

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

"Thy Word is Truth."

THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL
VOLUME
1939

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified"

Acts 20. 32.

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Scripture Truth

VOLUME XXXI.

"THY WORD IS TRUTH."

1939

"THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK."

J. T. Mawson.

The Gospel of John. Chapter 20.

WHAT does "the first day of the week" mean to us who have believed? Surely the question is right and timely since the first day of the year of our Lord 1939 is also the first day of the week. It means great and wonderful things for us, this first day of which John speaks, for it was the day of resurrection, the beginning of a new creation, a day that shall never be forgotten and shall never know a night. It tells of darkness past, of death smashed and overthrown, of a victorious Saviour and a delivered people! It means all this and more to us who having not seen have believed. Blessed indeed are we! and that by the risen Saviour's own words (verse 29).

The light of the new day shines upon us and we walk in the light of it, but for Mary Magdalene "*it was yet dark.*" She, like all the disciples, was controlled by sight and not faith, and the darkness in which they mourned and wept was unrelieved. She was early at the sepulchre and peering in the darkness hers were the first mortal eyes to see that the stone was taken away from the sepulchre. She concluded that someone had been there before her and who could it be but an enemy. It was not an enemy, *it was the Father.* For "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," Romans 6. 4. Who can tell what the first day of the week meant to the Father whose beloved Son had accomplished all His will? What infinite and holy joy must have been His when He "brought again from the dead the

Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," Hebrews 13. The first day of the week must have filled heaven with louder and sweeter praise than ever it had known before.

But for Mary "*it was early*" and though the day was awaking, her faith was asleep, a sleep that was almost death. But the love that filled her heart for the Lord was not sleeping, it was never more awake, and because she loved Him with a love that He only could understand and satisfy she had come thus early to the sepulchre. She had come to anoint His body and it must have added another pang to her almost boundless sorrow to find that this unsatisfying "satisfaction" was denied her. His body was not there.

We must take special notice of this Mary, for she is the outstanding figure on this first day of the week, her love for her Lord made her so. And what cause she had to love Him. She had been the slave of a seven-fold Satanic malignity and He had set her free. He had driven out the evil spirits and turned the hell of the life she had lived into the heaven that His own presence affords. He had set her heart and her tortured mind at rest, as the Shepherd of her soul He had led her into paths of righteousness and peace. And now He who had wrought so mightily and mercifully for her had been slain as a common felon, and even His body was gone. No wonder "*it was yet dark*" for Mary. No wonder she gave voice to her agony and despair

in her oft repeated words, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

What could she do in her bewilderment but run to Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved, her grief was too great for one heart to bear, and they on hearing her report also *ran*. Her words shook them out of their sullen sorrow and put a surprising energy into them. Surely the mystery was deepening, what could that empty sepulchre, so lately containing the body of Him in Whom all their hopes were centred, and so well sealed and closely guarded, mean? They satisfied themselves that it was even as Mary had reported, the tomb was empty, but to still further deepen the mystery, the linen clothes had not gone with the body. Stooping down and looking in, John, who fleeter of foot, had reached the sepulchre first, beheld and saw these clothes lying undisturbed, and Simon arriving on the heels of John and being bolder than his friend went in and confirmed what John saw. He "*seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about the head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together by itself.*"

These details as to the linen clothes must not be overlooked. There is a reason for this twofold testimony as to them. Lying there in perfect order they tell us more than that there was no sign of a struggle. When Lazarus came forth from his tomb at the command of the Lord he was bound hand and foot with grave clothes, witness that he had to return to that grave again, and he needed friendly hands to loose him and let him go. But the sacred body of Jesus did not need such friendly service, it did not arise from the dead wrapt in the garments of death. He

left them behind Him undisturbed by His rising. They were lying there for those disciples to see just as they were when the body of Jesus lay within them; neither they nor the stone that held the door of the tomb had impeded His triumphant rising, all that spoke of bondage and of prison had been left behind. It was the first day of the week, the resurrection day; the power of resurrection life had vanquished death. The grave was empty. The Lord was risen indeed, and all that spoke of death was left behind for ever.

..."*Then went in also that other disciple who came first to the sepulchre, AND HE ALSO BELIEVED.*" He who saw His crucified Lord dead upon His cross and bore record of it that we might believe, *saw* also the empty grave that he might bear witness of that also. "*Then the disciples went away again to their own home.*" It was a strange thing for these men to do, and we marvel at it; surely they might have pursued their search for Him who had been so much to them. It may be that their sensibilities were benumbed by their sorrow, or they may have feared being in the vicinity of the tomb when the authorities learned that it was empty, lest they should be charged with the theft of the body. We do not know why they went away to their own home on such a morning with all its mysteries, leaving Mary standing without weeping.

This we do know that they "*as yet knew not the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead.*" If they had known the Scriptures they would have had no need of sight to convince them that the grave was empty; they would have been assured and triumphant and rejoicing men, waiting in that garden to greet their risen Lord. How great are the Scriptures! What assurance, what confidence

they give to those who know them. Sight and sense may deceive us, but the Scriptures are the very word of the God who cannot lie. We give thanks for every experience of the truth of them, but we would not rely even upon our experience, it may fail us; the Word of God is the impregnable rock upon which faith rests without fear, it never fails.

"But Mary stood without the sepulchre weeping." The men might depart to their own home, she had no home where her Lord was not, the world was a wilderness without Him. Poor, desolate, heart-broken woman! *And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain.*" It was not the linen clothes that she saw, ceremonies of death, but angels in white, heavenly messengers in garments of victory, now holding death's territory, that the Lord had subdued and taken, and their question seems to be one of surprise that one who loved their Lord should weep on that great day. *"They say unto her, 'Woman, WHY weepest thou?' She saith unto them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.' And when she had thus said, she turned herself back."* As much as to say, "How could anyone ask me, why I weep, could I do anything else but weep, having lost my Lord? She had no home where He was not and even angels from heaven had no attraction for her.

"And when she had thus said she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me

where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Her eyes, dimmed with days and nights of constant weeping did not discern her Lord, but her love spoke out, a desperate but ignorant love, that saw no difficulty in what she proposed to do. Disciples had failed, angels even she could not trust, would this gardener help her! The time had come. The Lord could not withhold from her the revelation of Himself in resurrection. She, faithful woman, must be the first to behold Him alive from the dead. He answered the cry of her heart with one word, "Mary." It was enough. He called His own sheep by name and His sheep heard His voice. *"She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."*

The day had fully dawned for Mary. The first day of the week meant for her the risen Saviour, her Lord and Master, and she, wholly surrendered to His will, was a vessel meet for His use, one that He could send with the greatest message that had ever been carried by mortal lips.

And what does the first day of the week mean for us? Does it mean for us as it meant for Mary, a risen Saviour, our Lord and Master? We needed His finished work for the salvation of our souls, and chapter 19 of our Gospel gives us that, but we need the living Saviour for the satisfaction of our hearts and "the first day of the week" gives us that. But He who can fill our hearts and make them overflow with joy is our Master. We cannot have the joy of His ever-living for us if we are not subject to His will. But if with Mary we bow low at His feet and respond to His love by that one word "Master" we shall even now know somewhat of the light and joy and triumph of the new day, the first day of the week.

THE RIGHT GROUND OF GATHERING. T. Oliver.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18. 20).

NO matter how few in number or poor in intellect and spiritual gift may be the constitution of a local Christian company, if the conditions ensuring the Lord's presence are in evidence that company does not merely exhibit local responsibility, but is representative of the Church all over the world. There the Lord is paramount. The Holy Spirit in the midst excludes what is of the order of the flesh, man's arrogant mind and all that has come under the judgment of God. At the same time the Holy Spirit introduces Christ and His glory, taking of the things concerning Himself and making them living for the apprehension of the company. If one member suffer then all suffer, but on the other hand if one member gets a spiritual uplift all the others are uplifted too.

Much ministry, oral and written, has been occupied with the subject of the right ground of gathering. It has been often asserted that we gather on the ground of the one body. Such a statement is apt to be very misleading, although it is intended to relieve us from the imputation of sectarianism. "The one body" is an abstract term which includes all the redeemed on earth and thus denotes what is outside responsibility. But our gathering together is in the realm of responsibility, so that the expression is apt to have little meaning under existing conditions.

The real important statement is that we gather to or in the authority of the Lord's name. That name has great significance! There are also great privileges as well as responsibilities attaching thereto. The fact of

our gathering to His Name is tantamount to the statement that He is rejected here as He is accepted there, i.e., in heaven. The martyr Stephen in the climax of his trial bore witness to the rejected Man being in full acceptance in heaven associated with the glory of God.

It should be observed that the verse quoted is in the second part of the Gospel of Matthew. In the first part, Christ is presented to His people on the basis of their being yet under probation. But from chapter 11 onwards the fact of His rejection on earth is established, and the subject matter proceeds on the basis of His acceptance and exaltation in heaven. Hence the kingdom or the rule of God is described as the kingdom of heaven, finding its centre in the Man at the right hand of God. Hence His name does service for His personal presence in His absence, so far as responsibility is concerned. But the verse shows the marvellous association of His spiritual presence being granted to those so gathered.

But simple as the statement may be we are not to presume on that quality. Many who claim to be so gathered may be only deluding themselves because their practice is vitiating the sense of the Lord's Name! Did not He in His own matchless ministry give unmistakable evidence of the truth of that contention? "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have we not cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess to them, I never knew you" (Matt. 7, 22—23). It is

not sufficient to claim His name and its consequences; we must justify the claim by fulfilment of the responsibilities relative thereto in the Spirit of Christ.

There are not only responsibilities but priceless privileges connected with gathering in the name of the Lord. From the Corinthian epistle we see that they were saints by calling, and thus formed the temple of God and as such they had the mind of God, and the presence of the Holy Spirit, excluding the mind of man. In the dedication of the temple by Solomon the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because it was filled with the glory of the Lord (2 Chron. 7. 2).

The next important matter is that the "salvation bringing grace of God has appeared in Christ." He came primarily to present God to man. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5. 19). The continuation of that ministry and power is now manifest in the church of God. All God's goodness to man is displayed there. That is matchless grace! In spite of the rejection of Christ by the world, the church and the Spirit of God are here. Spiritual gift manifests not only the glory of Christ but His wonderful grace. Indeed spiritual gift is grace. Unless what purports to be gift is associated with manifest grace

it belies its profession. Gift is not displayed externally as at first. We have not the apostles nor the gift of tongues, but otherwise all that was vital in the first century is vital today. We have the record of the Apostles' ministry in the Epistles and the Holy Spirit makes that living and operative.

There is abundance of resource, discernment and scriptural exposition evincing present grace for every need. We are apt to put great stress upon our endowment in the way of oral gift. That undoubtedly has a great and honoured place, but the necessary prelude to the exercise of gift in 1 Cor. 14 is found in the display of love one to another in 1 Cor. 13. Otherwise oral gift would be analogous to the sound of a tinkling cymbal. The proportion of real gift finds its measure in the extent of love manifested. As we apprehend the love of Christ, we love His own, because all are equally dear to Him. We are of His own whom He loved and for whom He gave Himself. There is often grave discrepancy between the oral endowment and the "hidden man of the heart," which is manifested in a meek and quiet spirit, esteemed in the sight of God as of great value (1 Peter 3. 4). That does not cause one iota of what is real to be null and void and the knowledge of that is a very great comfort!

It is not as of old "the skill of such as work in brass." But the skill of such as walk in love; the fashioning of any kind thought in the heart towards a brother; the arming of the mind to bear and forbear in love; the going forth of the soul in sympathies; and the moulding off or softening down of any hard or selfish affection; these are the copies of the heavenly patterns.

In the working out of our salvation we trust too little to quiet thought, simple faith, silent prayer, receptive waiting, and lean too much on anxious, restless personal action.

"THE SAME."

W. Bramwell Dick.

"Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"
(Hebrews 13. 8).

COULD we find a more comforting, encouraging, reassuring word with which to enter upon the New Year? We review the past and in the world there have been changes. Through God's infinite mercy we have been preserved from a threatened war, but change, the nature of which no one can predict, seems imminent. We take account of our fellow Christians known to us, and, with all saints, loved by us, and how many have been called home to be with the Lord. Many of our readers find blanks in their home circle. The empty crib or the vacant chair tell their own tale of sorrow and bereavement. "Change and decay in all around we see." It may be we find change in ourselves. Less heart affection for the Lord Jesus, less interest in His things; less desire for His service; less loyalty to His truth; less eagerness for His return. Let us, however, turn from ourselves, our sorrows, our surroundings, our circumstances, and "consider Him." Shall we make the words of our text our motto for the year upon which we have entered and say "Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." That will take our eye off ourselves and everything connected with ourselves and will engage our thoughts with Him who is ever, and always, and altogether the same. In this epistle we have the record of many changes. Heavenly Intelligences; pious men; divine institutions are all passed before us and all pass off the scene, while there stands forth in all His majesty and greatness one supreme unique Person. In the first chapter He is addressed by God as "The Same," and

then after the numerous changes have been mentioned we are reminded that "Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday and to-day and for ever." It is said to be a Name of God and in the New Translations by J. N. Darby is several times indicated in the Old Testament. Let us return to our text. He is "the Same," yesterday in the Eternity of His Being; to-day, a glorified Man in the glory of God, to-morrow the One who shall be the centre of the vast system of glory. See how this is calculated to affect us as we learn from our chapter. Verses 1 and 2 and 3. There will be a continuance of love like unto His love Who is "the Same," verse 4; there will be that purity that should characterise those who know Him who is "the Same." Verses 5 and 6. There will be absence of love of money; satisfaction with present circumstances; and unflinching confidence in Him who is "the Same." Verse 7: There will be the grateful remembrance of those who have led us to Him who, though they have gone, remains and is "The Same." Verse 9. There will be the refusal of that which is new and strange, and which, in some cases, indicates change on the part of the propagators of such things, because we know Him who is "the Same." Verse 13: We will gladly answer the call to "go forth unto Him without the camp," though that means "bearing His reproach," because, though religious leaders plead altered circumstances and changed conditions, He is still there, and He is "the Same." Verse 14. We will not seek place, nor position, nor pleasure where He is not, for He has been refused and He

is "the Same." Verses 15, 16. We will seek to exercise our privilege as holy and royal priests because this is pleasing to Him and He is "the Same." Verse 17. We will heed our leaders who watch over our souls because He has enjoined it and He is "the Same." Verses 20, 21. He is "our Lord Jesus," He is our Shepherd, He is the One who has pledged Himself to bring us safely home and He is "the Same."

We look back over our history be it short or long. How frequently have we changed, our friends have changed, our fellow believers have changed, it has been one continuous story of change has it not? We look forward, and what changes the New Year may hold for us we do not know, but in confidence in Him we step out and our souls rest in this

that "Jesus Christ (is) the Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." We want nothing more. The sky may be dark; the difficulties may appear great; the burdens may seem heavy, but again and again we repeat it until it becomes part of our very being:—

"Jesus Christ (is) the Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," and our glad hearts sing:

"While all things change, He changes not
Nor e'er forgets, though oft forgot;
His love's unchangeably the same,
And as enduring as His Name."

We await His coming, we expect Him at any moment, then His heart shall be satisfied and our joy shall be complete. Till then let our souls rest right here:—*"Jesus Christ (is) the Same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."*

For those who Suffer.

There is a very encouraging word in Isaiah 64 for us to wait upon God. In J. N. Darby's New Translation it reads: "Never have men heard, nor perceived by the ear, nor hath eye seen, O God, beside Thee, *who acteth for him that waiteth for Him*" (verse 4). If we may have God acting for us, it is well to drop our own futile efforts and wait for Him. In a footnote the alternative reading is given. "*What He will do for him that waiteth for Him.*" God is honoured when we wait for Him and wait upon Him, and if we honour Him will He fail us? The great principle with which we began our acquaintance with Him when we had to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord," holds good in every crisis of our lives. Let us rejoice that He acteth for those who trust their lives to Him.

Let us remember that we are going to the Father. Even now we are the sons of God. Let us live like it, more simple, uncomplaining, useful, separate, joyful, as those who march with music, yet sober as those who are to company with Christ. The road is heavy, high road and low road, but the end of it is "home."

There is nowhere that earth's sorrows are so felt as up in heaven; there is nowhere that earth's failings have such kindly judgment given.

PARTY SPIRIT.

"Now the works of the flesh are these . . . strifes, contentions, schools of opinion, envyings, murders. . . ." (Galatians 5. 21) (J.N.D.).

PARTY spirit is the complete destruction both of truth and love. The truth is hateful to the out-and-out thoroughgoing partisan. We all know that in ourselves. When we have, at any time, become abandoned partisans in anything, then farewell to the truth. We will not have it. As many lies as you like, but not the truth! It exasperates us to hear it. You are henceforth our enemy if you will insist on speaking it. We shut our eyes to the truth, and we stop our ears. It is not truth that divides us up into such opposed parties as we see all around us in the Church, it is far more lies. It is not principle once in ten times. Nine times out of ten it is pure party spirit. And I cling to that bad spirit, and to all its works, as if it were my life. I feel unhappy when you tell me the truth, if it is good truth, about my rival. I feel the sore pain of concession. I feel as if all my foundations were being taken away from under me. How fierce you always make me when you so rejoice in the truth and go about spreading it! I am a Jew, and I want no dealings with the Samaritans. I want to stand aloof all my life from all who differ from me. I do not want to hear what they have to say for their fathers and for themselves. I hope that the old walls of separation will hold together all my time.

And where truth is hated in that way love can have no possible home. Truth is love in the mind, just as love is truth in the heart. Trample on the one, and you crush the other to death. Cherish and be tender with the one, and you will eat the fruits

and drink the sweets of the other. Now the full-blown party spirit is utter poison to the spirit of love as well as to the spirit of truth. "Love suffereth long, and is kind: love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." But party spirit is the clean contradiction of all that. "No assurance," says Thucydides, "no pledge of either party could gain credit with the other. The most reasonable proposals, coming from an opponent, were received not with candour, but with suspicion. No artifice was reckoned dishonourable by which a point could be carried. Every recommendation of moderate measure was reckoned either a mark of cowardice or insincerity. He only was considered a completely safe man whose violence was blind and boundless: and those who endeavoured to steer a middle course were spared by neither side." That might have been written yesterday, so true to our own life also is every syllable of it.

By the just and righteous ordination of Almighty God, our sins carry a punishment immediately and inseparably with them. And party spirit, being such a wicked spirit, infallibly inflicts a very swift and a very severe punishment on the man who entertains it. You know yourselves how party spirit hardens your heart, and narrows and imprisons and impoverishes your mind. You must all know how party spirit poisons your feelings, and fills you with antipathy to men you never saw, as well as to men all around you who have never hurt a hair of your head,

and would not if they could.

It humiliates my head to the dust of death, and it breaks my heart before God and before myself every day I live, to discover such stains in my heart against men who have hurt me in nothing but in this—that they have given their great talents and their shining services to another party than my party. What a terrible punishment all that is, let him tell us who, before God, is keeping his heart clean of all that. Unless it is casting

pearls before swine to attempt to tell us such things. No! Do not attempt to tell such things to us lest we turn again and rend you.

Another divine punishment of party spirit is seen in the way that it provokes retaliation, and thus reproduces and perpetuates itself till the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate the truth.

A.W.

“Hold Thou me up.”

“*Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe*” (Psalm 119. 117).

Do not spoil the chime of these morning bells by ringing only half a peal. Do not say, “Hold Thou me up” and stop there, or add, “But still I shall stumble and fall as usual.” Finish the peal of God’s own music, the bright words of faith that He puts into your mouth—“Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe”; for He “is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” HE IS ABLE.

The Word of God.

The Word of God only is the rule and measure of my responsibility, the expression of the authority of God over me. It is direct from God, and God’s title is absolute, and embraces my whole being in obedience; He exercises His authority immediately by the Word. . . . My first, immediate, and all-ruling relationship is with God by the Word. It has precedence of all others, and claims absolute and immediate subjection. “We ought to *obey*” is the Christian’s ensign; but “We ought to OBEY GOD *rather than man*” is the absolute claim of God, who has revealed Himself fully, and reveals Himself immediately to us by the Word.

J.N.D.

Love acts in four ways towards its object. It thinks of its object, visits its object, exalts its object. Thus has Christ shown His love to us. He thought of us, for He loved us and gave Himself for us. He visited us for He left His Father’s home and became a servant here. He suffered for us even unto death and by His death we live and are made heirs of God. It is such love as this in Him that can awaken a suitable response in us.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

The Entrance into Jerusalem. Chapter 21. 22.

WITH His entrance into Jerusalem there begins the last week of the Lord's life on earth and the events occupy more than one fourth of the whole Gospel. Seeking divine aid we would look at it not so much in the way of exposition but to follow His footsteps which led only to the cross and gain thereby a deeper sense of His glory who suffered all its woe and passed through it into resurrection triumph.

The entrance into Jerusalem gives a foreshadowing of the coming glory of the King. The two blind men (ch. 20. 30) own Him as the Lord, the Son of David, and receive their sight. What a time of joy and wonder it will be for Israel when they look on Him whom their father's crucified and own Him as their Lord and Saviour God. Psalm 118 and Zechariah 9 are brought in to complete the picture. When the KING comes Who is just, having salvation, then shall be heard the shout "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed be He who cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." But it can only be a picture for the moment for all must be founded upon His death. While the two texts recalled from the Old Testament record His royalty in Israel the two men that received their sight combine that same royalty with His Omnipotent glory as God the Son.

But the Temple scenes go further as bringing out the opposition to His authority and leading Him to the holy activity of judgment. Amidst the many events at this point of the history there are two solemn scenes of Judgment; the cleansing of the

Temple and the sentence on the fig tree.

Let us note the detail here. Two blind men are made to see, two disciples are sent for the colt, two animals brought, one to accompany the other upon which the King is seated. Twice was His praise proclaimed, on the way up to the city and by the children in the temple; two texts cited from the Old Testament to celebrate the King and two solemn acts of judgment by the King. In the first of these He combines two texts from the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah as descriptive of the state upon which His judgment came. In each case the Divine Human Personality of the King is in evidence while in certain of them His Deity overshadows all. As already remarked Omnipotence was at work upon the blind men, prescience in sending for the colt and glory and majesty in His entering His city on an unbroken animal: a colt upon which never man sat, but the two acts of judgment recall the mystic cloud and its flaming fire of the prophet Ezekiel. In the act of cleansing the temple we indeed anticipate the time when the King shall be seen in His fury, when He shall gird His sword upon His thigh with glory and majesty and ride prosperously because of truth and righteousness and His right hand shall do terrible things.

It appears from the record in Mark that the cleansing of the Temple and the cursing the fig-tree were on the second day. The one refers to the place of Israel as committed to the privileges and responsibilities of the House of God, the other her place among the nations

politically. In the latter there was plenty of outward appearance but no fruit, and the time had come to end that state of things. As is now well known the words "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," have a deep moral significance as referring to the close of man's moral history as a responsible agent before God. We have already seen that Christianity is anticipated in the Gospel, see chapter 9. 16, 17, where the Lord refers to new creation in figurative language. In the sentence on the tree the Lord shews that which is preparatory to the introduction of Paul's gospel. The Apostle was the witness to the grand truth that God had ceased to look for response from man as a responsible creature, that now instead of being tested by law, Christ in glory is presented as Saviour on the ground of free grace for every man. This serves to explain the apparent severity of the Lord's dealings by bringing out the wisdom of His ways in relation to the bearing of divine testimony throughout the ages.

"And when He was come into the Temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him as He was teaching and said, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" They felt that something must be said but the question exposed themselves; the divine activities of this blessed Person declared Who He was. The Lord answered them with a question about His servant John the Baptist which served further to bring out both the hostility of these men to what God was doing and their absolute incapability as shepherds for God in the midst of His people. The parable that follows shewed His estimate of His servant and their guilt in refusing his message. The two sons

refer to the two classes in Israel of which they His opponents were the second. The other class were the publicans and harlots who though open in their defiance yet were reached by the ministry of the Lord and His servant John.

The next parable spoken by the Lord goes much deeper bringing home to this apostate class their guilt and condemnation. They were the offspring morally of that class which all along the line of history had treated the gracious overtures of Jehovah with hatred and had persecuted and killed His messengers, and they were about to consummate their guilt in the murder of the sent One of the Father, the Father's only-begotten Son. "This is the Heir, come let us kill Him and seize on His inheritance." By His question the Lord in solemn majesty draws forth from these men the sentence of God on themselves as to where they were and what they were doing at that moment. All this He supplements by reference to Himself as the Stone that these builders rejected. (See Acts 4. 11—12). From a topical point of view this expression of a Stone is most fruitful and would yield a rich fund of blessing but all is judgment here "He that falls on this Stone shall be broken." This exactly describes what Israel did. By refusing Heaven's richest favour in the presentation of the Son the Messiah they were broken to pieces and remain so till this day. But "On whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." Here the Gentile is in view, it connects with Daniel 2. 34. 35—45. where we are shewn that Christ as Stone will fall on the whole imperial system of Gentile supremacy and grind it to powder.

Chapter 22. This chapter opens

with the parable of the marriage of the King's son. It calls for care. It is not now the Messiah King of Israel but the Son of God. Besides this the parable gives in figure the transition from Judaism to Christianity and follows on to the figurative presentation of professing Christendom at the close. The servants went forth to call those that had been bidden, evidently those who had been invited during the Lord's ministry appealed to again by the preaching in Pentecostal days. Verse 1—7 anticipates the book of Acts right down to the governmental judgment of God in the Roman seige of Jerusalem and the terrible price Israel had to pay for their refusal of Christ when on earth and also the testimony of the Holy Spirit to His ascended glory. At verse 8 we pass in the parable to the work of grace among the Gentiles or perhaps more properly mankind in general. The wedding was filled with guests but there was one present who refused to answer to the King's conditions. The man is a specific case and doubtless refers to that class which take up the profession and enter upon the privileges of Christianity without submitting themselves to Christ. The Lord knoweth them that are His and the eye of God detects the state of every heart and judgment is bound to follow. But here it is deeper than the governmental judgment upon the Jew spoken of in verse 7. Israel was cut off to be restored again but Christendom will go down under judgment never to come up again. Then said the King to His servants (Angels here the providential agents of Judgment) bind him hand and foot

and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This parable is different from the great feast of Luke 14. There the guest of chapter 15 is also a specific case representing all that are Christ's. The son who returned from the far country came into new creation by reconciliation and into the deepest and richest accompaniments of the counsels of God. The parable there anticipates the doctrine of the Epistle to the Ephesians which is New Creation. No one could possibly enter the feast of Luke 14 without the best robe, that is to say the place necessitates a corresponding state, nor could it be possible for any to be there and be cast out. Here in Matthew the wedding garment refers to the soul's acceptance of Christ as Saviour, there it is Christ formed in the soul. Here it is Christ for righteousness and the person is seen as justified having peace with God: there in Luke it is the believer made the righteousness of God IN CHRIST. Inside in this parable refers to the circle of Christian profession where there are both real and unreal, whereas to be inside in Luke 15 is to be within the sphere where all things are of God and where Christ is everything and in all. (See 2 Cor. 17—18. Col. 3. 11). There God rests in the unclouded blessedness of His own nature having Christ and those that are His before Himself for His own complacency. As it is said "That we should be holy and without blame before Himself in love" (Eph. 1. 3, 4).

Christian sympathy will find a way through every difficulty and a key for every prison door, it goes after the sorrowful and the solitary.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A. J. Pollock.

THESE are but two ordinances connected with Christianity—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both stand in relation to the death of Christ. Baptism, an act, has no meaning or virtue *in itself*, but is symbolical of that which should powerfully affect the believer's life every day and all the days. It sets forth the identification of the believer with the death of Christ, that it is his privilege to die practically to all that Christ died to. The world that crucified Him and the flesh that clamoured for His crucifixion are to be judged and set aside. The believer henceforth is to walk "in newness of life" (Romans 6. 4).

Baptism is one act, but the Lord's supper is a continued appeal to the affections of the Lord's people, occurring, as it does, Lord's day by Lord's day.

We believe the weakness that marks the Christian profession is very largely because the death of Christ is not prominent and dominating in the lives of the saints of God. If once the believer loses the sense of the vital meaning of the cross, and its intimate relation to his blessing from God and his standing before Him, he is in danger of getting on the downward path so far as Christian profession goes.

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It is often remarked that what comes out in the Gospels is not found in the Epistles, and what is brought out in the Epistles is not found in the Gospels. For instance, we find John's baptism in the Gospels, but not in the Epistles; Christian baptism in the Epistles, but not in the Gospels. The Lord's Supper is a striking exception to this rule. The record of its

institution by our Lord is found in no less than *three* Gospels. Scripture never goes in for needless repetition, so evidently the matter so emphasised is very near the heart of our blessed Lord, and should be very near the heart of every believer. But it is also found in the Epistles. 1 Cor. 11 tells how it was revealed to the Apostle Paul. Instituted on earth in all the darkness and sorrow of the very night of the betrayal, it was likewise made the subject of a special revelation from the glory to the Apostle Paul.

The reason of this was strikingly illustrated by an instance in the writer's experience. He was talking to an aged Quaker, headmaster of a celebrated school. Quakers so emphasise the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that they neither carry out the ordinance of baptism nor the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This old gentleman contended that the Lord's Supper was a *Jewish* feast, given to the disciples by our Lord before He died, and therefore not binding on Christians. The writer asked him, if this were so, how was it that a special revelation was given to the Apostle Paul, *the Apostle of the GENTILES*, given AFTER the Day of Pentecost, when the descent of the Holy Spirit had already formed the Church as the Body of Christ, Himself the living glorified Head in Heaven? Did this not clearly indicate that it was intended to be a *Christian* feast? He had no answer to make.

It is, indeed, touching that it was instituted on the night of the betrayal, when the impending ordeal of the cross was weighing heavily on the Saviour's mind, as witness the sweat like great drops of blood falling to

the ground and the agonising cry to God that if it were possible the cup of God's judgment on sin should pass from Him, subject to God's will. Then in all the blaze of the glory the revelation concerning the Lord's Supper was given to the Apostle of the Gentiles, so that wherever he went on his missionary labours, the Lord's solicitude for the remembrance of His own would be duly emphasised.

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The ordinance is simple in the extreme. It was not instituted in the gorgeous Temple with priests in flowing robes and swinging censers. Evidently the Spirit of God would not occupy the mind of the believer with the ritual of the occasion. Ritualism makes an appeal to the senses, the venerable building, music stealing through the fretted arches, priests with gorgeous vestments, with chantings and genuflexions, combine to impress the outward senses, and produce a false feeling of sanctity on the mind of the flesh. The result is only of the worst in very many cases.

No, in a large upper room furnished in an unknown part of Jerusalem, a room with no ecclesiastical setting, an ordinary room in an ordinary dwelling, with bread and wine upon the table, and bread and wine were the common articles of food in the homes of the poorest in Palestine, was the place where the Supper was instituted.

It was in the symbolic meaning of the bread and wine, wherein lay their significance, the body given, the blood of our Lord shed. How much is wrapped up in this simple statement. The body given! We are face to face with the astounding truth of our Lord's Person, very God and

very Man, one blessed Person. Oh! the mighty love that led Him to stoop from the glory, where in the form of God He received the homage of the angels, to being found in the form of a bonds slave, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Should the loaf upon the table occupy our thoughts, or rather be simply a touching symbol of a truth of vital importance, appealing in its simplicity and the wonder of its meaning to our affections?

Sad indeed is it that ritualism has run riot in its irreverent imagination and made out that in the blessing of the emblems by the priest the bread becomes the very body of our Lord and the wine His very blood. No doubt this has been invented to fasten the chains of superstition upon men, and give the priest a power that sets him above the laity, and between the people and the Lord. Shame is it that the consecrated wafer, as it is called, is put in a box, called an aumbry, and worshipped as if the Saviour were there in Person. Let us cherish the simplicity with which our Lord instituted this feast, and not turn it into an occasion for shameful and senseless idolatry.

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We are told in 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17, that the cup which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ. the bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? "The cup of blessing which we bless!" What a touching and absolute contrast to the cup our Lord drank for us at the cross. None but our Lord and His Father will ever know what He went through that the communion of His blood might be ours. That blood brings the believer the forgiveness of sins and redemption. It brings him to God.

In the Tabernacle's typical teaching the worshipper could go as far as the blood of the sin offering went. The High Priest on the great day of atonement carried the blood into the very holiest of all, it could go no further, and sprinkled it upon and before the mercy seat. That sets forth symbolically what Hebrews 10. 19—22 sets forth doctrinally, that the believer has boldness of access into the very presence of God, there to be a worshipper.

It is indeed a cup of blessing. All the ingredients in the cup the Lord drank were those of suffering, distance, and death; not only death, but death under the judgment of a holy God for sin as He took the sinner's place. The cup the believer receives is full of blessing and happiness, and joy.

The bread is the communion of the body of Christ. We enter into all the blessings of Christ's death, and have entrance into a realm of blessing and delight the world knows nothing of.

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"Drink ye *all* of it" (Matthew 26. 27), was the invitation of the Lord to His disciples, and surely His invitation to-day for all of His own is just the same. "They *all* drank of it" we read in Mark 14. 23. The invitation is given in Matthew's Gospel, the happy response to the invitation is given in Mark's Gospel. This raises a question we do well to meditate upon. For whom is the Lord's Supper? Is it the badge of membership with a particular body of Christians? To raise this question is to answer it. Scripture is so plain in the matter. It is the LORD'S Supper. It is where He should be supreme. His invitation is for all the blood-bought children of God. Does a known Chris-

tian ask to remember the Lord in His death? Is he known to be sound in the faith and walking in a godly way? Such an one must be received, or else it ceases to be the LORD'S Supper, and becomes one of man's, a sectarian feast common only to the members of a particular body of believers.

"Drink ye ALL of it," is a challenge to every believer on the face of the earth. The Church of God is not a question of frontiers, nationalities, language, social positions, the colour of the skin. This is a fellowship that embraces all those, who love the Lord, wherever they may be found. The appeal is to the heart.

I remember speaking to a young Christian, who told me he was thinking of asking to break bread. Two years after I met him and enquired if he were sharing in the Lord's Supper. He replied, "I have not yet made up my mind." I replied, "It is not a question of your *mind*, but of your *heart*. Affection for the One you owe everything to should move you."

We may well ask a question here. Do we come into fellowship by breaking bread, or is breaking bread the expression of fellowship? It is clearly the expression of fellowship. There is but ONE fellowship in Scripture for the believer. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 9). "There is ONE body, and ONE Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 6. 3—6).

To Continue.

A MEDITATION ON THE PERSON OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Inglis Fleming.

[NOTE.—*The reader's prayerful attention is called to the accompanying article upon the Person of our most Holy Lord. May we ever contemplate so holy a theme with the awe and adoring worship which become us. May a spirit of controversy, or mere intellectual analysis or speculation, be removed far from us. No words that man's wisdom teacheth can keep us from error; our best language falls short of the perfection of the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Let us hold fast all these, and be very careful not to "go beyond" their divine limits. It is our joy, our salvation, that we know the Lord Jesus; it is also our joy that in the unutterable fulness of His own eternal being God alone can know Him.*]

THE secret source and spring and power of all real godliness is found in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no true piety without a true Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the believer and who produces in his life all that is fruit for God, ever stresses the truth concerning the glorious Person of the Son of God, that our hearts may be engaged with Him, and that beholding His glory we may become like Him and express Him in our walk and ways.

"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. 16). And a true Christianity needs a *whole* Christ. He is its centre and stay. Apart from Him *in all that He is*, everything of truth is weakened and damaged, if not destroyed.

So it is that all down the centuries from the hour of His incarnation the enemy has made ceaseless attacks upon the truth of "Jesus Christ come in flesh" (1 John 4: 2, 3). Sometimes His Godhead glory is assailed. Sometimes His real humanity. Thus,

in the same fourth century, Arius of Alexandria denied our Lord's true deity, and Apollinaris of Laodicea denied our Lord's true humanity.

Arius regarded the Lord as not being possessed of absolute Godhead, but as being only the chief and greatest of created beings.

Appollinaris refused to acknowledge the full human nature of the Lord, denying His human spirit, and filling its place with the Divine Logos.

The importance of knowing well and holding fast and teaching constantly all that the Spirit of God affirms concerning Him cannot be over-estimated, and that which is written is for our learning. So with unshod feet and reverence of spirit we may enquire into that which is revealed, remembering that in its fulness, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matthew 11. 27), and that adoration becomes us as we consider Him.

Into the depths of the mystery of His incarnation we may not penetrate, nor should we seek to be wise above what is written. The "obedience of faith" calls us to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, casting down ima-

ginations and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10. 5). Therefore we do well to "think in Scripture" as far as we can, and to keep as closely as possible in our words to that which has been unfolded in its holy pages, for "the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times" (Ps. 12. 6).

Let us consider then how the Holy Spirit presents the Lord Jesus before us, beholding Him in His glories, as they are spread out that our souls may feed and rejoice.

It was given to the apostle John, who lay in His bosom at supper, to portray the full Godhead of the Lord, and to him was given also to express the truth of His full humanity. His whole Gospel brings before us that which the Son of God ever was and also that which He became in grace for us. As he says, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Here, as in other Scriptures, we find our Lord Jesus brought before us, as truly God and truly Man in one glorious Person. At times He is spoken of as though He were only God, at other times as though He were only Man; but always as one undivided Personality. And it is this completeness in the divine and human natures which makes Him so dear to the heart of the believer.

Being this He can be the "One Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2: 5). He is great enough to meet all the claims of the throne of God. He is lowly enough to lay hold of sinful men and to bring them to God in perfect righteousness. The "Daysman," longed for by the patriarch Job, is provided in Him. He is the one who can "lay His hand upon

us both" (Job 9: 33).

"He is the true God" (1 John 5. 20), "God with us" (Matt. 1. 23). He is also "the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2. 5). And faith neither "divides the Person, nor confounds the natures." They are united by a bond unique and inscrutable. He is the God-Man. He is God in all that God is. He is Man in all that man is, sin apart. He speaks of His spirit (Luke 23. 46). He speaks of His soul (John 12. 27). He speaks of His body (Matthew 26. 12, 26). He claims Manhood as He claims Godhead, but ever speaking of Himself as a single personality "I". These truths of His Person are the foundation of that which the believer has for time and for eternity. *All* that He is gives efficacy to all that He has done and is doing.

The atonement made by Him at Calvary and His present ministry as Priest and Intercessor on high, and everything which flows from these, depend upon the truths of His Godhead and Manhood together. So loving Him we are called to hold fast the revelation though it is beyond the realm of human reasonings.

And He will be the object of wonder and of worship to the redeemed as they bow before Him in the courts of light and cast their golden crowns at His pierced feet. As we gaze upon Him now, in something of that same spirit, we sing,

"The Person of the Christ,
Enfolding every grace,
Once slain, but now alive again,
In heaven demands our praise."

That which He has accomplished — His finished redeeming work of Calvary — gives peace to the conscience and enables us as "worshippers once purged" to consider Him,

Himself, and thus have our hearts and lips filled with praise and adoration. That He was truly Man enabled Him to suffer and die for man in making atonement on his behalf. That He was truly God gives that atonement its infinite value.

That He was and is truly Man, One who has been tried in all points as we are (sin apart), enables Him to sympathize with us as we tread our pilgrim way, seeking to follow His steps, while it is the hand of His Almighty which holds up "our goings in His paths."

We contemplate Him then, "coming in flesh." He is "that Holy Thing" born of the virgin. "The Seed of the woman," so long promised, has come to bruise the Serpent's head. Conceived in the womb by the overshadowing power of the Highest, He was born a Son to Mary—Jesus—His lowly name, yet He is to be great, and called "the Son of the Highest." The virgin's firstborn Son is "Christ the Lord."

We contemplate Him in the Bethlehem stable.

"Blest Babe who lowly liest,
In manger-cradle there,
Descended from the highest,
Our sorrows all to share."

He is cast upon God from the womb and made to hope upon His mother's breasts. May we not join the angels in spirit saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good pleasure in men?" He has come who shall bring highest honour to God and who shall reconcile men to Him in righteousness, so that a holy God may look upon them with complacency, and have them in His presence with delight, in fulfilment of His purpose of grace.

We contemplate Him in the temple when eight days old. "The

Child Jesus" is brought in that the custom of the law may be carried out. Taken into aged Simeon's arms He is declared to be the Lord's Christ—God's salvation.

We contemplate Him in all the perfect unfoldings of childhood. He grows and waxes strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God is upon Him. He advances in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men. At twelve years of age He is consciously the Son of the Father. Missed by His parents, and found at last, in the midst of the doctors in the temple, He enquires, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" But thence He goes down with them, and comes to Nazareth and is subject unto them.

We contemplate Him in His holy Manhood "at the river of Jordan, where John was baptizing." He who ever was in the beginning with God, begins to be about thirty years of age. Before Abraham He was—the Great "I AM," the unchanging One, "the Same." The Word which "was God" was made flesh and dwelt among us, complete in Manhood now as He had been, and ever remains, complete in Godhead eternally.

To fulfil all righteousness He will identify Himself with the remnant of Israel in the waters of baptism, taking His place with them in their first step—though He is the Sinless One. Then when baptized, heaven breaks silence rejoicingly, and the Father's voice is heard saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," while the Spirit of God descends as a dove and abides upon Him.

We contemplate Him in the desert. He is "driven by the Spirit into the

wilderness," and we see Him hungering there and tempted by the devil. Answering the suggestion of the evil one that He should make stones bread, He, the self-humbled, dependent, devoted, obedient One, says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The testing only brings out the perfection—the sweet incense is beaten small that its fragrance may be shed forth.

Then "full of the Holy Spirit," "led by the Spirit" and "in the power of the Spirit," He ever speaks and acts. It is "by the Spirit of God" He casts out demons. In His wonderful stooping, He who is "over all, God blessed for ever," has taken a place in which He will be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We contemplate Him further in His holy goings and ministry. He, "Emmanuel"—"God with us"—has drawn near to fallen men, His creatures for their good, making God known. Grace and truth have come in Him. Yet He is the "Man of Sorrows" and the grief-acquainted One in outward circumstances, though in spirit He rejoices in the accomplishment of the Father's will. As it has been said, "He bore in His spirit that which He put away by His power," for "in all their afflictions He was afflicted." Everything essential in perfect holy Manhood we discern in Him, while as occasion calls for it we,

"See the Godhead glory
Shine through the human veil;
Or willing hear the story,
Of Him who's come to heal."

He who is "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isaiah 40. 28), is discerned on Sychar's well, "weary" with His journeyings of love (John 4. 6).

He who keepeth Israel and never slumbers, is seen peacefully sleeping amid the howlings of the storm upon the Galilean lake.

He knows all that is to come upon Him and forewarns His disciples of His suffering and death at the hands of men. Yet He knows not the day or hour appointed of the Father for His glorious coming. He upon whom worlds are dependent is Himself seen as the dependent One, saying, "I will put My trust in Him." He who commands the universe and spoke worlds into existence is under commandment of the Father and declares, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me."

He "sighs deeply in spirit" when a sign is sought in unbelief. He is righteously angry with the wilful opposers of His testimony. He weeps with Mary of Bethany and "groans in spirit" at the grave of Lazarus. He mourns over Jerusalem. He prays throughout His way, and at Gethsemane prays "more earnestly" when His soul is "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." There the bitter cup which He is to drink at Calvary is in view. In His holy hatred of sin He shrinks from all that the judgment will mean, but in His perfect obedience He cries, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." "Though He were a Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5. 7, 8).

Finally we contemplate Him in His holy sufferings and "death of the cross." There He will drain to its dregs the cup of judgment from which He shrank in His holy perfection in Gethsemane's dark garden. He feels in sacred sensitiveness of spirit all the ridicule and shame, all

the insults and mockery which are heaped upon Him by those who surround the cross, even as He knows the excruciating tortures of that awful gibbet.

Then bearing our sins and "made sin for us," He "who knew no sin" is abandoned in righteousness by God, and as all waves and billows pass over Him, and deep calls to deep, as judgment, for our sakes, falls upon Him, the cry rises from out of the darkness of that unparalleled hour, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Knowing then that all was accomplished the Victor's cry is heard, "It is finished," and He bows His head saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," and so gives up that ghost.

He has been crucified and slain by wicked hands. And yet we know until His hour was come none could take Him. His life He lays down of Himself, and He will take it again, having authority for this also. Thus on the first day of the week we see Him rising triumphant from the dead. He raises up the temple of His body, while it remains true that "God raised Him from the dead."

We contemplate Him now in resurrection. We hear Him "by the Holy Ghost" giving commandment, and then, on Olivet, we see Him parted from His disciples and taken

up into heaven, ascending up where He was before, but now in Manhood, and taking up His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, "The Man Christ Jesus" still, now in the glory of God.

There we know Him as "for us;" ceaselessly interceding on our behalf—Jesus, the Mighty Son of God, succouring, sympathizing, saving to the end His loved ones while on their pilgrimage, able to feel with them in all their trials because He Himself has suffered in like manner, sin apart, during His earthly sojourn. Man knows the things of a man by the spirit of a man which is in him. Our Lord in lowly grace became a Man that He might know and sympathize and live for us on high as once He died for us at Calvary.

In all these scenes we find Him whom our souls love, manifesting the faculties and powers of full and perfect Manhood, though full and perfect Godhead is His. Both the divine nature and the human nature appear with equal distinctness, each in its own perfection and time but inseparably connected in the same glorious Person.

In Him we "behold our God." In Him we "behold the Man." And while we know not the fathomless mystery of His glorious Person, we know His deep, eternal love, and with glad hearts praise and adore Him.

There is a day that comes apace,
Long looked for by the blood-washed
race,

That ends their earthly story;
Their last day here of toil and strait,
Whose sunset finds them at the gate,
That very gate of glory.

What could we wish that day to be
Whose nightfall brings with certainty
The close of time's brief measure;
Oh! nothing better could we ask
Than grace to fill our last day's task
Entirely for His pleasure.

G.C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

Loosing and binding on earth ratified in Heaven.

“Kindly explain to a puzzled brother Matthew 18. 18 and John 20. 23 in Answers to Correspondents, which is a valuable feature of ‘Scripture Truth’.”—EDINBURGH.

THE passages our correspondents ask about are “Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,” and “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained.” We should bring in also the words of the Lord to Simon Peter in Matthew 16. 19. “I will give unto 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.”

Simon Peter was distinguished among the Apostles in that he was the one chosen of the Lord to open the door of the kingdom of heaven, first to the Jew in Acts 2 and then to the Gentile in Acts 10. After that the keys were needed no more. It was not the door of heaven that he opened for them, but of *the kingdom of heaven on the earth*, and they were not by this necessarily blessed with the eternal forgiveness of their sins. they were if they believed the gospel, but that is not the point here, but that they entered into the sphere of profession on earth, then established, *by baptism* in the Name of the Lord. In that sphere Peter had power to bind and loose. He used that power in the 5th of Acts when by the Holy Ghost he discerned and exposed the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. He bound their sin on them and his action was immediately ratified in heaven. Again in chapter 8,

he went down to Samaria and by the laying on of his hands the Holy Spirit was given to the Samaritan believers and the ban that had kept the Jews and Samaritans apart for centuries was lifted by the admittance of the believing Samaritans into Christian fellowship, at the same time he most solemnly bound the sins of Simon Magus. Both actions were ratified in heaven.

In Matthew 18. 18 the binding comes first in contrast to John 20. 23. Here it is the church sphere, and has in view those already in the church (verse 18). The obdurate and unrepentant brother (verse 18) is to be treated as “outside” by the one whom he has trespassed against, by the judgment of the church, or assembly, which acts under the authority of the Lord, whose presence is in the midst (verse 20); and until grace produced repentance in him this would continue; when he did repent he would be loosed from that judgment.

1 Cor. 5 and 2 Cor. 2 give an even more extreme example of this authority first to bind, and loose again when the discipline had produced the desired result. Here we have the assembly on earth carrying out the will of heaven, where their action is ratified; and this is definitely *administrative* action, both in retaining and remitting, and abides to this day. Two or three gathered together in the Lord’s Name have the authority in that Name to put away from among themselves one who has proved himself unfit for Christian fellowship.

In John 20. 23 the remittance of sins is put first, which leads us to the conclusion that its primary interpretation has a wider outlook than those already "within" (1 Cor. 5. 12). It seems to contemplate an administration of grace, specially apostolic in character, to the world. The apostles were specially chosen and sent forth of the Lord to represent Him, as He had represented His Father (verse 21); for this He breathed His own Spirit into them, He gave them the Holy Ghost (verse 22). They then had to go forth as ambassadors for Christ, praying men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; their words were a savour of death unto death in them that perished, and of life unto life in them that were saved (2 Cor. 2), and a sure proof that men were of God was they heard the apostles (1 John 4. 6). They belonged to the inauguration of the gospel dispensation and the beginning of the church on earth, of which the Apostles and the Holy-Ghost-inspired prophets were the foundation.

Those who believed the apostolic word were baptized by them and received into their company; they were "added to the church," "added to the Lord," and by thus receiving them the apostles released them from the old position in which they had stood, whether they were Jews, guilty of the murder of their Messiah, or Gentiles, who had spent their lives in the worship of demons. This was administrative, of course, and had to do with earth and the changed position and new fellowship in which the forgiven ones stood. As to the eternal forgiveness of sins, and the setting of a soul in true relations with God, which the gospel proclaims, not even an apostle could do that, for who can forgive sins but God alone?

It has been suggested that John 20. 23 would apply to evangelists going forth to-day with the gospel. We should not care to apply it to them except in a modified way. Luke's Gospel 24. 46, 47 gives their abiding commission.

"Gospel Preachers and the New Birth."

In December, 1937, issue of "Scripture Truth" there appeared an article on the New Birth. Having the knowledge of the truth set forth therein, could one intelligently use the well-known text "Ye must be born again" as the basis for an address in the Gospel meeting?—BELFAST.

WE know of no more powerful text for arousing men to their true condition before God, and preparing them for the blessing of the gospel, than "Ye must be born again." It brings to an end all hopes in reformation and all trust in self-righteousness. It was George Whitfield's great text, and men like Spurgeon and Moody made good use of it. It is true that no man can bring about the new birth in his own soul, nevertheless the necessity of it must be pressed, and especially in the cases of those who like Nicodemus

have a religion and "good works" in which they falsely rest.

The preacher will be wise if he does not attempt an explanation; he cannot explain it. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, *but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit,*" John 3. 8. But the necessity must be preached, and the effect of it can be described. Those who are born again have no hope except in the only-begotten Son of God,

whom God gave in His great love for men, and who, as the Son of Man was lifted up and suffered as our

substitute and representative that we should not perish but have everlasting life, verses, 14—16.

The Cloud of Witnesses.

It was suggested at our Bible meeting a few nights ago that the words "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," Hebrews 12. 1, might mean that the departed saints of Hebrews 11 were witnessing our efforts in the heavenly race. Also that the joy that was set before the Lord, verse 2, was the joy of the Father's approval.—SOMERSET.

THese witnesses of Hebrews 11, are not witnessing our efforts in the heavenly race, but are witnesses to the power of faith in God and the triumphs that such faith gains over all obstacles. By faith they overcame and proved that God is ever faithful to His word. Their exploits are recorded to encourage us to endure and to faint not, we shall be tested in our day as they were in theirs, but faith brings God in and triumphs in the test. Abraham's God is ours. But even though we gain great encouragement as we consider them we must look away from them

unto Jesus. These heroes of Old Testament story were tested and triumphed each of them in one test, but in Jesus we see faith in its completeness, He was tested in every way and never failed; He trod the whole path of faith from the beginning to the end of it, we learn it all in Him and gain strength from Him to follow and endure.

The joy that was set before Him would cover all the results of His path of faith which included the cross.

"Wherefore did ye Doubt?"

ONE of Luther's friends visited him to complain of the trials through which he passed and of the way the devil buffeted him. Said Luther to him, "The devil can do that in a masterly way, otherwise he would be no devil. But you come to me, dear friend, and believe that I can surely comfort you through God's Word, and that is good. But if you expect good from me, *what may you not expect from Christ who died for you?* Look up to Him who is ten thousand times better than I."

Luther himself was often tempted and cast down. On one such occasion his good friend Dr. Pommer said, "Our Lord in heaven is looking down and doubtless thinking, 'What shall I do with this man, Luther? I

have poured My mercies upon him and given him many gifts and much grace, and yet he will despair of My goodness?'" Dr. Pommer intended the words to be a rebuke, but they came to Luther as a great and glorious comfort.

So many and great have been the mercies of God to us in the past, that is it right that we should doubt Him now? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and will He fail us now? He has carried on His own work from the beginning, we have no need to doubt His ability to still maintain it.

“We walk by faith, not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5.
W.B.D.—y

Seek not to limit the Lord
Nor weigh by your weakness His power;
Vision can never be truth
In a dark or disheartening hour.

Even of time and of sense
The fabric is coloured as viewed
With the prejudiced eye of the self
Or the lenses of feeling and mood.

Lean on the Lord and His strength;
Study the Word, and BELIEVE;
Faith is the measure, not sight,
And the Spirit can never deceive.

The wealth of His power in grace
Has more than is visible wrought;
His love is more deep than you know,
And His purpose more wide than your thought.

When a man builds a house or a ship he takes heed that no beam be strained; so God never overtaxes our faith, He knows our frame. He is faithful and will not suffer the testing to be greater than the faith.

To be strong in faith two things are needful—a very low esteem of ourselves, and a very high esteem of Christ.

Humility promotes fellowship, pride produces division.

There is this difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit: in bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit you are always happy, whereas, in doing the work of the flesh there is always bitterness. Even if you are successful in what you aim at, it leaves a taint of its own bitterness behind it.

Confidence.

“My spirit on Thy care,
Blest Saviour, I recline,
Thou wilt not leave me to despair
For Thou art Love Divine.

“Whate’er events betide,
Thy will they all perform;
Safe on Thy breast my head I hide,
Nor fear the coming storm.

“In Thee I place my trust,
On Thee I calmly rest,
I know Thee good, I know Thee
just,
And count Thy choice the best.

“Let good or ill betide,
It must be good for me;
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee.”

“THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.”

J. T. Mawson.

No. 2. The Gospel of John. Chapter 20.

THE first day of the week was the end of Mary Magdalene's darkness and sorrow for it brought back her Lord alive from the dead, and gave her “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” We are not surprised that with joy and wonder she fell down before Him to embrace the nail-pierced feet, but why did He say to her, “Touch Me not?” Many suggestions have been made as to the meaning of these strange words. We believe that the true interpretation is that the truth of John's Gospel carries us outside and beyond the range of sight and sense into the region of faith. Mary had believed that the Lord was the Messiah of Israel, on this level her links with Him had been earthly and a matter of sight. She had known Him “after the flesh” which means in limited earthly circumstances, and according to the old creation, but she had to learn, as we have to learn that, “though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know Him no more,” 2 Corinthians 5. 17. The resurrection of our Lord was the beginning of a new creation, which as far exceeds the old, even at its best, as heaven is higher than earth, and she had henceforward to know the Lord not only as the Son of David, and the Conqueror and Master of death but as ascended to His Father, the centre of heaven and the object of the Father's pleasure there, the Father's well-beloved Son.

Mary and all the disciples had hoped to see Him take the throne of David; they would have been contented to have seen Him crowned

with Israel's crown, for their thoughts and hopes had not reached higher than that, but the Father had something greater than that for Him, even the fulfilment of eternal counsels. He must ascend to His Father's throne, the only place in the universe worthy of Him who had accomplished all the Father's will. Would then these greatly loved disciples be losers by having their earthly hopes disappointed? Most certainly not. Nothing could separate them from His love, He would carry their hearts with Him where He was going and by faith and the Holy Spirit, who was to come upon them and dwell in them, they would have part with Him in that heavenly home to which He was about to ascend, and that not as disciples merely, or as willing subjects in a glorious kingdom, but as His brethren, which was a new and spiritual relationship for them, a relationship more intimate and glorious than that in which the angels stood to the Lord.

But this being so why should He have allowed the women to hold Him by the feet immediately after this, as we read they did in Matthew 28? The answer is that the design of Matthew's Gospel is different to that of John's. Each is perfect in its place. Matthew shews us the Lord as Israel's King. “Where is He that is born King of the Jews?” is the first question in it. In the last chapter there is no mention of the ascension, the Lord is there with the godly remnant of Israel, representing those who in a day yet to be will go and disciple all nations in His risen power and conscious of His presence

with them. Jewish hopes have been suspended for the time being and heavenly hopes have taken their place, that is John's Gospel, but these hopes of Israel are to be restored and realised according to the Scriptures, and His fame carried by His messengers from among the Jews to all nations under heaven, that is Matthew's Gospel.

If Mary was the first of the Lord's followers to learn that the hopes they had entertained were not at that time to be realised she was the first to hear of the new relationship which was the result of His death and resurrection. He had said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," chap. 12. 24. He was the Corn of Wheat, and His disciples and all who have believed on Him are the *much fruit*, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren," Hebrews 2; and Mary was chosen to carry the news of this to those whom it concerned. Who else could have done it? The disciples were not there to be sent, but Mary was there, a vessel meet for the Master's use, and how wonderful was the message He committed to her. "Go unto My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father, to My God, and your God."

We must not suppose that Mary understood the meaning of the message; not until the Holy Spirit came to lead those whom He indwells into all the truth would any understand it, but that did not diminish the honour that the Lord put upon her, an honour which shewed how He appreciates the affection that can be satisfied with nothing but Himself.

And eagerly and well she carried out her commission; like the man born blind of chapter 9, whose testimony was, "One thing I know," she carried with her a testimony that no unbelief could shake, for she had seen the Lord and heard His voice.

As a result of her service the disciples gathered together at their secret rendezvous in the evening of the day. Men of little faith they were, and the prey to misgivings and unbelief, with the doors closed and barred for fear of the Jews. It may be that the memory of their faithlessness kept them back from going to seek their Lord, and the doubt as to how He would treat them added to their perplexity, but while they talked "came Jesus and stood in the midst." The barred doors did not keep Him out. Nothing could do that, they were His first and chief thought on that first day of the week. He might have gone to the high priest and the rulers of the Jews and convicted them of their great crime in rejecting Him and so have vindicated His Name, but He did not. He might have asked of His Father, and He would have given Him the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psalm 2), but He did not, those Galilean fishermen were more to Him than the vindication of His Name, or crowns and kingdoms, they were the men that His Father had given Him out of the world (chap. 17), they were His brethren, and having loved them He loved them to the end. .

"He stood in the midst," and His presence with them changed everything. They may have been despicable before in their unbelief and terror, and not the sort of men that any leader would be proud of, or such

as a military commander would have chosen for soldiers, but now, in the sight of the angels in heaven at least, they were the most august company on earth. The Lord, the risen Lord, the Lord of glory stood in the midst of them, He claimed them as His own, He had said of them "My brethren." They were His assembly, the nucleus of His church, and they represented all who afterwards should believe on His Name. Then and there Psalm 22. 22 and Hebrews 2. 12 was fulfilled. "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." He sings because He is triumphant and He sings with joy because He possesses now beyond all challenge those His Father had given Him, His blood-bought brethren, but greatest of all He is now able to effectually reveal to them the meaning of the Father's Name.

We cannot pass this great first day of the week scene with haste. It has much to teach us. The first chapter of our Gospel tells us, that "He was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. He came to His own and His own received Him not." "He was cut off and had nothing" as the old prophet prophesied of Him. Instead of the throne of David He was nailed to a felon's cross, instead of the world's homage He was despised and rejected by men! Think of the Lord of glory crucified, and that by the princes of this world (1 Corinthians 2)! But now He stood in the midst of His own. He held territory won from this present evil world and its god and prince, who is the devil and Satan. He was supreme in that assembly, every heart there rendered Him willing homage: they were glad when they saw the *Lord*, and as never before those men realised the

meaning of that great title. This is what He had called in anticipation "My church." It abides, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, but the chiefest joy of those who know its blessedness lies in the fact that He now has His own circle, "His own which are in the world," where His will is everything, His word is treasured, His Name magnified, His love known and His Father's Name declared.

To gain this territory He had to pass through Gethsemane's agony and the unparalleled woe of Golgotha; it was the only way to deliver His own from the bondage of sin, the world and Satan; if they were to be forgiven and sanctified it was necessary that He should bear their sins in His own body on the tree and endure the just judgment of God that those sins deserved. He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father, Galatians 1. 4.

The subject is of such importance both to the Lord and to us that we must pursue it. What a wonderful gathering that must have been: the Jew shut out and the Lord shut in with His own. There would be no jarring note there, no fleshly ambition, no place for the world. Sometimes we sing of what heaven will be.

"Every knee to Jesus bending
All the mind in heaven is one."

We see a foretaste of this in that "first day of the week" gathering. Those men whom He called His own were not of the world. He had said to His Father, "I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world," chap. 17. 14. They had been of the

world but He had chosen them out of it (chap. 15. 19), and by His death He had delivered them from it and they were one with Him, and His joy in being in the midst of them was infinitely greater than theirs could be in having Him there. And He has not changed, He loves His own as much to-day as He loved those disciples on that first day of the week, but how are we responding to His great and changeless love? That is a fair question, surely? As we consider that first assembly meeting do we know anything comparable to it to-day?

Let us consider a contrast to that holy scene that should move us to heart-searching and indignation, yes, and to shame. It is found in the address to the church of the Laodiceans, Revelation 3. 14—22, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me." Instead of being shut in with His loved brethren, He is shut out of this church—shut out! and yet standing at the door and knocking! Think of the tragedy of that! Think of the sorrow of heart of Him who stands outside, and think of the delusion and the poverty of those who have shut Him out. A "Christian" assembly without Christ, and deaf to His appeal of love. What had happened? the Jew at first so rigorously excluded had got in. "Beware," the Lord had said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." They had not heeded that warning

and the Pharisees had got in with his ceremonies and ritual, he had set up his standard within that sacred enclosure, and formulated his rules and regulations, and the Sadducee had got in with his rationalism and materialism, and Christ and His authority had been forced out and the door shut on Him that ought to have been shut upon the Jew. The fear of the Jew is a wholesome fear and to be cultivated, especially as the spirit of him is in everyone of us. And by the Jew I do not mean the race of Israel, but that spirit that tends to legality and bondage and boasts in an ecclesiastical standing without a corresponding moral condition. And this backslidden church boasted, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," and knew not that it was wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind and naked.

We turn back to this first assembly meeting, this pattern of what every assembly meeting should be, for though the Lord is now ascended to His Father He has not forgotten those whom He has left in the world, and we have His own words "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them," Matthew 18. 20. And the Holy Spirit is with all such to make the presence of the Lord as real to the faith and affection of His saints as it was to those disciples on that first day of the week.

(To be continued).

The preacher who leaves out of His preaching the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, preaches but half a gospel.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A. J. Pollock.

(Continued)

I COR. 11. 27—34 tells us that the Lord's Supper demands on the part of those, who partake of it, that they should be living consistent Christian lives. It is true that what gives us fitness to partake of the Supper is the atoning death of Christ. It sets forth the communion of His body and His blood. Whilst that gives to every believer fitness, it is very clear that there should be a corresponding practical fitness in our lives. There is such a thing as eating and drinking unworthily. I might be found going with the world and worldly amusements, and worldly companions during the week, and be found at the breaking of bread on the Lord's day morning. This would be eating and drinking unworthily. Suppose a son or daughter companied with friends, who spoke slightly of their parents, and slandered their characters, and the son and daughter heard all this without protest, and laughed at the expense of their parents behind their backs, do you think it would be a consistent thing to eat at their table, and be receiving their loving care?

What, then, is the remedy when conscience accuses one of eating and drinking unworthily? Scripture tells us. Honest self-examination. It does not say, Examine yourself and stay away, absent yourself. No, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." That means whatever is unworthy in our conduct has to be judged in the presence of the Lord, put aside, and the way is then open to continue the remembrance of the Lord.

1 Cor. 11. 27—34, goes on to show how holy is the remembrance of our Lord. It shows how possible it is for a believer to be so slack in his Christian conduct, so inconsistent with the place he takes, that the Lord will come in in discipline. We read because of eating and drinking unworthily, "for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (verse 30). We cannot do as we like in the holy things of God. How solemn to be laid aside, and still more solemn is it to be removed from the place of testimony by death, even if it meant being taken to be with the Lord. No Scripture shines more clearly as to the assurance of salvation for the believer than this. The government of God can go to the extreme limit of removing a backsliding Christian from the earth, his testimony on earth being so bad that he cannot be trusted to remain on the earth any longer, and yet removed to *HEAVEN*. So we are assured, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (verses 31, 32).

"Not . . . condemned with the world," saved by the atoning work of Christ and chosen by the sovereignty of a God of infinite love. How wonderful! Yet the appeal comes to us, that we should live lives consistent with the holy place we have been brought into.

But things may be so flagrant that the assembly must deal with the evil and put the offender out of the meet-

ing. 1 Cor. 5 tells us of a case of shameful immorality. The Apostle Paul tells the believers that the way to deal with this evil is to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (verse 13).

However such stern and necessary discipline has not to be carried out with harshness and callousness. The Corinthian saints, converted recently out of paganism with its shocking laxity of morals, were not sufficiently aware of the holiness of God's house, and were treating the grievous sin of one of them as if it meant little. However the letter of Paul opened their eyes to the heinousness of the sin in their midst, and how a little leaven leavens the whole lump. To put them in the place morally where they were as before God on the ground of the work of Christ on the cross, it was necessary to clear themselves of this evil. At the same time the discipline was "for the destruction of the flesh, and that the spirit may be saved in the day of Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 5. 5). In short, the discipline had recovery in view.

That the instructions of Paul bore fruit is evident from his second letter to them. We read how they sorrowed after a godly sort, how they cleared themselves, with what zeal they acted (2 Cor. 7. 11). Not only so, but evidently the sinning brother had been reached by the discipline, and was now ready to be restored to the assembly. The saints are exhorted to forgive him, comfort him, and confirm their love to him (2 Cor. 2. 7, 8).

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How admirable is the wisdom of Holy Scripture. It might be that brethren of a hard spirit, with a liking for sitting on the judgment seat, might ex-communicate saints for

shortcomings, that call for patience and godly care, and not for ex-communication. For instance, we are told to "warn them that are unruly" (1 Thess. 5. 14), not ex-communicate them. Again we read, "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16. 17). It does not say ex-communicate, but avoid them. Evidently things had not ripened to that extent. How slow the Spirit of God is to take drastic action, but would seek that the saints should act lovingly, patiently and yet faithfully with evil in their midst.

Recovery takes spiritual condition. Paul exhorts, "Brethren if one be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of MEEKNESS; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6. 6). A spiritual person is not necessarily one with much knowledge of the Scriptures, but one who is governed by the Spirit of God, and exhibits the marks of the Spirit of God in his spirit, such as affection for the erring one, the feeling that the flesh is no better in him than in the erring brother and he might be tempted, concern for the holiness of God's house, above all MEEKNESS is emphasised.

1 Cor. 5. 11 gives a list of those who are unfit to remain in outward Christian fellowship, and whose place is outside. Fornicators, the covetous, idolators, railers, drunkards, extortioners. There is the list. What a mercy we are not left without definite instructions in these solemn matters.

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There remains one solemn instruction, all the more notable because it

is contained in John's second pastoral letter, and addressed to a sister in the Lord and her children, who evidently were Christians, and walking in the truth.

We read these solemn words, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed, is a partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John verses 9—11).

Here it is not moral turpitude as in 1 Cor. 5, but doctrines subversive of the Person of our Lord and destructive of Christianity. Not only is the person, who advocates such doc-

trines, to be refused, but the one that bids him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds. To allow him into your own home would constitute the one who did so a partaker of his evil deeds.

Thank God whether it be serious evil doctrine subversive of Christianity or moral turpitude, the Scriptures give us clear teaching how we should act.

May the Lord give us to prize more than ever the privilege of response of affection to our Lord in answering the desire of His heart that we should remember Him in the breaking of the bread and drinking of the cup. Finally we are thus privileged "TILL HE COME." How soon our last privilege of this nature may come. Surely the coming of our Lord draweth nigh.

Oh what will be the day when won at last
The last long weary battle, we shall come
To those eternal gates the King hath passed,
Returning from our exile to our "Home."

For those who Serve.

Remember that that which God is most set for Satan will most oppose.

No servant can lead another beyond the measure of his own grace. The Spirit honours the word spoken where it has been effectual in the speaker.

If you are near the heart of Christ and in communion with Him you could not get alongside a sinner without telling him of a Saviour, or a saint without telling him of Christ, his life in heaven.

Do not be afraid of God's discipline. You will need it if you are to be used by Him.

You can only plead with God as you know Christ. He alone is the channel by which God can bless. The power of intercession is a great thing to the true servant of God.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

T. Oliver.

“**S**EE! I am with you alway unto the end of the world (age)” (Matthew 28. 20, German translation). “Our faith is the victory which overcomes the world” (1 John 5. 4, German translation). “But, of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you” (1 Thess. 5. 1).

Some time ago I was standing in one of the largest squares in Berlin looking up at the Dom Kirche, the large Lutheran Church. As I contemplated the gross secularism of that great city of four million people which had officially repudiated God, I was somewhat depressed. Presently, my eye lighted on the two texts (first mentioned above) displayed conspicuously on the facade of the church. My depression was instantly dispelled! One would seek to transmit the impression conveyed.

The Apostle in writing to the Thessalonians referred to the times (i.e., the duration) and the seasons (i.e. the characteristics of the period until the Lord's return). He did not require to occupy time in the matter of detail, because they had an accurate understanding of the significance of both the duration and characteristics of the period.

The first text on the Berlin church directs attention to the duration of the age. There has not been a moment in the whole period when the Christian could not count on the Lord's presence with him, because in the moment before the Lord ascended, He said “See I am with you alway,” i.e., unbroken continuity. Then the second text occupies us with the characteristics. Our faith is the means of victory over the

world in its multitudinous phases, but yet partaking of one character, i.e., shutting God out. The world may shut God out in a straightforward way as exemplified in Germany, or it may do so in the subtler way in vogue in this country. But whatever may be the phase of its action there is only one agency on which the Christian can rely to overcome it, i.e., his personal faith.

Six hundred years before the first advent of Christ as described by Habakkuk the prophet, times were very bad. Wickedness was at a premium and righteousness at a discount in human affairs. The Chaldean invasion was a far more terrible scourge that Hitlerism or any other of the dictatorial enemies which afflict civilisation to-day. Habakkuk was greatly perturbed at the apparent triumph of evil over good. He cried to the Lord for enlightenment. He got a wonderful view of the day of the Lord and of the true path for His people in the intervening period and so came to know the secret of how to be an overcomer in very adverse circumstances, viz., “the just shall live by his personal faith”!

However, before God can bring affairs to a climax, His people must be dissociated from pride and constrained to walk in His ways, while the nations must fill up their cup of sin and apostasy and become ready for judgment. Although primarily the prophecy of Habakkuk relates to the immediate judgment on the Israelites, it undoubtedly also looks on to the future, i.e., after the church will have been caught up to heaven. God will then work in the hearts of the scattered children of Israel bringing them to repentance and ultimately

back to the promised land. Then they will cry out to the Lord as they will see the rising flood tide of evil and the power of the enemy. That God should allow their oppression is an enigma to reason, but they will learn that their hard discipline is in view of lasting blessing! God is about to intervene to accomplish the work of establishing a universe of blessing filled and ruled by Christ, that for which He has been working through all the ages.

In all this there is a lesson for the Christian in the interval of grace between the two dispensations to which reference has been made. In spite of the unfaithfulness, the strife and the anti-Christian doctrines propagated in what bears Christ's name, faith connects our hearts with the world to come, where everything that has breath will praise the Lord. There is a striking parallel between the days of Habakkuk and our own day. Secular matters dominate everything on the surface, and what purports to be of God is too often mixed up with worldliness in all its phases. There is a general apathy as to the claims of Christ. The divisions amongst God's people are a sad contradiction to the harmony which is normally associated with His name.

True Christianity involves a heavenly calling, but that has its bearing on earthly relationships, so that we should be walking in all lowliness (as to ourselves) and meekness (as to others), with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

But we need not be cast down, because God is about to intervene and the enemy will be utterly defeated. Faith connects us with a brighter day, in spite of all around which would seem to cast a blight upon our hope. The conclusion of the prophecy of Habakkuk is a magnificent hymn of praise, consequent on the prayer, "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years." He could rejoice in the Lord, in the God of his salvation. His feet were like those of the hind springing forward to the age of glory and joy, although there was complete failure of crops and flocks and everything on which the heart could naturally rest. The prophecy ends on the top note of praise with reference to the chief singer on his stringed instruments (Neginoth) as a contrast to the prayer in the beginning of the chapter upon Shigionoth which was a wind instrument of variable tunes implying a good deal of blowing with little music.

Men may shut us out from their fellowship, slanderous tongues may separate us from friends. The devil and men may build a wall around us and imprison us from many a joy and fair prospect, but there is one thing they cannot do—they cannot put a roof on the prison to keep out the sweet influences from above, or hinder us from looking up to our God, from whose love none can separate us.

We shall not lose the Holy Ghost by being in glory; loss indeed that would be.

SLIPPING AWAY.

J. T. Mawson.

"For this reason we should give heed more abundantly to the things we have heard, lest in any way we should SLIP AWAY" (Hebrews 2. 1, New Translation).

"Lest haply we DRIFT AWAY from them" (Revised Version).

THESE is a saying, it has appeared in writings for many years, and we have heard it often in public addresses; it is: "A hundred years ago the truth was recovered for us." With the greatest respect to those who use it, I suggest that it is one of those sayings that need revision, for it may be extremely misleading. The oftener it is repeated the larger the US may appear in our eyes, until the truth becomes secondary to the US, and the US becomes the centre round which the truth revolves. The fact is the truth never needed to be recovered for anybody, it was never lost; it has always been there, in Christ, in the Spirit, in the Word of God. The truth stands for ever sure. But it has been the way from the beginning for men to slip away from the truth. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews knew this well, hence his warning to us to take heed lest we should slip away. The Old Testament is a history of truth revealed and of men of God rejoicing in it for awhile and then slipping away from it, and God in His mercy recalling them to it and again the drift. We of this favoured church period have been no better in this respect than those of other dispensations, and it is a wholesome thing to realise and confess this, for no sooner do we cease to give heed abundantly to the things that we have heard than we begin to slip away. There is the continual need of recall and recovery to the truth, it was never more needed than to-day—Remember, Repent, Return.

In this connection there is another evil of which we need to be aware; it is mistaking *the effect of the truth* in those who have gone before us for the truth itself, and of imitating or endeavouring to perpetuate the effect of the truth, instead of giving abundant heed to the truth itself. We should rejoice whenever we see the truth put into practice and be encouraged by it, as we rejoice and are encouraged by the triumphs of faith recorded in Hebrews 11; but in none of those worthies was faith seen in its completeness and perfection, for this we must look off steadfastly to Jesus, and even so in no man or body of men has the truth been fully manifested, even in the best of them the effect might have been greater, there is only one perfect standard, only One could say "I am . . . the Truth." We must fix our attention on Him, there is failure everywhere else.

We might use the well-known illustration of the schoolboy's copy book. The head line is copper plate, it is perfect. The boy appreciates this and he does his best under its influence, and his copy is quite commendable. But if his copy of the headline becomes his standard his writing will deteriorate until at the foot of the page there will be little resemblance between the headline and his writing. If we set up someone else's copy of the truth as our standard there must of necessity be serious deterioration. And this is done when tradition, precedent, the judgment of some able teacher, liv-

ing or dead, or any group of men becomes our standard and guide in our Christian life and communion, or in any difficulty or crisis. We cease to be held by the pure perfect Word of God, we slip away, and sects and parties, strife and discord are the sure result. Our safety lies in, "What saith the Lord?" and "It is written."

When spiritual life declines and there is this slipping away, almost unconsciously the tradition of the elders becomes important, rules and regulations are pressed in order that an outward and uniform standard of conduct might be maintained, but while that may satisfy the ecclesiastical mind there is nothing in that for God and it tends to the bondage of the conscience and soul; the fear of man takes the place of the fear of God and what others may say to simple subjection to His Holy Word. The last chapter of the church's history on earth is being written, we have reached the foot of the page, and the contrast between that which we see and that which is set before us in the Word of God is saddening to every one who can discern it. Do we

long for recovery? It can only come to us as we are delivered from the trammels of every false standard; as we look off from the effect of the truth in others and cease to make their words and ways our rule and return to the truth itself. Our Lord and Leader has not changed or failed. See how He presents Himself to the last three of the seven churches (Rev. 3), "These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars." "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David." These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Brethren, it would be a vain thing to set to work to imitate the effect of the truth in others, but we can humbly seek to be recovered to the truth that produced revivals in the past. The more we consider what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 2 and 3) the more we feel the need of the urgent call to remember and repent, repeated so often in those messages of the Lord to the Churches.

"Neither Death."

"I am persuaded that neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8).

HOW beautifully this thought contrasts with the saddest aspect of the power of death in our human experience! He is Death the Separater, who unclasps our hands from the closest, dearest grasp, and divides asunder joints and marrow, and parts soul and body, and withdraws us from all our habitude and associations and occupations, and loosens every bond of society and concord, and hails us away into a

lonely land. But there is one bond which his "abhorred shears" cannot cut. Their edge is turned on IT. One Hand holds us in a grasp which the fleshless fingers of Death in vain strive to loosen. The separater becomes the uniter; he rends us apart from the world that he may bring us into the very home of our God. The love filtered by drops on us in life is poured upon us in a flood in death.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

(Continued)

(Chapters 22 and 23).

FROM verse 15 the wickedness of the enemies of the Lord came definitely to the fore, they took counsel to entangle Him in His talk. They were as subtle as they were wicked, these Pharisees, and their uniting with the Herodians shewed that their hatred of Christ overrode all political enmity. Their question was cunningly planned, it was calculated to put the Lord in opposition to Caesar and so into collision with the civil authority; or else set the people against Him who hated Caesar's yoke. But a greater than Solomon is here, and in one short sentence He goes to the root of the matter, exposes the true condition of the nation, and puts them to silence. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Had they owned God's supreme claim and yielded themselves to His holy will they never would have been under the Roman yoke.

The same day came the Sadducees, and their question went beyond life in this world to resurrection and the life beyond death. We are thankful that they were allowed to bring forward their cavils, and had the Lord's answer been understood the denial of the resurrection could not have found an entrance into the Corinthian Assembly (see 1 Corinthians 15). On another occasion He had said, "I am the resurrection and the life," here He goes beyond the question of the Sadducees and establishes the truth of the immortality of the soul as well as resurrection and life in the resurrection world. As He had exposed the Pharisees so now He

lays bare the ignorance and folly of the Sadducees. He honoured the Word of God, which they did not know; and the power of God which shews itself in resurrection when all man's power is laid low in death, and in a few words described life in the glorified state. Then by the reference to Exodus 3, He proves the immortality of the soul and shews that all, even in the unclothed state, live unto God. How full of comfort this is, and how deeply thankful we are that in meeting the opposition of His foes He brought out the full truth for faith to rest upon.

The Pharisees gathered together and put forward one of their number, a lawyer, determined to find some way of overthrowing Him whose presence in grace among them ought to have laid them prostrate at His feet. Again the Lord's answer goes beyond the question and brings in both tables of the law; first that which is due to God and then our obligation to our fellow men. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two hang all the law and the prophets."

Having silenced each class the Lord puts forth His question which at first seemed easy to meet, but in reality was beyond the reach of any of His opponents. His reference to Psalm 110 could but close the mouths of all. The Psalm was known and held by these men to be

Messianic but they would not own their Messiah. When He asked them concerning His servant John (chap. 21. 29) they would not own that John's ministry was from heaven nor, because of their fear of the people dared they deny it. Here the very truth that formed part of their Rabbinical creed condemned and closed their mouths. Unhappy miserable and apostate, they were dumb, condemned but not subdued after all their efforts to condemn the Lord of glory. That David's Son is David's Lord hangs upon the mystery of the Incarnation and like His word from the glory in Revelation 22: 16, "I am the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star." It shews Him in divine human Personality as Lord of all.

Matthew 23. The stern words of this chapter leave little to be said by way of comment. Having met all their questions and put His own which they could not answer the Lord Himself has the last word. It is peculiarly solemn, searching and penetrating and like the flaming sword of old it turns every way as guarding all that was of God in His Person and displaying supreme authority in Him on whom they were ready to pour out all the hatred of their hearts. Judgment is a necessity of the moral nature of God and being fully revealed there is of necessity an answer in the creation to all that He is as revealed. The lion has roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? The Lord God hath sworn by Himself, saith the Lord the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city. Amos 3. 8; 6. 8.

The Lord addresses the people in

verses 1—12. Moses' seat is occupied by the Scribes and the Pharisees: all things therefore, whatever they may tell you, do and keep. But do not after their works, for they say and do not, but bind burdens hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of men, but will not move them with their finger. In their ostentation and love of pre-eminence they scruple not to use the legal code to crush the people. Coming back to the law of His Kingdom the Lord asserts that great truth that he that will be greatest must be servant of all.

From verse 13 to 36 He addresses the leaders and in language unsurpassed for solemn denunciation pronounces eight woes of judgment upon them. They shut the kingdom of heaven against men; they were callous; devouring widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers; they were blind and were completely void of the sense of what was sacred whether the temple, the altar or heaven itself. With an exterior of sanctity that compelled the servile homage of their followers they shew themselves to be the children of their fathers by perpetuating their guilt. Verses 34 to 36 mark the transition of thought to the people in general and prepares for His lament over Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" And then with what pathos and distress of heart:—"Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Before proceeding to the prophetic

sketch of the next two chapters (chapters 24, 25) we would reflect upon the glory of the Lord as seen in what has passed before us. The royal entry right from the Jordan through Jericho may well remind us of the nation's entrance upon their inheritance in earlier days. Then acclaimed by the people on the way up to the city and by the children in the Temple the blessed One broke down in sadness. Well He knew that the words of Psalm 118 sung by the people must be used by Himself against them (comp. chap. 21. 9; 23. 39; Luke 19. 41). It was the last solemn test of the nation during His life here below and it was in every way complete.

To the opened eye He was there in full mediatorial capacity making known the heart of God on man's behalf for grace and blessing. Every movement pre-supposes that both God and Man are there in One Person and consequently depicts Deity shining through the Human Veil. Omnipotence, Omniscience, Prescience in effulgence and refulgence everywhere are seen yet withal a Man: a gracious tender Man whose dignity combined with lowliness, greatness with simplicity and was such as to set Him forth in a holy refinement which was so far beyond others as to be difficult to understand. One Who honours Scripture fulfils Scripture while He is the blessed centre around which the light of the whole sacred Volume radiates.

He does what He does because He is what He is and in doing what He does shews Who He is. He tells and foretells because He both knows and foreknows, and does these because He is Who He is. "Behold the former things are come to pass, and new

things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." He opens up the future both for blessing and for judgment, all hanging upon Himself as the divine Centre of the whole moral arena.

In the parable of the King's son he anticipates the governmental judgment on Israel, the refusal of God's claims in Christendom later while the fulness of the gospel is supposed all the time. The parable indeed lays the ground for the expansion that comes out in the scheme of prophecy in the second sermon on the mount which is recorded in chapters 24, 26. He is moving in an atmosphere of murder but no man can take His life from Him: yea, rather, He had come there to lay it down. But before doing so all must come under His eye to be measured by His standard and exposed in the light of the perfect judgment of Him whose moral measures are divinely perfect.

He claimed the Messianic rights as being the perfect answer to every divine prediction of God's Anointed and at the same time brought to the most delicate adjustment the wider claims of all mankind. Although the difference between Jew and Gentile was great He stood in relation to both and at the same moment was available as a Saviour for all, and indeed He stood as Son of God beyond each, Who would build His assembly which brings in another company taken out from both Jew and Gentile which would be for His own eternal delight.

What a glorious Person for our contemplation, adoration and praise is the Lord Jesus Christ. There is mystery, majesty, magnitude and depths that command and control us; yea that overwhelm yet draw us;

draw us on to richer strains of joy and praise. Jesus Lord we can but prostrate our souls at Thy feet in holy fervour and profound amazement, Thou Who was rich but for our sakes became poor that we through Thy poverty might become rich. Thou hast enriched our souls for eternity and put us under a debt we can never pay but we shall live to serve and

adore throughout that eternity where God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit shall shine in light divine and glory never failing.

“For ever our still wondering eyes shall o’er His beauties rove; to endless ages we’ll adore the riches of His love.”

CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS.

J.N.D.

I accept as the general rule, than any special call of God apart, Christians should abide in the calling wherein they are called. This is only the place of their walk, its motives and character are behind. These are summed up in one word—*Christ*. He is at once the life and the object or motive of life in us, giving thus its character to our walk. “To me,” says the apostle, “to live is Christ” (Phil. 1. 21). There are two great parts of divine life, of which *devotedness* is one.

As to reward, *as motive* or merit, it is clear any such thought destroys the whole truth of *devotedness*, because there is no love in it.

It (*devotedness*) is not the benevolence of nature, but the activity of divine love in the new man.

All true *devotedness*, then, is the action of divine love in the redeemed, through the Holy Ghost in them.

There may be natural benevolence clothed with a fairer name, and irritated if it be not accepted for its own sake.

We long to hear Thy voice
 To see Thee face to face,
 To share Thy crown and glory then
 As now we share Thy grace.
 Should not the loving bride
 The absent Bridegroom mourn?
 Should she not wear the garb of
 grief
 Until her Lord return?
 Come, then, Lord Jesus, Come!

The whole creation groans
 And waits to hear the voice
 That shall restore her comeliness
 And make her wastes rejoice.
 Come, Lord, and wipe away
 The curse, the sin, the stain,
 And make this blighted world of
 woe,
 Thine own fair world again,
 Come, then, Lord Jesus, come!

SEPARATION FROM EVIL.

“Let every one who names the Name of the Lord, withdraw from iniquity” (2 Timothy 2. 19, J.N.D.’s N.T.).

HERE is an imperative word, for the Lord whose Name we bear is *the Holy and the True*, and to bind His Name with iniquity would be equal to blasphemy. It is a word that cannot be ignored by those who would be faithful to Him, and who would enter into the joy of His approval in their service. It is a call to personal holiness and separation from the world, and it demands separation from those who while professing to serve Him deny the great truths as to His Person and work, and from every religious system or organisation in which His supreme rights are denied Him. But if such separation is not to descend into a rigid and obnoxious Pharisaism it must not be separation from evil merely but separation unto Him. “They turned *to God* from idols.”

No one who professes the Lord’s Name is exempted from this call. If I met a converted Jew who wished like the many thousands of Jews in Acts 21. 20 to have the benefits of faith in Jesus and yet hold on to their old religion I should turn him to Hebrews 13. 13, “Let us go forth therefore *unto Him* without the camp, bearing His reproach.” If I met a man who had owned the Lord from among the heathen and yet wanted to go on with his former practices and consort with his former friends I should urge upon him, (2 Corinthians 6: 14—17) “What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?”

I would go to the same Scripture to shew the worldly Christian

his inconsistency. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” It seems almost incredible that anyone who knows the Lord should desire to be an associate of such as this Scripture describes but the call would not be given if it were not possible for any one of us to become entangled in such associations. Often self-interests and the fear of the consequences of such separation prevent some from obeying the word, but the same word gives great encouragement to feeble faith. “Come out from among them and be ye separate *saith the Lord* and I will receive you and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, *saith the Lord Almighty.*”

James is very strong about this association with the world by those who have professed the Name of the Lord. He says “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God,” chapter 4. 4.

But the call to separation from what is evil in Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy comes closer to us than any other. It is not there separation from the Jewish camp or association with idolators or the grossly evil world, but from some who bear the Name of Christ, but are unfaithful to Him. The house of God of the First Epistle has become like a great

house in which there are many vessels, some honourable and some dishonourable, and if any man would be a vessel unto honour meet for the Master's use he must distinguish between these. But how can he distinguish between them? He must judge first of all and most of all by their words. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and his ministers often appear as ministers of righteousness, and many of these have forced their way into the Christian profession. They are the tares that the devil has sown in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13), and their words do eat as a canker (2 Timothy 2. 17). They have substituted the doctrines of men for the word of God and have overthrown the faith of some. The faithful man will purge himself from these. How can one who holds dearer than life the eternal Godhead glory of the Lord Jesus be the friend of one who denies that He was more than man?

Or one who confesses that he owes his soul's salvation to Christ's sacrificial death and actual resurrection agree with him who denies both? Here there can be no compromise, and if any man who is a true Christian attempts it he must cease to expect to be a vessel meet for the Master's use, for this is certainly the meaning of 2 Timothy 2. 21.

We are warned that in the last days perilous times shall come and the crowning features of these times is that men shall be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." We are surely in these days, but how are we to act? *From such turn away.* That will not be a popular thing to do, but it will meet with the approval of the Lord and that should be everything to the one who desires to be a faithful servant of His.

Waiting for God.

Isaiah 64. 5. Waiting is not easy. To go on waiting, supplicating, agonising, to look around and find no help, to look up and find no answer. Waiting as summers come and go, and yet no response. The answer seems further off than ever. Shadows have thickened, hope is well-nigh fled, and the lonely heart cries—Lord, how long?

Blessed be God, though all this is true, there is a Divine Workman at work for the tried, tempted soul. God Himself is in it all. Behind the curtained heavens the eternal God is shaping the blessed answer for us, and at the same time shaping our hearts for the blessing. A Working God—our Father—for a waiting child. How blessed, how reassuring for the heart amid the rush and roar of life's activities. Child of God! be at rest, your interests are not forgotten. Deep down in your soul let the scripture sink, it will calm the waves of unrest, it will still the murmur that will rise to your lips, it will bless you with quiet happiness in your loneliness and give you a peace passing all understanding.

THE GALATIAN EPISTLE: Chapter 2.

Summarised Notes of Bible Reading in London.

THE conflict that Paul waged for the truth of the gospel as given in this chapter shews the supreme importance of it. The expression "the truth of the gospel" occurs twice (verse 5 and 14). It was this that Satan aimed at, but God had a man who stood firm at the critical moment.

There were two great battles, one in Jerusalem and the other at Antioch, and the second would be the harder of the two. If the legalist party had prevailed in their efforts to Judaise the Gentile believers, they would have driven a wedge between Paul and the Apostles at Jerusalem, and the Lord's prayer for the unity of the Apostles in John 17—"that they may be one as we are," verse 11, would have failed. The first contention of the legalists was that without circumcision after the manner of Moses the Gentiles "*could not be saved,*" Acts 15. 1. The next contention was that though saved by faith in the Lord Jesus the law must be their rule of life, Galatians 2. Both were dealt with at Jerusalem, the second was more prominent at Antioch.

Paul went up to Jerusalem by revelation. We should not have known this from the account given in Acts 15. There the desire of the brethren is prominent, but for Paul that was not enough, it did not determine his going, but the will of God, he went by revelation, God directed him; but it was a happy thing that the desire of the brethren was in accord with the will of God. It would appear that the character and motives of the legalists were exposed at Jerusalem,

hence Paul calls them "false brethren," come to "privily spy out our liberty" to "bring us into bondage," verse 4; language clearly showing that Satan was behind their activities. Here we see the spirit of the Jew, and we must watch against that spirit, for we are all in danger of it. It shews itself in the claim to superior spiritual intelligence to one's brethren, in efforts to limit the word to a favoured circle, in the demand that all should be up to one standard and conform to one rule; it always makes for bondage and not the liberty of the Spirit. There is a rule by which we are to walk (chap. 6. 16), it is the rule of the new creation, the outpouring of the new life, against this there is no law.

There could be no admixture of law and grace "for if righteousness come by law, then Christ is dead in vain," verse 21. The law recognised man as on trial, by it he was tested, it gave him no righteousness, but utterly condemned him as guilty before God after he had been fully tested. Christ died when man had neither goodness nor righteousness, and when his time of probation was ended, He died for the ungodly. The death of Christ was God's intervention on man's behalf when there was no hope for him on the ground of his works. If there had still been hope on the ground of his works Christ's death was unnecessary.

The legalists were Satan's ministers, for their activities only tended to "pervert the gospel of Christ," chap. 1. 7. That was Satan's aim, even if those who were his instruments did not perceive it. The gos-

pel of Christ was man's only hope and yet these men were plotting to destroy it. We can understand why the soul of the Apostle was so stirred. He saw that the purpose was to destroy the stronghold of divine grace.

In the gospel of Christ two things combine; the glory of God and the blessing of man; Satan was set against both. In that gospel alone can mercy and truth unite, and righteousness and peace flow together.

The Apostles of Jerusalem added nothing to Paul, they could only confirm the truth that he had preached and which he had received from the Lord in glory without any reference to them. The same Lord who had wrought through Peter had wrought mightily through Paul and the gospel that had saved the Jews was equally effectual among the Gentiles, bringing both into one body by sealing of the Holy Spirit. So they gave to Paul the right hand of fellowship, a most blessed result of his visit to Jerusalem.

After the triumph of the truth at Jerusalem we should not have anticipated another battle for it at Antioch, but the devil is a persistent and wily foe, if repulsed in a frontal attack he will manoeuvre for an attack on the rear, and God allowed him to do this that an added emphasis might be given to the truth of the gospel.

Peter would receive a great welcome at Antioch, especially as he had been so valiant for the truth in Jerusalem, and we can understand Paul's joy at having him there in that happy assembly in which grace had united Jew and Gentile in one heart and mind. And Peter seemed to be a thoroughly delivered man,

the lesson he had been given to learn in the matter of Cornelius seemed to be bearing good fruit as he joined with the saints in their love feasts and at the Lord's Supper. This lasted until certain came from James! They had been silenced at Jerusalem, the power of the Spirit and of the truth had confounded them there; they would try again at Antioch. They seemed to be specially on Peter's track. Inquisitors they were, spying out his liberty; and he poor man feared them and fell into the devil's snare. He withdrew from the Gentiles and divided in practice the Church of God and marred the unity of the Spirit. It was a terrible thing to do. It would appear that all the Jewish brethren followed Peter's dissimulation, even Barnabas, the friend and yoke-fellow of Paul, and Paul stood alone. When Paul saw that they walked not uprightly he withstood Peter to the face. He would not compromise; their walk was not according to the truth of the gospel.

It is astonishing to see the man who had faced the dread rulers of the nation with a boldness that surprised them (Acts 4) now flinching in the presence of a few Jewish "brethren." In the former case Christ only was before him, here it was self; then the power of the Holy Spirit sustained him, here he stood in his own strength, and fell.

Paul's argument was that the law had availed them nothing. They, even the Jews, had been compelled to turn from it to Christ for justification. Faith in Him, and not the works of the law, was the only way of blessing; "for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." Peter knew this, he had preached it and fought for it. If then he was right

now in turning back to the deeds of the law and separating from the Gentiles, it was as good as to say that he had been wrong before, and if this was so, since it was Christ who had drawn him from the works of the law into faith in Himself, Christ was the minister of sin (verse 17). Well might Paul say, "God forbid." How blinded Peter must have been by the fear of man not to have seen that this would be the only reasonable end of his action. Which ever way it was viewed he was a transgressor. If he was right in pulling down the legal barrier, he was wrong in building it again, if he was right in building it again, he never ought to have pulled it down. We can understand his sorrow of heart when his eyes were opened, we are not told that he "wept bitterly" as he did when he denied his Lord, but we feel sure he did, and how thankful he would be when the victory was again on the side of the truth that Paul had stood against him without flinching. It is good to read from his pen in later years. "Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you," 2 Peter 3. 15. There was the triumph of grace.

Then Paul speaks of himself; in no

man was the truth more clearly illustrated, Peter had thought of his reputation as a Jew, Paul had no reputation to maintain. "I am crucified with Christ," he says, and that was the end of any reputation that he might have had. Indeed the law had demanded his death, he lay under its condemnation, Christ, his Saviour had borne its full penalty for him, and he identifies himself with His crucifixion, and it was not Paul now that lived but Christ in him.

Crucifixion was a shameful death, it meant reproach and repudiation: this is clearly its meaning in the last chapter. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

The prepositions (verses 19, 20) are instructive, "that I might live *unto* God"—a *new object*, "I am crucified *with* Christ"—*identification*; "Christ liveth *in* one"—a *new life*. "I live *by* the faith of the Son of God"—a *new power*, "Who loved me, and give Himself *for* me," *substitution*. The last gives the motive behind Paul's surrender and repudiation of self, that Christ might be everything in his life.

Are you lukewarm?

Let us test ourselves, our Lord holds the true thermometer in His hands, what does He say of us? How is it with you? Do you say, "Well, I am not the warmest of all, but then I am not the coldest of all"? Then I have a suspicion as to your temperature; but I leave the matter to your own judgment, only remarking that I have never yet met with fire that is moderately hot. The fire with which I have been acquainted has been such that I have never given it my hand without remembering its warm embrace. Fire has never yet learned moderation. I am told that it is wrong to go to extremes, and upon that ground fire is certainly guilty; for it is not only intensely hot, but it has a tendency to consume and destroy without limit.

FINALLY.

L. A. Anderson.

THERE is generally something of more than usual interest about the words uttered by one who is concluding his remarks on a subject. When the judge does the summing up of a case to the jury it is a moment of unusual interest and importance as he finishes what he has to say. The final words in the Scriptures have also a special significance.

Finally — rejoice (Phil. 3. 1). In the early part of the previous chapter we find that Paul had reminded Philippian saints that they were not to boast in what they were doing or in what they had: but rather were they to imitate the Lord Jesus Christ, who though equal with God came down and took the very lowest possible place among men, “and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Having set the perfect pattern before them he says now “Do all things without murmurings and disputings” (verse 14). “Hold forth the word of life” (verse 16). He then tells them some sad things, all are seeking their own interests, rather than Christ’s, that he does not know how matters will go with him, and Epaphroditus had been sick nigh unto death: but in spite of all these things that might depress he says “*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.*” He never changes and He never will, praise His name. Things are no better now than they were then, but there *is* One who went down to the lowest and who is now in the highest place, therefore *rejoice, rejoice in the Lord; He will look after all the circumstances and overrule all to His glory and our blessing.*

Finally—think (Phil. 4. 8). The

apostle urges these same saints in the preceding chapter to have Christ before them first and foremost and to press forward, for there were many dangers by the way to beset them as indeed there are for every one of us. He reminds them, too, that one day their bodies would be changed; therefore in the meantime they were to “stand fast in the Lord” (chapter 4, verse 1), to rejoice and not to worry, but leave all their affairs in the hands of God who would keep them in peace. Then he says “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.*” There is plenty of bad and evil to think upon but God wants us to go in for the positive side and that which is good and “think on these things.” If we practised more that which this verse bids us, what a difference it would make in the life of everyone of us. Many want to *think things out* and perhaps, because they cannot think so deeply as some Christians can they get discouraged. Now God says “*think on these things*” and everyone can do that, and as a man thinks so is he.

Finally—be strong (Eph. 6. 10). Paul is in the course of finishing the epistle he wrote to the Ephesians by the power of the Holy Spirit. “*Wives,*” he says, “submit” (chapter 5, verse 22) — “*Husbands love*” (verse 25)—“*Children obey*” (chapter 6, verse 1)—“*Fathers provoke not*” (verse 4)—“*Servants be obedient* (verse 5)—“*Masters . . . forbear threatening*” (verse 9). We all come in one or more of these categories

and God has a word for each of us, which if only we take heed to will make for peace and not friction. Then comes the injunction, "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might,*" and then we are told to put on the armour. Naturally we assert *ourselves* and stand up for *our* fancied rights, but David said, "Thy *gentleness* hath made me great," and this is recorded in the Bible twice that we might not overlook its importance (see 2 Sam. 22. 36, and Psalm 18. 35). Not David's prowess, but the Lord's gentleness. It is only by putting aside our ideas of strength and putting on the *whole* armour of God that we *can* be strong to meet the foe and his wiles, and to stand in this evil day.

Finally,—be ye all of one mind (1 Peter 3. 8). In the first chapter of this epistle Peter reminds those that were scattered from the land of their fathers of their incorruptible inheritance, of their having been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and of the abiding character of God's word by which they had been born again. In the second chapter amongst other things he tells them what they once were and what they are *now* by the grace of God, and draws attention to the fact that they are to respect and honour the rulers whom God has allowed to be in power. Moreover servants, wives, and husbands are to act as God has placed them and not each one to do what is right in his own eyes, but to have Christ before him in all His perfection as their pattern of meekness and suffering.

Then we read "*Finally . . . , having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*" We must not bring our own ideas to what God has written but humbly

seek to have His mind about it, then we *shall be* all of one mind. Let us have *compassion* towards one another. And let us *love as brethren*; that is love not only those that are easy to get on with but the other kind as well! *because they all belong to Christ*. Finally, *be pitiful, be courteous*; alas, often we are hard, for it is possible for us to have but little pity for others, and sometimes even we can hardly be polite or courteous. We need this exhortation as well as the others.

Finally, brethren, pray for us (2 Thess. 3. 1). Whatever else we do we *must pray, yes, finally pray*, but not here for ourselves. Our own needs and personal requests are to be put on one side, and we are to pray for *others*: and those that need our prayers are those that are in the forefront of the battle. Not only so, but we are told *what* to pray for, namely, "that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified," and also that His servants may be preserved from unreasonable and wicked men. *Our* needs are only too often paramount but hear the urgent appeal—"Finally, brethren, pray for us." May we all be interested in God's servants and in the welfare of His interests.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace (2 Cor. 13. 11). The apostle had written one epistle to the Corinthian saints pointing out what was wrong and then subsequently another as an encouragement to them to continue in the right path.

In the verse quoted which is amongst the very last in the second epistle, Paul bids the brethren farewell and gives his closing exhortation setting the ideal in front of them

—“*Be perfect*—as all the joints in a healthy body work smoothly and without discord—have nothing short of this in view,—“*Be of good comfort.*” In the fourth verse of the opening of this epistle we are reminded of the comfort that we ourselves have received of God, and in the fourth verse from the end of the same epistle we see how that we are to put into daily practice all that which we have received. Then as

Peter exhorted so does Paul, “*Be of one mind.*” “*Live in peace*”—What a needed word in these days of so many disturbing factors.

“*Finally, brethren, farewell—live in peace.*” What better message could be given?—Surely nothing except the promise which follows—“and the God of love and peace *shall be with you.*”

“The Rock that is higher than I.”

When some men come to die, the religion which they themselves thought out and invented will yield them no more confidence than the religion of the Roman Catholic sculptor who, on his death-bed, was visited by his priest. The priest said, “You are now departing out of this life;” and, holding up a beautiful crucifix, he cried, “Behold your God, who died for you.” “Alas!” said the sculptor, “I made it.” There was no comfort for him in the work of his own hands; and there will be no comfort in a religion of one’s own devising. That which was created in the brain cannot yield comfort to the heart. The man will sorrowfully say, “Yes, that is my own idea; but what does God say?” Brethren, I believe in that which compels me to adore, and I thank God for a Rock that is higher than I am. If it were not higher than I am, it would be no shelter for me.

Love for our Master and His commands should be considered before everything else. It is in this generally that weakness is shewn. We spare the flesh and neglect what we owe to God: in reality, we are sparing ourselves through fear of not being agreeable to others.

Beyond the gloom of dark Golgotha’s sorrow,
 Beyond the silence of the vanquished grave,
 We hail Him Thine anointed Man in glory,
 Our living Lord whose life for us He gave.
 Father as sons before Thy face we enter
 At Thine Own bidding this abode divine,
 The Home made ours by Him who brings us to it
 Where each shall in His glorious likeness shine!

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY.

W.B.D—y.

A simple point, but one worth a thorough appreciation, is that gifts are of a secondary importance to the Christian. They have a value of their own in the building up and edification of the church, but it is something of a secondary order. We should desire gifts, but there is a "more excellent way": that is, love. The measure of the relative importance of love and gifts is this: that if a man were supreme in gifts, if he spoke with the tongues of men and angels, had all faith to move mountains, had the gift of prophecy and understanding of all mystery and all knowledge—if he had these things and had not love he would not merely be second best, he would be NOTHING. And if in addition he gave all he possessed to the poor and his body to be burned, it would profit him NOTHING, without love (1 Cor. 13).

God is not mocked. He searches the heart: strikes right through to the motive. If the motive—the spirit—is not right, the action is nothing. Conversely, if there be no gift worth considering amongst brethren, they may still be on the highest ground. The widow's mites may be of great value. If we have love, we have everything. On the word of Scripture, we have more than faith, or hope, or gifts. Love is the essence of our new and eternal relationship with God: other things are of temporary character only. From love spring longsuffering; kindness; meekness; seemly behaviour; absence of self-seeking; resistance to provocation; pure thought; joy in the truth; belief; hope; and endurance. All necessary subsidiary qualities are included within it, therefore. It is the root of all, the short-cut (if the phrase may be used) to all. We might make a great effort to be these various things separately—many people do. But that is simply the law. But love brings them with itself. If we say we cannot have them, we say that we have not the Spirit, for the fruits of the two are comparable:—

The Spirit (Gal. 5. 22—3)	(1 Cor. 13. 4—7).
Love	Love
Joy	Rejoiceth in the truth
Peace	Is not easily provoked
	Envieth not
Longsuffering	Suffereth long
	Endureth all things
Gentleness	Vaunteth not itself
Meekness	Is not puffed up
	Seeketh not her own
Temperance	Doth not behave unseemly
Goodness	Thinketh no evil
	Rejoiceth not in iniquity
	Is kind
Faith	Believeth all things
	Hopeth all things

Love is our new nature, we should pray that we give it freedom—that we hinder not the Spirit—simply that. Paul says "follow after charity"—it is there. Then, and then only, "desire the best gifts."

“THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.” J. T. Mawson.

No. 3. John's Gospel, chapter 20, continued.

THE appearance of the Lord in the midst of His disciples on the first day of the week was the fulfilment of His own word to them. “I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you” (ch. 14. 18 N.T.), and “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (ch. 16. 22). They had forgotten that He had said these things to them, but He had not forgotten. He is the Faithful and the True, and He neither forgets nor fails. So we read “Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” He came with a salutation that must have driven the tumult of fear and doubt from their hearts. It may have been a common salutation, but it took on a new meaning on His lips and at such a time. It meant what it could never have meant before. He had spoken to them of peace in view of His going away. He had said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you . . . let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (ch. 4. 27), and “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace” (ch. 16. 33). His salutation was the announcement to them that the time had come for them to possess this three-fold peace.

Peace, what a word it is! Is it possible to have it in this sad world? Yes, it is. Let us thank God and rejoice, that the first word from the lips of the risen Lord in the midst of His disciples was, Peace, and that word was not spoken for them only but for us also who have believed on Him through their word. He was about to ascend to His Father, and these Galilean fishermen, whom He

loved so well were to be left in the world, but they were not to be the unhappy sport of every storm that might assail them, He would leave peace with them, and this peace abides for us unto this day.

We must first consider the basis of it, and for this we must begin with God; we could have no peace but a false peace if we were not at peace with Him. God sent His Son into this world of sinners preaching peace, and “He has made peace by the blood of His cross.” Our sins were laid upon Him when He suffered the Just One for us the unjust to bring us to God, and He has put away those sins for ever by the sacrifice of Himself. In His death the inflexible justice of God was magnified and His righteousness upheld; the effect is peace. Having peace with God we need not fear either death or the devil. The blood of Jesus has silenced the tongue of the great accuser and death's power has been annulled by the Saviour's death, and now the Lord, who is alive for evermore proclaims peace as the result of a completed work, an all-sufficient sacrifice, and a signal and everlasting victory.

But there is more. He gives to His own His own peace. “*My peace I give unto you*” and this peace must be included in the salutation. This is that peace that was always His because His mind was always stayed upon His Father. As His holy feet trod the filthy streets of those eastern cities He was the Man of sorrows; the sin and sorrow that surged everywhere made Him that, but He was never ruffled. The contradiction of

sinners against Him was strong and persistent, but He was never perturbed. "His path uncheered by earthly smiles led only to the cross" and yet He did not falter; a peace that nothing could disturb possessed His heart and mind as He carried out His Father's will. He was the dependent Man, and all His confidence was in His Father's wisdom and love, and in that confidence He had perfect peace. This is the peace He gives, not as the world gives; He shares it and makes it real by bringing His own into the same relationship to His Father and God in which He stands. Hence in all circumstances and at all times His peace may be theirs as they wholly confide in the Father's wisdom and love.

Finally, in view of the tribulation and hatred that they would encounter in the world as His witnesses, they were to have peace in Him. "*These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace,*" He had said. This phase of peace in tribulation was to be theirs as they remembered and treasured the words that He had spoken to them. He had told them plainly that they would suffer for His Name's sake; He had told them this so that when it did happen to them they would remember that He had told them (chap. 16. 4), and not be taken by surprise. Peace with God, peace in the knowledge of the Father's love, peace in Christ, their risen and exalted Lord, who had overcome the world, all this was contained in the words of His salutation as He stood in their midst.

HIS WORDS were wonderful, but what shall we say of *HIS WOUNDS*? "*He shewed them His hands and His side.*" Let us put ourselves in the place of those men and

enter into their reactions to this situation; His sudden appearance in their midst must have startled and amazed them, His salutation must have thrilled them to their heart's centre, but would not the tears rush to every eye as they beheld His wounds? It was indeed their Lord who stood before them, His wounds were the absolute proof of that, they could doubt no more, and He had suffered those wounds for them. Did they speak? No, even Simon Peter was silent in the presence of the wounds of Jesus. How inadequate and cold would words have been then! In silent wonder they gazed upon their Lord alive from the dead, and they were glad. A gladness too full for words filled them, a foretaste and earnest of that gladness that will fill the ransomed hosts when for the first time they behold their great Redeemer in the Father's house.

The divinely given record as given through John is impressive in its simplicity and economy of words. But we do not need words to unfold that wonderful hour before our souls, we can see it all. We see those men, furtive and afraid gathering in that upper room; we enter into their amazement at the appearance of their Lord in the midst—the Lord of the angel hosts, and yet the One who loved them and had called them brethren, and whom they feared they had lost for ever. We hear His salutation and see Him shewing His wounds. Would they ever forget that sight? How eloquently those wounds would appeal to them! They were glad when they saw the Lord. There is a quietness and calm about the scene in spite of its tremendous meaning; as we consider it we feel that all fear must have fled away, the peace of His presence must have filled and pervaded that assembly,

and the brethren of the Lord were at home with Him.

Then He spoke to them again for He had work for them to do. His words and His wounds were in view of *HIS WORK* in the world. They were to be His sent ones, even as He had been sent by His Father. What an honour was this! What confidence He was reposing in them! But they were not sent forth in their own strength; it was not their natural enthusiasm that would make them His triumphant witnesses. If they were to represent Him they must be like Him. They must have His *peace*, and in view of their going forth He imparts His peace to them. They must have His *life* also, hence He breathed on them. As God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life on the day of his creation, so the risen Lord breathed the life of the new creation into these men on the first day of it; and further they needed His *power*, and this they would have by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, who was to come upon them at Pentecost.

Finally He gave to them their commission. They were to go forth and inaugurate the gospel dispensation, the reign of grace. They were to be Christ's Ambassadors praying men to be reconciled to God, and carrying

with their message the forgiveness of sins.

There is presented to us in this entrancing scene a view of what abides for the Assembly—the Lord's own beloved saints, when gathered unto Him and the resources they have in and through Him during His absence from the world. Everything is 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 making the relationship real by leading them into the meaning of the Father's Name; He stood in the midst of them bringing perfect peace to them and shewing them His hands and His side, the indelible and eternal witness to them 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 Lord, and who would be their power to witness for Him in the world as they carried into it the message of the forgiveness of sins, which as His representatives they were commissioned to proclaim.

May the Lord by His Spirit recover His saints to these great things and make them living and real to us all, for His Name's sake.

To Continue.

The Evangelist.

There are three things incumbent on the evangelist.

First, that he delivers his message—communicates the gospel—and in order to do this rightly he must know it.

Secondly, he must look to the Lord for guidance as to the person or persons to whom he shall announce his message.

Thirdly, he must be led by the Spirit as to the manner and way in which the work is to be done.

THE VOICE OF GOD.

T. Oliver.

"God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by (in) prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by (in) Son" (Heb. 1. 2).

A WELL-KNOWN writer on Christian themes once said that a silent heaven is the greatest mystery of our existence! That God is silent amidst all the high-handed oppression and cruel actions of men must always be an enigma to people who judge by what they see. Nevertheless that God has spoken is the greatest fact of history. The Old Testament is full of the revelation of God. That God spoke in Moses was evident, because anyone who refused his speaking on earth fell under the summary judgment of God. Hence emphasis is put on the importance of hearing the One who speaks from heaven, as of vastly greater interest (Heb. 12. 25).

All through the Old Testament, God spoke with ever increasing punctuation in the prophets. In the glorious days of Solomon, prophetic function was not so much in evidence, but as kingship and priesthood deteriorated the star of prophecy shone forth in the firmament with growing lustre. Then after 400 years, God was manifested again but in another character. "When the fullness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive sonship" (Gal. 4. 4—5). The advent of Christ introduced everything for God. Before His time all was provisional. But His coming established a permanent basis for God to work. All the sacrifices under the law could not effect anything of absolute significance. They were simply relative to an event to

come, and that was the death of Christ. By his own blood He obtained eternal redemption and became the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 10. 12, 15).

So there has been a complete revelation of God in a New Covenant established in the blood of Christ, so that His love can flow forth without hindrance, Whosoever will may take of the water of life freely. God wishes to be known as the God of love. He gave His Son that man might not suffer the consequences of his rebellion, but have eternal life, i.e., the enjoyment of God's presence for evermore. When God spoke on earth in Moses He was occupied with affairs in the realm of responsibility, but when He speaks in this era from heaven in His Son He is occupied with the unfolding of blessing in the realm of His purpose, which was in His mind before the world was founded, i.e., before responsibility existed. These blessings are of spiritual order and are found in the heavenlies in Christ. These communications are made by the Spirit consequent upon Christ going to the right hand of God after accomplishing all to the glory of God. He has sent His Spirit here to be His mouth-piece.

So that God is not silent nor has He so much work on hand that He cannot attend to details as a great classical writer once averred. He sees everything so that an apparent trifle like a cup of cold water offered to His own in His name does not escape His notice. But He is longsuffering,

not willing that any should perish. The burden of prophecy affirms that God will intervene suddenly in the affairs of men and when He does so, no one will be able to gainsay His title for a moment. Of old, His voice shook the earth, but when He speaks again after man has filled his cup of sin and rebellion, God's wrath will

be manifested against ungodliness. His voice will shake not only the earth, but heaven also. Only things which cannot be shaken will remain, these appertain to the realm of grace, and are being received now in the process of our service of God acceptably with reverence (Heb. 12. 28).

THE FULNESS OF SCRIPTURE.

J.N.D.

THERE is so much instruction in the Scripture that I find it impossible, in giving a few hints on any portion of the text of it, to attempt to bring out the breadth and length of its various applications. Indeed, as flowing from God, and bearing continually the impression of fullness of His character, I constantly find, in opening, under God's mercy, any particular passage at different times and under different circumstances, that it presents itself in bearings so entirely different, that, although not in reality inconsistent, they could not be thought, by one untaught of God, to be drawn from the same passage.

It is this which so strongly marks and contrasts the Word of God with any human writings. While these are the expressions of a judgment formed on results, or the imperfect discussion of unascertained thought, the writing of God is the expression of the full perfectness of the divine mind, bearing upon that which diversified it (while in itself intrinsically the same), according to the infinitely various reflection of that on which it expresses itself. This was true intrinsically in Christ, in whom

dwelt all the fulness, and the Scriptures are the divine expression of that fulness.

This leads us to remember how one ought to lean upon the Spirit for the right use of Scripture, and also in speaking on it, for He alone knows its right and suitable application.

We also learn why the best commentators must be so entirely imperfect, or, I would say, we see the evil of the best commentators; for they cannot express the applicable power of the divine mind in the circumstances of the person reading, but merely what *their* mind has received out of it at the time of writing, *which may not be at all what the individual or church needs, or the Spirit would give at another time*; and this, too, on the supposition that every comment is right as far as it goes, is a part of the divine mind in Scripture.

Hence the poverty of understanding, and the systems also into which men have fallen, and hence also partly the divisions in the church have been established as they are.

The nearer we are to God, the more precious is all the truth of God to us, and everything that is near His heart.

“HOW THOU OUGHTEST TO BEHAVE THYSELF.”

A. J. Pollock.

THE Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy. There were most tender links existing between the elder and younger man. Timothy was Paul's son in the faith. He had led him to the knowledge of the Saviour (1 Tim. 1. 18 and 2 Tim. 2. 1). Doubtless the early teaching of godly mother and grandmother played its part in the blessing of God that came to Timothy. Further Paul, writing to the Philippian assembly, could say of Timothy, "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" (Phil. 2. 20).

It was to no novice that Paul wrote, but one well matured in the truth, one who shared the Apostle's thoughts and exercises more closely and fully than any.

And yet Paul could write to him as to behaving or conducting himself in the House of God. Surely if this was so, it behoves us to pay great attention to the advice that Paul gave to Timothy—advice not only from one older and more experienced in the things of God, but the advice of the Holy Spirit of God, for the Apostle wrote as under the inspiration of God. No advice could have been more lofty in its character, more helpful in every way.

Romans is the great foundation epistle, and deals with us as *individuals* in our relation to God. In it we learn to behave ourselves as *individuals*. If we fail to do that we shall not be able to behave ourselves in a *collective* character. The House of God gives the collective character of things for there we are the dwelling place of God on earth.

The trainer of colts does not begin by putting them into double harness. They have to learn to behave themselves in single harness. Till they have learned to behave in single harness, no attempt will be made to teach them how to act in double harness. As individuals we have to learn the serious nature of sin, the weakness of the law, that there is no control of self that way, the power of the gospel to salvation, the judgment of the flesh, as witnessed by our baptism, the walking in "newness of life," the Spirit of God being the only power whereby this can be accomplished.

But whilst learning how to control ourselves according to Romans, we are also placed in relation one to another, and we find ourselves in the House of God. What an immense privilege this is! The believer is in the House of God, and always there. It covers not only our conduct in the assembly when in function, but it stretches out in all our lives, covering our conduct in every sphere, domestically, spiritually, in our contact with the world.

That is seen in the instructions to the bishop or overseer. He is to be able to rule his own house well, for if he cannot do that, he is not fit to rule or guide in the Church of God. So our behaviour in our own houses is part of our behaviour in the House of God. Then the overseer is to have a good report of them that are without. That is to see his deportment in business, in contact with tradespeople, with men and women as he comes in contact with them in the ordinary intercourses of life is to be

such as to commend him as a Christian. Of course it is possible to be acceptable to worldly people by being worldly oneself. But where a Christian man or woman has to do with the world, whilst maintaining his or her true Nazariteship, such conduct should be theirs as to commend Christianity.

The House of God is not a building that we can enter and leave, but consists of God's people on the earth. That House is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. The pillar is for proclamation: the ground or base of the truth is the maintenance of the truth practically. We have the whole truth of God in the Scriptures. How far do we proclaim it, how far do we uphold it in practice? Alas! We must look at the Church as a whole and failure is written upon everything. We are naturally apt to look on the little section of Christians we walk with as being the whole and applying everything to ourselves, and often with much complacency that the facts of Church history do not warrant. Our only right attitude is one of brokenness in a day of ruin. Thank God, truth does not alter, but unless we behave ourselves in the House of God, the pillar of testimony will be defective, and instead of holding all the truth of God in true balance we may err as to the ground of the truth, for we repeat it is here the House of God that is the ground of the truth, believers in association with each other.

For instance, take the truth of the one Body of Christ, Christ the glorified Head in heaven, believers the members on the earth. How far has the Church been the pillar and ground of that truth? If it had, then ALL Christians would be walking

together in the truth of it. But what is written on the pillar? We find Roman Catholics, Greek Churches, State Churches such as Lutheran in Germany, Zwinglian in Switzerland, National Establishment in this country, the Free Churches so-called, and saddest of all, the truth must be told, that saints separated from systems and professing to carry out the truth of the one body are broken and divided into fragments, and instead of being a witness to the truth of the one body, they are a witness to the ruin of the church more than most.

And yet in spite of this we rejoice to see many spirit-filled lives of men and women, who are seeking to serve the Lord in many ways. We see Christian men and women in associations that are not scriptural, and yet acting in a spirit beyond their associations. It is delightful to meet such. Think of the army of missionaries, who give themselves to the conversion of the heathen and their edification, their building up in Christ, after they are converted.

What then are we to do in this day of ruin? How does Paul seek to help Timothy? It is most significant that he does not elaborate a set of rules, or even give instructions as to right deportment and ways in the church of God. How does he give advice?

He presents *Christ* to him in a most remarkable and profound way. 1 Timothy 3. 16 is one of the great outstanding verses of the Bible. In its contemplation we are lifted far above smallness or pettiness. He speaks of PERFECTION, and sets before Timothy the only perfection that has ever been seen on this earth. He speaks of Christ, the Mystery of godliness. Till *His* life was lived on

earth the perfection of godliness, the acme of piety was never seen. Christ unrolled that before the eyes of those who cared to look and ponder. Still more, the record, the inimitable account of that wonderful life is preserved for us in those four little pamphlets, the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. How much is packed in those four evangelists, sufficient to occupy a lifetime, nay an eternity, of adoring contemplation.

It reminds one of one's early schooldays, when we first learned to write. The exercise book was placed before us. There was the copper-plate head-line for us to copy. We did our best to copy the head-line. But when we came to write the second line, instead of copying the head-line, childlike, we copied our own copy. Thus we went all down the page copying our copies, instead of always keeping our eye on the head-line.

May we say it reverently, Christ is our Head-line? Paul's recipe for behaving ourselves in the House of God is that we see in HIM what true and full godliness is, and that we should seek by the Spirit's enabling to be like Him. If I behave in the House of God in this way, then I shall indeed behave myself.

In Christ God was manifest, "manifest in the flesh," — "the mystery of godliness." Godliness is surely being like God in our ways. There is of course an infinite distance between ourselves and Christ. He was and ever is GOD. But His manhood was perfect, and it is outlined most wonderfully in the four Evangelists, and we are exhorted to follow in His steps (1 Peter 2. 21).

Then we read that the Lord was "justified in the Spirit." Every word He spoke, every step He took, every action He performed, nay His very hidden thoughts, were all pleasing to God, His Father. To each thought, word and deed the Holy Spirit could say, AMEN. It comes as a challenge. Can the Holy Spirit say AMEN to all I think, say and do? It is good to challenge our hearts and consciences as to this, and to seek grace to keep our eyes on the Head-line.

Our Lord was "seen of angels." What a sight was theirs! To see "GOD manifest in the flesh" was wonderful and strange to their gaze. To see perfect Manhood displaying itself to God's infinite delight was indeed a lesson to them — one Object on earth utterly pleasing.

It is possible that we are very unaware of the great part that angels play in connection with us. We are told in Ephesians 3. 9 that the manifold wisdom of God is seen in the church by principalities and powers in heavenly places. Surely this embraces the angelic hierarchy. What do the angels see in me? may well be an arresting thought. Alas! what pettiness and crookedness they must see.

Christ was "preached unto the Gentiles." Not in His lifetime surely, but the testimony to Him brought many Gentiles to acknowledge Him as Lord. Is this not a hint and more than a hint that a Christian with His eye on the Head-line must be earnest in the gospel? He will catch the spirit of Christ, who preached the gospel to the poor, healed the broken-hearted, preached deliverance to the captives, recovered sight to the blind, and set at liberty the bruised.

"Received up into glory." Glory was where our blessed Lord found Himself at the end of a faithful life, and this is the end too for His own. It is good to walk in the light of the future. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4. 18). It is sweet to see an aged Christian, nearing the celestial city, ripening, maturing, softening, broadening in his sympathies as the

little squabbles of earth fade, and the realities of the heavenly land with their wonder and sweetness fill his soul. May these be the lines we go upon.

Let us have grace to keep our eyes on the gracious, glorious Head-line, and thus influenced in ten thousand ways by Christ we shall learn how to behave ourselves in the House of God.

Sanctification is the vessel set apart for use. *Consecration* is that same vessel filled with Christ.

You would not be easily startled by events if you saw all that there is in Christ to enable you to meet everything calmly.

It is not great acts which convey the assurance of the greatest love. The more minute the attention the greater the true love and interest. The greatest love of all says "Even the very hairs of your head are *all* numbered."

Our very helplessness is our blessing, for it is God's opportunity, when we can do nothing He comes in.

1 Thessalonians 2.

Verses 17, 18, and 19. The Apostle longed after his children in the faith with true affection. He had had a great desire to see them, we may be sure with one end in view, their spiritual prosperity, but Satan hindered him. We are not told how, probably by persecution, but Paul rose above this disappointment and looked on to the time when he would see them face to face at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. There would be no Satan to hinder then, or failure to deplore; no need any longer for exhortation even. And it is in view of that day that the Apostle wrote in another place, "Your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Colossians 1. 28, 29.

Paul had one end in view, to present every man perfect in Christ. Not that every man would receive his words, but he had nothing short of this before him; he recognised no distinctions: Greek, Jew, Barbarians, Scythians, bond or free, were all alike to him, sin and grace had swept away all barriers, and all his dealing with men was to this end, to present them perfect in Christ. The wisdom and power of God wrought in Him to this end. He was himself filled with and wholly controlled by Christ, and he laboured to bring all others where he was.

TRIBULATION AND DELIVERANCE.

W.B.D.—y.

Gathered from Isaiah 5. 26—30; 8. 7 onwards; 10. 5 onwards; 28. 15, etc.; 29; 66. 7, 16, etc.; Jeremiah 4. 5 onwards; Joel 2; Zephaniah 1. 14 onwards; Zechariah 14; Micah 5. 5; Revelation 19. 17.

Down on thy knees, O Israel, midst the tumult and the fear,
The clamour of the trumpet and the flashing of the spear,
The thunder of the chariot and the roaring of the flame:
And the murder and the horror and the pillage and the shame:
Gross wert thou grown in luxury, and fattened in thy pride,
And lo, while yet the word was "peace," death and destruction ride.
Down on thy knees, O Israel, midst the fury and the wreck,
Bow the proud head, ye hard of heart, and bend the stubborn neck,
Thou wouldst devise a pact with hell, a covenant with death,
But while the very words of folly linger on thy breath
Behold across the pleasant land the northern armies surge,
Behold the day of trouble, and the overflowing scourge.

Racked are the forms of men with pain, and every face is pale,
Jerusalem in torment writhes, and Judah in travail,
And Israel is formed anew, and now is at the birth—
A chosen remnant sought of God to praise Him on the earth.
Down on thy knees and rend the heart, ye Israel reborn,
Gaze upon Him whom thou hast pierced, gaze upon Him and mourn:
Down on thy knees, ye remnant, down, and seek the Saviour's face,
It may be in this dark despair He worketh yet in grace.

Yea, while the prayer is on thy lip, the terror at its height,
The hosts of God go forth to war, the LORD goes forth to fight,
The ravening wolf is turned aside and smitten from the prey,
The hordes of the oppressor in their fury turn at bay,
And lo! The skies are black as night with eagles for the feast
Of the carcasses of captains, and the flesh of man and beast
Down where the maddened trumpets scream and the reeling banners
writhe,
And the power and pride of man go down before JEHOVAH'S
scythe.

Thou hast delivered my soul from death: mine eyes from tears; and my feet from falling" (Psalm 116).

Redeeming grace delivers the soul; *comforting grace* gives comfort in sorrow. *Upholding grace* preserves the feet amid the temptations of life.

THE LORD'S PRESENCE.

Could anyone in faith hold that the Lord is in the midst of two or three gathered to His Name (Matthew 18. 20) and not be very sensibly affected by this truth? Surely an effect must be produced that nothing else could. No one can define or imitate the influence of the presence of a loved one, how much more when the Lord, the greatest and dearest to us is in the midst. The effect of His presence cannot be defined, but one may be conscious of it, according to the measure of faith. Could I truly believe that the Lord was present and not be controlled and influenced by Him? Must He not sway and control every thought and feeling. Should I not be in happy subjection to His will and have gladness of heart that I am so near the One who loves me and who gave Himself for me? He cheers my heart, keeps my will in check and enables me to wait on Him without distraction.

The Lord's Table.

Think of going to the Lord's Table with the heart cold towards Him! How deeply this must grieve Him. He comes to meet us there, because His love is as great towards us as ever it was, and He comes as our eternal Lover to find a response in our hearts to His love. He must make us feel it if there is not the response He looks for, but if we are indifferent to His ways and voice the indifference will increase in our hearts until we are manifestly backsliders. The beginning is "Thou hast left thy first love," the end is Christ shut out of the heart and life (Revelation 2 and 3).

Acts 9. 4. A voice from heaven said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Who was speaking? Jesus. Where was He? In heaven. But Saul was on earth, how could he be persecuting Jesus who was in heaven? A despised people on earth, poor and persecuted, were owned by the Lord as Himself; they were united to Him by the indwelling Holy Spirit. It was the first hint as to the great truth that "There is one body." The Head in heaven, the members on earth. And you, young Christian, are a member of that body, one with Christ.

John said: "We forbid him, because he followeth not *with us*." That tells the whole tale. They were thinking of themselves, not Christ; of their own importance, and not His honour. If it had been *His* importance they would have thought how blessed it was to find the effect of His Name, and rejoiced to know His power was being exercised by man. But no; they were looking at themselves as well as at the Messiah. And is there not something of the same thing in us—a satisfaction at that which aggrandizes self as well as Christ, instead of seeking the honour of Christ alone.

J.N.D.

THE PERSON OF THE LORD.

A. E. Booth

THE Person, the perfections, and glories of the Son of God are most sacred and precious themes for contemplation. They will furnish healthful material for meditation throughout all time, and in eternity, for in this we shall ever be learners, because we are but *finite*. Our capacities will ever have their human limitations, but He who will ever command the loyalty, the devotion and homage of our hearts is *infinite*. To those of most advanced knowledge there will ever be a limit, for it is written, "No man *knoweth* the Son but the Father." In the original Greek there are two words used for knowledge, and our A.V. does not properly distinguish in this. First, "*gnosis*," which simply means *to know*, to have knowledge; the second, "*epignosis*," the meaning of which is to have "*full*" knowledge.

All believers have the knowledge of Christ our Lord, but no one has *full* knowledge. Only those in the Deity are able to fathom the fulness of Deity. Only those who are infinite can measure the immensity of the infinite, hence we, though born of God, are but creatures and finite, and in this respect, "No man knoweth (*epignosis*) the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11. 27). But it is also written, "This is life eternal, that they might *know Thee* the only true God (the Father), and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17. 3); again, "I *know* Whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1. 12). But in the contemplation of such a theme as the Person of our Lord we need ever to guard against speculation, or what might be fanciful, lest we place a blur upon, or tarnish, the glory of His Person.

He had divine and eternal glories,

which belonged to Him in the Godhead, for He was ever the "Only begotten Son." Then again, from the Virgin birth He had perfect human glories. Those that He acquired by His incarnation and perfect life on earth, glories distinct from those which were His before the world was. Then again, as we contemplate His cross, His sufferings and death, these will add yet further glories that He shall possess for ever. We need thus to watch with zealous care and not confuse these sacred perfections and glories of Him who loves us with a love eternal, and Who gave Himself for us. A prayerful, reverential spirit ever becomes us in the study of such a subject as that before us. The Sacred Word alone can furnish us with light and instruction for both mind and heart, and light received from the truth, by the aid of the Holy Spirit will always edify, increase devotion and homage to both the Father and the Son. Such exercise should ever be encouraged.

His Deity—Godhead

We will first take a glance at a few passages of the Old Testament, then the New, and note the uniform testimony of *both* concerning the *claims* of the Sacred Word for the Messiah promised in the Old, and the Christ sent to us in the New. From Genesis 3. 15 to Malachi 4. 2, promise after promise was given concerning His coming; the woman's "Seed," "Shiloh," "the Prophet," "the Anointed," "the Man," "the King," "the Sun of Righteousness," etc., etc. All these fall into proper line and furnish little difficulty for a true believer, but there are further claims made for Him in that Sacred Word. The Hebrew prophecies claim for Him *Deity* also—

(1) "Our *God* shall come and shall not keep silence" (Psalm 50. 3).

(2) "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call Him *Immanuel*" (God with us) (Isaiah 7. 14).

(3) "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty *God*, the Father of eternity, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9. 6 R.V.).

(4) "Say to them of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; Behold your *God* shall come with vengeance, even *God* with a recompense. He will come and save you" (Isaiah 35. 4).

(5) "Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your *God*! Behold the Lord *God* shall come" (Isaiah 40. 9-12).

(6) "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of *eternity*" (Micah 5. 2 Margin).

These examples from the Old Testament will suffice, but the same golden thread runs into the New, and joins both in a uniting bond, to serve as a united testimony throughout:—

(1) "Behold a virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His Name *Immanuel*, which being interpreted is, *God with us*" (Matt. 1: 20-25).

(2) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with *God*, and the Word was *God*" (John 1. 1).

(3) The claims of Christ for Himself were, "I and My Father *are One*" (John 10. 30-33).

(4) The homage that He received from Thomas was, "My Lord, and my *God*" (John 20. 28).

(5) The testimony of the Spirit through the Apostle Paul, "and of Whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, *God* blessed for ever, amen" (Romans 9. 5).

(6) God the Father addresses the Son upon taking His throne, and says, "Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever" (Hebrews 1. 8—9).

(7) Then from another Apostle we read, "To them that have received like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of *our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 1. 1 J.N.D.).

With these passages we leave each reader with the testimony of God Himself, from the Inspired Word, concerning the Deity of our Lord Jesus. Now we will pass on to truths in closest association.

The Form of God (Phil. 2. 5—11).

In this remarkable epistle to the Philippians we will select seven verses from the central part of the second chapter, and in those verses the Apostle begins with the *glory* of His Deity.

(1) "Christ Jesus; Who *being* in the *form of God*" (A.V.).

(2) "Christ Jesus, Who *existing* in the *form of God*" (R.V.).

(3) "Christ Jesus, Who *subsisting* in the *form of God*" (J.N.D.).

By a comparison of these three translations the real force of the passage may be readily seen. *First*, His "Being," "existence," "subsistence,"

and in this there never was a beginning. It was His existence before all creation. And *Second*, be it observed that the emphasis is placed upon "the form."* We have already seen by abundant proof that He was one Person of the Godhead, but here the passage teaches us that He existed in the *form* of God; that is, the glory, power and majesty of Godhead ever surrounded Him as a royal vesture. It ever encircled Him as a robe. None were higher, no glory beyond His, and concerning this bright eternal glory in which He ever dwelt, He prayed that those whom the Father had given Him might *behold* it. It may be but the outskirts of those sacred precincts that we shall behold, for there shall be *hidden* and *inner* depths we shall never penetrate, because it is written concerning the Godhead, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, etc." (John 17. 5, 24), (1 Tim. 6. 16). In this He ever subsisted prior to all creation. Another apostle who engages us with the same rich vein of thought wrote, "In the beginning was the Word."

When Creation was brought into existence, *He was there*, and all Creation is the work of His hand. Thus these sacred Scriptures set before us the eternal existence of the only begotten Son. Before angelic creation, material creation, human creation, He was ever the self-existent, eternal Son.

When once the light of truth such as this falls upon the heart and mind, we discern how dreadful are the theories and doctrines of Unitarians, Adventists, Millennial Dawnists, and

some forms of Higher Critics, who deny the eternal Deity of Jesus, our blessed, blessed Lord. The Scriptures thus furnish us with light and truth concerning the Person and the glory of the Lord. He "was *God*," and He "existed in *the form* of God," With these sacred and blessed facts in mind we will now engage the reader with further truth.

Truth Negative

(1) He "thought it *not robbery* to be equal with God" (A.V.).

(2) He "counted not the being on an equality with God *a thing to be grasped*" (R.V.).

(3) He "did not esteem it *an object of rapine* to be an equality with God" (J.N.D.).

Here again by comparison of the different translations we can better apprehend the truth that is set before us. A striking contrast is here given between our Lord and Adam. Satan's bait for Adam was, "Ye shall be *as God*." (Heb.) Adam, short-sighted, grasped after the bait. He aspired to be as God. He sought Godhead place and Godhead glory, and fell into the snare. In this fall he lost all he possessed as an innocent creature, and God has preserved for us the faithful record of this fall (Gen. 3). But when we look at our Lord we see the contrast. He was ever God the Son. He was equal with God, co-equal, co-existing, co-eternal. He could not be higher and He never grasped after something that He could not be. A glory beyond angel or archangel was eternally His, but the love that filled His breast led Him to think of those beneath Him, a race of fallen men on earth; hence, to secure a prize for Himself, He *relinquished His hold*

*En Morphe, Greek, is the keyword to the entire subject before the apostle. "The form by which a person, or thing strikes the vision" (Thayer).

upon this *form*. What marvellous love! What condescending grace!

Truth Positive

(1) "He made Himself of *no* reputation" (A.V.).

(2) "But *emptied Himself*" (R.V.).

(3) "But *emptied Himself*" (J.N.D.).

(4) "But *stripped* (or *divested*) Himself" (Consult Liddel and Scott, and the variations in the best Greek lexicons).

In this we approach truth positive. In verse 6 we see, in contrast to Adam, what He did *not* do (negative). In verse 7 we see what He *did* (positive). He did not grasp after what was not His, neither did He "cling to" what was His own, but He did *divest* Himself of a form ever His.*

But the passage *does not* mean that our Lord in coming to earth renounced, emptied, or divested Himself of His own essential nature; such could not be.

Another has written, "He did not account His divine state a thing to be tenaciously grasped, but, on the contrary, stripped Himself of His glories—He laid aside—*not the essence of His Godhead*, but its outward manifestation" (Bible Commentary, F. C. Cook).

Again, "He emptied or stripped Himself of the insignia of Majesty" (Lightfoot).

Again. "Nothing in the passage teaches that the eternal Word

emptied Himself of His divine nature or attributes, but only of the outward and visible manifestation of the Godhead" (Scofield).

Thus the passage and its connection show us clearly that the main idea conveyed is that He exchanged one condition, visibly and eternally displayed in glory, for a new and different condition on earth. "The *form* of God" describes what was His eternally. "The *form* of a bond-servant" describes the new condition into which He came in love and grace. Yet, while changing His condition, He ever abode the same Person. But here we need to use the pen guardedly, for while He gave up the *form* in which He was eternally wrapped, the deep, deep reality of Godhead He never gave up. Love, divine love, led Him to descend, to come down. "He bowed the heavens and came down" in grace, as He shall again bow the heavens and come down in righteousness.

To recognize His Deity and own also His perfect humanity, and guard each with even balance is important as we think of His Person and glory. He said Himself when here, "I and My Father are One." Again, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The Father and the Son were One in nature, power, aim and action, yet not one Person. To see Him was to see the perfect reflection of the Father.

Then again, if we view the Son on earth as Man, as Servant, He was perfect in *dependence*, perfect in *obedience* to the Father's word and will. See a few example passages:

(1) "I will bless the Lord (Jehovah), Who hath given Me *counsel*" (Psalm 16. 7).

*"Kenos" is a word used in the Greek lexicons for "to empty," but it is also used for "to strip."

(2) "But Thou art He that took Me out of the womb; Thou didst make me *trust* upon My mother's breasts" (Psalm 22. 9, J.N.D.'s trans.).

(3) "Jesus increased in *wisdom* and stature" (Luke 2. 46—52).

(4) "He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen *and heard*, that He testifieth" (John 3. 31—34).

(5) "The Son can do nothing of Himself (i.e., independent of the Father (John 5. 19—20).

(6) "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7. 16—18).

(7) "I do nothing of (from) Myself; but as *My Father hath taught Me*, I speak these things" (John 8. 28, 29, 38, 40, 42, 55).

(8) "I have not spoken of (from) Myself; but the Father which sent Me, gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak" (John 12. 49-50).

(9) "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of (from) Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (John 14. 10—11).

(10) "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me" (John 17. 8).

(11) "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man—neither the Son" (Mark 13: 32).

In this last passage we see the perfect Servant, the dependent and obedient Man; as such He had no revelation from the Father of this one fact, yet, at this very moment He was one Person of the Godhead, and as such knew all things. Yet He here

refers not to His Deity or divine knowledge, neither did He draw upon those divine resources which were ever His, but He is before them as the One sent of God, and as such He had no communication as to the date referred to.

The Bondsman's Form

Now we approach another contrast, not between the eternal Son and Adam, but a contrast between what the Son was in the full, unsullied light and glory of Deity, and the form that He assumed by coming into the world. Here we touch the great New Testament truth of the incarnation. He was "in the form of God," but voluntarily "the Word became flesh (not *was made*) and tabernacled among us" (John 1. 14, Greek).

Again we read that—

(1) "He took upon Him the form of a Servant" (A.V.).

(2) "Taking the form of a Servant" (R.V.).

(3) "Taking a bondsman's form" (J.N.D.).

This step He took in accord with the counsels of eternity, He took it voluntarily, He took it to serve and to fulfil the Father's will and pleasure, He took it in richest love and grace to procure redemption, and an eternity of bliss for those saved and blest by His coming, and it was *as God the Son* He took this place. He came forth from His eternal dwelling place. He came down, and the self-divested One was seen in the new form first in Bethlehem, born of Mary, "a Child-born," according to the prophecy, and "a Son given," the Son from heaven, the Son from the past eternity, but the Son, "the

Logos *became* flesh." Mary brought Him forth; the Shepherds saw His face. So the Wise Men beheld Him, and gave Him the homage due to Him. He was "the second Man, the Lord *out of* heaven," the perfect *Bondservant* of the Father's will on earth. What a mystery, with hidden depths, surrounds the great truth of the incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God! Here we see now God and Man perfectly united in one Person, and as we gaze upon a truth so stupendous and so magnificent, we do not pretend to explore the divine fullness and hidden depths, which alone the Godhead can fathom, but as be-

lievers in the great fact revealed in the Sacred Word, we draw near to His footstool and acknowledge with hearts full of gratitude His Deity, His perfect humanity, and in like spirit with the Wise Men, we open our treasures and give Him "gold and frankincense and myrrh," and we worship Him. We have seen the external form in which He was ever clothed, but now exchanged for the lowly form of a bondservant on the earth. He was in eternity before the world was, but now He is in time. He was in heaven, but now seen on earth. How great the contrast.

To be continued.

"The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Thou art coming, Star of Morning,
 For Thy Bride;
 Faithful! from afar returning,
 True and tried:
 Who to save her,
 And to have her,
 Bled and died.

Thou art coming, Shepherd! Ever
 Good and Great.
 None from Thee Thy sheep can sever
 But 'tis late!
 And all shatter'd,
 Torn and scatter'd
 Still we wait.

Thou art coming, Mighty Jesus!
 Then shall be
 Death's hold plunder'd to release us,
 Jubilee!
 In the power
 Of that hour—
 Victory!

"Thou art my God, and I will give Thee thanks; my God, I will exalt Thee" (Psalm 119. 29).

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

(Continued)

Chapters 24. 25.

THESSE two chapters may be called the second sermon on the Mount. They belong to the grand scheme of prophetic truth which has an important place in the Scriptures and particularly in the New Testament. We have been permitted to listen to the glorious anticipatory chant of Psalm 118 in combination with Zechariah 9. 9, and been drawn still nearer to contemplate Him as the sent One of the Father, as those that are robed in righteousness at the marriage of the King's Son; we have now to behold by faith His glory as Son of Man which is destined to fill both heaven and earth.

This address includes in one long chain of testimony the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God, and so comprehensive is the range of divine dealings that it runs down to eternity, as may be seen in the judgment of the sheep and goats which is final. The Saviour Son of Man is the Centre around which all these events blessed or fateful revolve, all being made to hang upon His Incarnation. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Well we know that the work of redemption necessitated Manhood for the Son, but there is more, for the Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." He is seen here in relation to earthly saints, both of Israel and the nations, and heavenly saints who form His Assembly, as well as those glorious beings which are the Ministers of His pleasure to men.

But let us note well His judicial

aspect as Judge before Whom the different classes of rebels connected with these three dispensational companies must stand, and from Whom they must receive their sentence for eternity. All this it should be noted shows Him in Mediatorial capacity in relation to the great conflict of good and evil which is raging in the creation and takes in the whole arena of heaven and earth and hell. Yet, and here we touch the cross, that which surpasses all, that which in its fulness of mercy, love and kindness bows our souls before Him in praise, worship and adoration. We touch the cross which on our side shews both guilt and malice combined with both helplessness and hopelessness, while on the side of God it speaks of all that He is in righteousness and holiness with His pity, mercy and love. The Mighty One Who spoke and taught here as never man speaks in the beauty of holiness and the fulness of these glories as connecting Him with the various phases of God's moral creation was just about to stand before the tribunal of the creature and be judged by men as a blasphemer, and between two malefactors, nailed to a cross and crucified.

The Sermon depicts evil come to its height; close indeed to which we are to-day. To such an extent has it arisen that it has to be said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." It depicts the time of the great Tribulation. The righteous must flee for the devil has come down in great fury to swallow up all that is of God upon the earth. (See Revelation 12). Such is the triumph

of evil that apart from a divine intervention there would be no flesh saved; a state of things as never had been nor shall be again on the earth.

To verse 14 of chapter 24 the teaching is general. By which we mean that the Lord so orders His words that they may apply to others as well as those spoken to. It seems clear that we come to a definite prophetic landmark at verse 15. The taking away of the daily sacrifice and setting up the abomination of desolation—what ominous words for a Jew—is the sign for the righteous to flee. It is a time of unprecedented suffering when the furnace of affliction is heated one seven times more than it was wont to be heated, when the beast and the false prophet are allowed to work their terrible ways after the working of Satan with all power and lying wonders, when the blood of the righteous shall flow, and when they shall cry in agony of soul, "How long, O Lord" (see Rev. 13). We cannot wonder at the apparent break-up of all ordered government which seem symbolised in verse 29, a point reached which leads to the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens which is the answer to the second part of the question put by the disciples in verse 3.

From this point on to verse 44 contrary to what we might have expected the Lord goes back to what preceded His coming to warn His disciples both by parables and from history with regard to the terrible state of things yet to come. Foreseeing the dreadful storm the blessed One adds emphasis to His solemn forewarnings by saying, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." These are the words of a faithful and well known love. Could they or we doubt

Him? His words are the guarantee that evil shall be permitted only so far as divine wisdom sees fit for the working out of its own wise decrees. "Hitherto shall thou come and no further and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." He concludes this part of His instruction with the words of verse 44, "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

At verse 45 the Lord comes still further back to the times preceding the catching away of the Assembly according to the words of 1 Thess. 4. 13—18. He speaks of faithfulness to Himself in His absence during the Church period. His instruction is given in three parables which run down to chapter 25. 30, after which He resumes His future connection with the earth and the Gentiles. From this it will be seen that the part between chapter 24. 44 and chapter 25. 30 may be read parenthetically. Taken in this way the discourse falls into three distinct parts; the first dealing with Israel, the second with the Church and the third with the nations of the earth; each being viewed in relation to His coming. As in all of Scripture there is here perfect moral order. In the Book of nature around us everything fills its allotted place in the great scheme of Creative wisdom; every forest leaf and every blade of grass; every drop of water and every grain of sand. So in this the Book of Revelation; every word and every letter is divinely chosen to bring out the mind of Him who is in complete control of the moral order in relation both to His eternal counsels and to His time ways in Christ His well-beloved Son.

It is not difficult to see in the closing verse of chapter 24 a description of conditions to-day. There is, thank

God in spite of all the unreality a faithful witness to Christ. We rejoice in the thought that in the very world out of which our Lord has been cast there are ransomed hosts whose delight it is to serve, honour and adore the rejected and crucified One. Alas, there is the evil servant also who says, My Lord delays His coming and begins to smite his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken. How deeply solemn it is for such, for, the Lord of that servant comes at a time he thinketh not and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him a portion with the hypocrite; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Continuing His instruction concerning His second coming the Lord uses the well known parable of the ten Virgins. The illustration is that of an eastern marriage. Keeping in mind what has been already said it will be seen that the Church as the Bride of Christ is not seen here nor is the secret catching up of the saints when the Lord comes into the air (1 Thess. 4). The parable describes a condition of things which would obtain at the close of the dispensation, the virgins representing the whole Christian profession as it is seen in Christendom to-day. The words, "THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom," seem not only to denote this but also the remarkable awakening concerning the coming of the Lord which marks the present time. The expression "Behold the Bridegroom" (N. Trans.) may go further and include the precious unfoldings of Scripture in relation to the Person and glory of the Lord which have been so blessedly ministered in connection with the movement of the Holy Spirit relative

to the Philadelphian letter of Revelation 3.

While the call found all in a condition which could but be described as sleep there began to come into evidence the marks of heavenly and divine vitality in the recognition of the presence of the Spirit of God. This and the fact of a glorified MAN in heaven are the two main marks of the dispensation if such it may be called. However much the line of demarcation between the righteous and the wicked may be effaced to-day the Spirit of God makes the distinction and like the figs shewn to Jeremiah (see Jer. 24. 1—3), the good are very good and the bad very bad. Whatever was their place in the profession the foolish virgins had not the Spirit and the solemn outcome of it was that they were left outside. "Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh."

The third parable (verse 14—30) sets forth the responsibility of trading with the Master's property. The talents here are different from natural qualifications which put certain persons beyond their fellows in this life. The talents are gifts bestowed by a departing Lord. A distinction exists too between what is here and the parable of the ten pounds in Luke 19, and both must be kept clear from the gifts to His Assembly by Christ the exalted Head in Ephesians 4. The latter shews the Assembly in corporate relations. There, gifts are given for the perfecting of the saints "for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the Body of Christ; till we all come . . . to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The passage before us in Matthew as well as that in Luke has clearly Christendom in view as favoured by

the light of Revelation beyond masses of their fellowmen in heathen lands. Faithfulness in the first two doubles that which had been committed to them, and draws forth both commendation and reward, while the third is left by failing to trade with the talent, in a worse position than if he got nothing. The one who hid his talent in the earth is like the man who entered the feast disregarding the condition: both were marked by insubjection.

At verse 31 we enter another department of glory in the prophetic scheme, and consequently have to contemplate another phase of the glory of our Lord. Here it is the Son of Man coming in glory with His ministers of state to hold an assize of discriminating judgment. We have had His coming in relation to Israel which was a divine intervention at a time of unprecedented suffering; then His coming in relation to that part of the earth where heaven's richest gifts have been bestowed: here it is the same coming in relation to the nations of the earth which have just been tested by the gospel of the kingdom. In the first it was as Son of Man, the second as a thief in the night; here in the third it is the King upon His throne and all nations gathered before Him. The final test of these nations was the gospel of the kingdom and this great event shews the result for each individual for eternity. "He shall separate the one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand. Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . for I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat . . . I was in prison

and ye came unto Me. Then shall He say unto those on the left hand, Depart from Me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat . . . sick and in prison and ye visited Me not. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

The disciples had asked, When shall these things be, and what is the sign of Thy coming and the end of the age? All is answered with a perfection that fits in each part of Scripture with every other part and the blessed Person Who is the Centre of all stands forth imparting completeness to all. Each of the three great lines of truth are seen to converge upon Himself in such a way that the whole prophetic scheme can be seen in its completeness. What is said of Israel involves the fulfilment of the promises in the judgment of their foes: what is said of the church age involves the translation of the Assembly and the judgment seat of Christ on high; the marriage of the Lamb and His coming forth in warrior judgment when in Solomonic splendour He shall sit upon His throne and the Gentile come into the blessing of eternal life.

There yet remained in the mystery of His ways a deeper unfolding of His love in the supper chamber and what followed: truth concerning the Father's gift to the Son and the Son's coming forth to die for these and all that will come into the great scene of eternal bliss. John 13—17 brings out the deepest and richest things of eternity, but withal nothing can detract from the grandeur of this sermon where we see our Lord Jesus Christ as the Sun and Centre of all the ways of God in time.

THE GALATIAN EPISTLE: Chapter 3.

Summarised Notes of Bible Reading in London, January 14th.

PAUL'S indignation with the Galatians at their turning from grace to law and from faith to works was well justified. If they were right and could achieve righteousness by the works of the law, Christ had died in vain, the sufferings of Calvary were unnecessary and futile. But they were not following the truth, they were bewitched and deceived and were being lured into bondage and darkness.

How senseless they were to turn from the grace of God, the only hope for sinful men to the law that could only condemn them; they were choosing the curse and despising the blessing.

The contrast between the works of the law and the promise of grace is worked out in the chapter. Both law and grace were from God. There was nothing wrong with the law, the trouble was they were using it wrongfully. It was given to shew man what he is; the grace of God made known in His promise was the revelation of what God is. The law came to convict men of the fact that they could not gain blessing by their works, the grace of God was revealed to shew men that God would save them without works.

At the fall man aimed at independence of God, and he also acquired great self-confidence and self-importance, and considered himself quite capable of gaining life and righteousness by his works. This came out when at Sinai he declared, "All that the Lord our God has said unto us we will do." The law breaks down his self-confidence, and makes a man turn wholly to God. This we see in Romans 7.

Christ crucified was such a reality to Paul that he could tell them that before their eyes Jesus Christ had been set forth crucified among them; so vividly and with power he had preached Him to them.

The death of Christ is presented in various ways in Scripture. In Romans it is chiefly His *death*; in Hebrews it is His *blood*; in Corinthians and Galatians His *crucifixion*. Romans would be God's approach to men in His great love for them. Hebrews our approach to God according to His divine holiness, which the blood only could make possible. In crucifixion there is reproach and repudiation. Carnal Christians need this side.

What had the law done for the Jews? They had been under its culture for more than a thousand years and they crucified their Messiah when He appeared; they clamoured that He should have the most shameful of deaths, they utterly repudiated Him. Evidently the law had brought out all that was bad and nothing that was good in the Jew. How senseless then for Gentile Christians to expect that it would produce some good from them.

On the other hand the cross was God's judgment on the flesh; that is, man in his natural sinful condition; at the cross sin in the flesh was condemned in Christ who was our holy substitute, that we might have life and righteousness in Him, risen from the dead, the beginning of the new creation. These Galatians would own that the judgment their sins deserved had been borne by Christ upon His cross, but more, the truth was that they had died, in God's account

in that same cross, and everyone of them ought to have taken up Paul's words, "I am crucified with Christ." The law has nothing to say to dead men.

They had received the Spirit—the holy Spirit of God, by the *hearing* of faith, that is, they had heard and believed the gospel and had been sealed by the Spirit as a consequence, and that before they had even heard of the law. By the works of the law, no man in the whole history of it had gained the Spirit, but they had received Him by simply believing. The Spirit was not acquired by man's work but was God's gift.

They were evidently taking the law as their rule of life, to make perfect their Christian living. It was a senseless thing to do. For if the law could not give life, how could it be expected to perfect a life that needed none of its restrictions? Neither justification nor sanctification are by the works of the law.

It is the principle of law that is in question and not exactly the Ten Commandments. The principle of law is that God will bless me *if* I deserve it. He will do well to me if I do well to Him; if I am favourably disposed to Him, He will be favourably disposed to me. Israel covenanted with God to obey Him and by their obedience secure His blessing. Who that has learnt anything of self would choose to stand before God on that ground?

It was not on that ground that Abraham stood. He believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. For Abraham every thing depended upon God and His promise. To believe God is the only right attitude for His creatures. It was here that Adam sinned; he doubted God's goodness and fell. Right relations with God are res-

tored when a man believes that God is as good as His word—he is accounted righteous.

The law was given to speak to Israel, but the blessing of Abraham stretches out to all nations, and all who have faith, whether Jew or Gentile are blest with faithful Abraham.

Now while faith is the way into the blessing because it recognises the goodness of God and that all good proceeds from Him, and that He is wholly to be trusted, the law brings only the curse. For cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them. Then why was the law given? "It was added because of transgression." Sin was always there; "death reigned from Adam to Moses because sin was there, but the law turned sin into actual transgression: that is, definite rebellion against God; man became not a sinner only but an actual transgressor of a known commandment. "Whatsoever things the law saith it saith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God," Romans 3. 19. The law was not against the promises that God had made, but came in to shew to men that their only hope for blessing was in what God could be to them in grace; they must rely upon Him and not upon themselves. It has done its work well and has no more to say.

But the blessing is in "the Seed," which is Christ. To Him as the Heir the inheritance belongs, and if any are to come into the blessing it can only be as being "in Him."

The law that came in centuries after the promise was made could not disannul it. The promise stands and yet the law could not be ignored. The great question of righteousness

had to arise and be settled, the claims of the law must be admitted and met. The curse of the law was there barring the way to the blessing. What was to be done about that? The way of deliverance was through Christ. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, verses 13, 14. He bore the curse to make the blessing sure to us. So that grace does not ignore righteousness, but it reigns through righteousness.

The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe, verse 22. Romans 11. 32 says that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all," that brings out His sovereign mercy, here it is the way we come into the blessing, it is by faith and not works.

Then the law is said to be the schoolmaster. The "our" in verse 24

is the Jew. And the passage should read, "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ." Until Christ came the law performed its task of teaching those who were under it the hard lesson of their own inability to do right, but now the dispensation of law and work is past, and the dispensation of faith has come and the office of the schoolmaster has come to an end. Even the believing Jew was no longer a minor, but a son of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and all who believe are that, for the "ye" of verse 26 takes in all who have believed. The bondage of the law is a thing of the past, the liberty of sons is ours.

Being baptised unto Christ they had taken up entirely new ground, the old distinctions of Jew and Gentile had passed away. It was not now the Gentiles becoming Jews or the Jews Gentiles, all stood on an equal footing and without distinction in this new place of blessing "in Christ." And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.

Praise.

Jesus! Thy precious love we boast,
Thy finish'd work is all our trust;
We glory in "the liberty"
Wherewith Thou, Lord, hast made us free.

Now in the presence of Thy cross,
With joy we count our all as dross;
Thou, Lord! alone art magnified,
Thou, Lord! our hearts hast satisfied.

To Thee with all Thy saints we raise
Thanks, worship, and eternal praise;
"Patient" — we wait Thy promised word,
"I quickly come" — Come, Jesus, Lord!

“THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.” J. T. Mawson.

No. 4. John's Gospel, chapter 20, continued.

BUT Thomas, one of the twelve, which was called Didymus” was not with his brethren on that memorable first day of the week, and as the Lord looked upon His disciples He must have missed him. Why was he not there? and where was he? This Thomas was a peculiar character, he was not a voluble and excitable man like his friend Simon Peter, nor trustful and companionable like John; he was a man by himself, his words were few and he was apparently of a dull, determined and materialistic turn of mind, he would take nothing on trust. Yet when he did speak it was to the point and there was no mistaking his meaning. Only John records his sayings and the Holy Ghost who inspired him to write had a purpose in that.

There was a time before the great tragedy when the disciples seemed thoroughly bewildered in their association with the Lord, they could not understand Him, He never seemed to do the thing that they expected. He could command the tempest when it threatened them; demons whom other men feared fled before His word, even death obeyed Him, yet when the Jews attempted to murder Him, He simply withdrew from Judea and went beyond Jordan and so escaped out of their hands. It was most perplexing. And then He proposed to return thither again. It seemed a foolish thing to do, and the disciples in evident surprise said to Him, “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?” When it was evident that He would not be turned from His purpose and some of them

were undecided what to do, Thomas spoke out bravely and well. Said he “Let us also go that we may die with Him.” He had pledged his allegiance to his Lord, and done it with his whole heart, and in life or death he would be true to his pledge. He meant it, though when the fury of hell began to rage he fled like the rest of them, for which cowardice he would never forgive himself. That was the sort of man he was.

He spoke again when the Lord told them that He was going away to His Father's house and would prepare a place for them there. They had not heard of the Father's house before, and yet He said to them, “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” This was too much for Thomas, it was too visionary for his matter-of-fact mind. How could they know the way to a place they had never heard of? He, with the rest of his brethren had looked for a place in Jerusalem with his Lord, but he would have been quite willing to share His fortunes in a desert, anywhere on earth, in fact, as long as his Lord was there, but the Father's house, and the way to it! Surely the Lord was speaking in parables, so he exclaimed with some impatience yet with deep reverence, “Lord, we know not whither Thou goest and how can we know the way?”

As we consider these words of his reported by John we begin to understand why he was not with the rest of his brethren on that first day of the week. His Lord had died and they had not died with Him; He had gone away and he knew not whither

He had gone. He was ashamed; he had failed his Lord and all he had hoped for had failed, and his pessimistic mind and mood had mastered him. He had only companied with his brethren because the Lord was with them, he could find neither comfort nor joy in them now that He had gone, so he had forsaken their company and hidden himself away to weep and mourn, and Mary could not find him when she sought for him to give him the message of the risen Lord. Yet his brethren found him during the days that followed, and there were ten of them, and every one of the ten said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But did that move and change Thomas? Not at all; no faith, no hope stirred his dull soul. Listen to his words, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into His side, *I will not believe*" verse 25. His dullness had grown into stubborn unbelief. His brethren were deceived but not he, they were ready to believe anything; he knew them; he would believe nothing that he could not see and feel.

"And after eight days again the disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." Again the closed doors did not keep Him from His disciples, and what a cheer His salutation must have given them, but this visit seems to have been specially for Thomas, for He addressed Him twice. He looked upon him with pity and met his unbelief with infinite grace; He shewed him that He knew the very thoughts of his heart and had heard his stubborn words to his brethren during the week that had passed. Stretching out His hands to him in entreaty He said to him, "Reach hither thy fingers,

and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless but believing." What a revelation of the Lord's grace was this, shewing that no matter what the condition of soul His disciples might be in He was equal to it. He appeared first to Mary, for she loved much and had the first claim and He filled her desolate heart with a joy that no man could take from her, and last of all he appeared to Thomas, and there could not be a greater contrast than that between Mary and Thomas, and He drove from his heart its sinful unbelief. And the grace that He shewed then abides for us to this day.

Thomas could doubt no more; those wounds in that incorruptible body were the eloquent witnesses that the One whom he had seen crucified but twelve days ago had taken His life again. The glory of the only begotten Son burst upon his astonished soul and falling prostrate before Him he cried, "My Lord and my God."

This great Gospel opens with the declaration of the Godhead glory of the Lord. "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." We read the words and wonder if any among all those who come into contact with Him will discern the full splendour of His person. One ray of His glory breaks into a heart here and another there as the story moves on to its climax. Its climax is here. At last human lips confess who He is, the close of the Gospel answers to its beginning. And it was Thomas who saw and believed and confessed: not enthusiastic

Peter, not John who had leaned upon His breast at Supper but Thomas, dull, calculating, materialistic Thomas. The truth that the whole Gospel was written to reveal is confessed at the end by the last man of the twelve from whom we would have expected it.

Happy Thomas, yet happier are those who have not seen yet believed. Believed what? That the One who bears in His body the wounds that He sustained upon the cross is none other than the eternal Word, by whom all things were made, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God.

Note it well, the Lord accepted the confession and adoration, and incidentally this is one of the strongest proofs that He is indeed what Thomas confessed Him to be. If He had been merely man, good and true, as some deniers of His Deity assert, He would have rebuked Thomas for uttering foolish words, for it would have been an unspeakable wickedness for one man to accept from another man the adoration that belongs only to God; but He accepted it because it was His right. And He went further and declared the blessedness of all those throughout the ages who should perceive His glory and confess it and render homage to Him. These words of His should be pondered and treasured by us, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed." How wonderful is this grace that has brought us into this supreme blessedness!

I have no doubt that this second

first day of the week has a dispensational interpretation. The first appearing is a type of this present church period. Thomas represents the Jew who refuses to believe the gospel of the risen Lord, and will not believe until the Lord appears to them when the Church period has closed with its rapture to heaven. Then they shall see Him and say, "What are these wounds in Thine hands?" Zechariah 13. 6, and then they shall confess "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" Isaiah 25. 9.

While rejoicing in the perfection of the Scriptures that reveal these ways of God to us, we must stress what lies on the surface, the grace of the Lord that can meet every condition of soul in His people. Are our hearts growing dull and cold towards the Lord, and does unbelief creep into our thoughts at times; does His word fail to stir our hearts as once it did? What is the remedy? A sight of Him as Thomas saw Him, His hands and side wounded. Yes,

"wounded for me"

"The Son of God, loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*."

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this Book; but *these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name.*"

To Continue

If the truth is held in communion with God it separates the soul to Him. Truth is to bear fruit and you have no truth that does not bear fruit.

THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD. A. J. Pollock.

"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? there is no searching of His understanding.

"He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint," (Isaiah 40. 28—31).

A THINKER, who thought long and profoundly on the problems of life, stressed the fact that everything was in a state of flux, everything was changing. Leaves burst into green, a few weeks pass by, change begins, autumn tints appear, the leaves drop, wither, become brittle, crumble into dust, perish. The river flows by. The water that filled its ample bosom passing by continually is soon seen no more. Yet the river, flowing on hour by hour, day by day, month by month, year by year, century by century remains, continually passing on, continually being replenished. There must be some *stable* source whence it is fed. Nay, human life, and that touches us all very intimately, is like the leaf and the river, changing, in a state of flux, going from strength to weakness, ending in extinction.

This deep thinker came to the conclusion that change, flux, continual deterioration, extinction must have its origin in *stability*, and that stability must be an Eternal Present. There must be an Unchanging One, and in this he was surely right.

So in our passage we are introduced to the Everlasting God, the Lord Jehovah, the One who *is*, who ever was, and who is ever to come (Rev. 1. 4), the Creator of the ends of the earth. We are told HE does not faint nor grow weary. He is the limitless source of power and life, the One that can know no change, no deterioration, no fading, no flux. What a comfort it is to fall back up-

on God, whose knowledge is so great, that even a sparrow does not fall to the ground without His notice.

Even in human nature youths, possessing to the utmost vigorous life, under certain circumstances, faint and grow weary; and even the young men, athletes, in all the pride of human virility may utterly fall.

When nature fails where then can we turn for help, but to the Spring, the static Source of all life and force; the One in whom there is no change? The river is fed by the never-failing springs of the hillside. It would soon run dry if it had no such source of perennial supply. So believers have a perennial source of supply, for God giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no strength He increaseth might. What a resource we have in God Himself, the Source of power and life.

We are told that they, who wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength. How often we have experienced this. Moments of depression come, weakness asserts itself, circumstances seem too difficult for us to grapple with. In our feebleness we wait on the Lord, we bring our depression and feebleness into His presence, and they pass away, they cannot remain in such an atmosphere. We rise up from our knees, our strength is renewed, not perhaps physically, but spiritually, though even a cheerful mind is good medicine for a sick body.

Visiting a sick sister in the Lord, crippled on her bed with rheumatoid arthritis, she gave us an interpretation, new to us, of the last verse, standing at the head of this article.

It is remarkable that in it we should have drawn to our attention three means of locomotion—flying, running, walking. Mounting up with wings like eagles gives us the idea of power over the very elements, vigorous life in the extreme. Running does not give the sense of easy graceful superiority over the law of gravitation that flying gives, but the idea of real effort, betokening a measure of strength of course. Walking is slow, sedate, step by step. The one that runs is not weary, the one that walks does not faint.

These three stages might well illustrate the changing conditions of human life. Youth flies, middle age runs, old age walks, creeps along. Is God able to meet us in differing circumstances? Surely He is.

In all the energy of youth, if we wait on the Lord, we can mount up. There seems no question but that of mounting. But time goes on, and life begins to alter. The slim youth becomes the heavy middle-aged man, not able to do what he once did. Or the middle-aged sister, whose energy at first seemed inexhaustible, has to sit down and rest betimes. But waiting on the Lord they run and do not weary. Their spirits are sustained.

But old age creeps on. Where

they once could walk a dozen miles as a mere refreshing exercise, a few steps now test their powers. To run would be dangerous to the heart that has never ceased beating for one minute all the long years of their life, summer and winter, year in, year out, the most wonderful engine in the world. See the aged man or woman, who waits on the Lord, taking a few steps, they walk and do not faint.

Fainting is a stronger expression of weakness than being weary. It is more intensive in its meaning. What a comfort that waiting on the Lord means that spiritually we do not faint. That whatever the circumstances are—old age, weakness, sickness, even mortal malady, our days numbered—the Lord, upon whom we wait, can minister power and strength, so that believers can triumph even in the article of death. "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" (Psalm 116. 8). "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7. 25). "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116. 15). Nature's greatest defeat becomes the occasion of God's greatest triumph. The flux, the changing, deterioration, death itself is left behind. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15. 26). "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15. 54).

Reliance on God's word is the only sure ground. How can you be certain? God has said it. If God's speaking requires proof, I must have something more sure and true than God. If God cannot speak so as to claim authority without another to accredit what He says, there is no such thing as faith.

“THE BODY IS . . . WHAT?”

Inglis Fleming.

YOU are a true Christian. Well I write now for such, and for such only. Do you ask, What do you mean by a true Christian? I mean this. A true Christian is one who has been “born of God.” He has a new life and nature altogether. He has received the Lord Jesus into his heart. He has been sealed by the Holy Spirit. He is a child of God. His sins have all been blotted out by the precious blood of Christ. He is “in Christ,” and for him “there is no condemnation” now, but a certainty of everlasting joy.

Now then if you are a true Christian, “your body is” . . . What? Let us turn to the Word of God to see!

First of all then, in 1 Corinthians 6. 13 we read,

“The body is . . . FOR THE LORD.”

Henceforth it is to be for His service. It is *His*. He has bought you altogether. His precious blood was the purchase price. You “are not your own.” The blood that has *cleansed* you from your sins *claims* you for His service. You are called by His love for you, to “live unto Him who died for you and rose again.” The time past of your life is surely sufficient for you to have done your own will and lived for your own interests. Before your conversion you sought your own pleasure. You gratified your own tastes and sought to accomplish your own aims and purposes. You lived *for yourself*. You were your own object. Your whole course was centered in “I.” You may have been religious in measure. But even such “religion” had your own advantage in view, as you sought to make out a righteousness of your own.

This aspect of life was well expressed by one who, after becoming a true Christian, penned these words as to his former history:—

“I lived for myself,
I thought for myself,
And for none else beside:
Just as if Jesus had never lived
As if Jesus had never died.”

That life of selfishness was condemned at the cross of Christ. There “our old man” (all that we were as in our sinful state before God) was crucified with Christ.” It was judged and set aside altogether. Now, as a Christian, you live before God “in Christ” risen. His life is yours. “The body is. . . FOR THE LORD” in order that His life may be expressed in you. It is “not for fornication.” It is not for the furtherance of your “own desires whether gross or innocent” but it is FOR Him. And, on His part, He is “FOR THE BODY.” He cares for that which is His and in which He is to be manifested. Thus we may turn to Him in regard to *all that* affects our bodies, assured that He will hear us for our good physically and for His own glory through us. Then, on our side, we are to be careful of our bodies, seeing that they are the Lord’s. Everything that will conduce to their well-being is to be attended to by us.

The words of the apostle Paul, as to his own course, may help us here. In 2 Corinthians 4. 10, we may read that which has been called “Paul’s diary.”

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in the body.”

Everyday he applied to himself that for which the Lord Jesus had died. He “always” refused “the

flesh," the self-life. He would not allow it to act. He kept it in check constantly. And this was in order that "the life of Jesus" might shine out even in him.

And, as another has put it, the Lord said, "Paul, I will help you in this," and so we read further,

"We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

"For Jesus' sake." The life of Jesus." "Our mortal flesh." Remarkable the association. Paul was allowed to know trials and troubles, difficulties and distresses (see verses 8, 9) in his pathway of service. But all that he endured was "For Jesus' sake," so that nothing of Paul being allowed "the life of Jesus" might be evidenced in him—yes evidenced in his "mortal flesh," in his body of weakness which was still subject to death. What honour was his! What honour will be ours if we follow him in his course.

Death worked in him and life toward others. He was made thus a blessing to those to whom he ministered day by day. In his body Christ was manifested, as He should be and will be in our bodies as we walk in the power of the Holy Ghost.

"The body is" . . . What? Referring further to the apostle's words we learn that our body is that in which "Christ may be magnified." Noble were his words, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me

to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1. 20-21).

"Christ . . . magnified." Christ made much of. *Personally* He cannot be made more than He is. But *in us* there may be this increase. In us, by the supply of the Spirit of Christ, more of Himself may be seen. This was the apostle's earnest expectation and his hope. And this "as always" tells again of his life's ambition and of his consequent purpose and practice.

Whether by his life or by his death it mattered not to him. Whether it might be by ministry or by martyrdom, that was insignificant, if only Christ might be magnified.

So it was with the early Moravian missionaries. They had a medal engraved in the centre of which was the figure of an ox. On one side was a plough. On the other side was an altar. Over these emblems was the inscription, "Ready for either." The servant of God going forth was to be prepared for all eventualities. If to live was his lot he was to be like the ox at the plough, strong to labour. If to die as a martyr on the altar of sacrifice was to be his portion, he must be willing for that.

Let us measure ourselves by this? Is our "earnest expectation and our hope" like the apostles? Are we like these Moravian brethren?

As we look into what remains of our life on earth can we exclaim, "To me to live is Christ"?

Before our conversion we might have said, "To me to live is self and to die is judgment." Happy are we, who now believe on the Son of God, in knowing that to die is gain for we shall be with Christ. But let us ask ourselves our aim in life. What

are we seeking day by day? The apostle mourns over some believers of his days, saying, "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." These were living lost lives, lives which will not count in the coming day of manifestation when the Lord will reward His own according as their work shall be.

The body is" . . . What? These Corinthian believers had forgotten the importance of their body. "What?" exclaims the apostle,

"Know ye not that your body is the **TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST** which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price . . . ? (1 Cor. 6).

Do you Christian readers know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? Have you been taught this? It is possible that the importance of your physical frame has never been brought before you. The writer was a believer for years before he knew the wonderful fact. He knew that the Lord Jesus died to save his soul—but as to his body being indwelt by the Holy Spirit—this was utterly foreign to his thoughts. He had never heard of such a matter. And this is the case with many Christians to-day. It is a blessed but a serious thought. This mortal body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of God. This being so I must see to it that I grieve Him not (see Eph. 4. 30). So therefore

- (1) Let me be careful, *what I put into my body*, lest it should be harmed in any way by any food or drink.
- (2) Let me be careful, *what I put on to my body*, and watch that my clothing is modest and clean and neat.

(3) Let me be careful, *where I put my body*, and refuse to go where I should not take so glorious and gracious a Guest.

(4) Let me be careful *how I use my body*, that it may be "preserved blameless" in every respect as befits a Holy Temple.

"The body is" . . . What? It is a vessel for the glory of God. "Glorify God in your body", is the apostolic exhortation. "Walk worthily of Him." We are left here that He may be honoured in the world, where His Son has been refused and crucified.

In view of this high privilege—a privilege no angel is possessed of—should we not cry,

"Lord, take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer"? (Prov. 25. 4). Every redeemed one is as "silver." But there is dross with each one which needs to be removed.

It is for the purpose of this removal that the Christian is put into the crucible of trial. The Lord Himself sits, "as the Refiner and Purifier of silver." And in grace He takes away that which hinders our suitability for the service of God.

The removal of the dross may be a painful process. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but rather grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth" blessing to us, and we become partakers of God's holiness and so are fitted for His use.

"The body is" . . . What? It is mortal, as we have seen. This may remind us that our time for service

is short. If our Lord still tarry we have but a limited period in which to glorify God here.

Of David it is said, "For David after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption" (Acts 13. 36).

"To serve our own generation by the will of God." That is for His pleasure, in the place He has allotted to us, this is our mission too. Each one of us has his own appointed sphere. No one can do another's work. Thus we should seek to know what our particular ministry is and then diligently fulfil it. Our life is brief indeed but it is important and influential. Let us then "Work . . . while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9. 4).

"The body is" . . . What? Soon it is to be glorified. Wonderful the prospect!

"We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body (our body of humiliation) and fashion it like unto His glorious body (body of glory) according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3. 21).

Our Lord is coming again. He has pledged Himself to do so. His own promise stands sure. 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 (John 14. 3).

At His coming His first action will be upon the bodies of His own. To be with Him in His glory they must be like Him. So those who have

been put to sleep by Him, those who have died "in Christ," will be raised first, in bodies of glory. Then those who are alive until His coming will be changed into His image. Then "together" all will be caught up to be with Him for ever.

"Behold I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed. In a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52).

From the Scriptures referred to, we have seen something of the great importance of our bodies. May it be ours now to give more diligence to be found of our Lord at His coming "without spot," may our "whole spirit and soul and *body*" being preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Thess 5. 23).

Seeing all that has come before us of favour, and privilege from God, what response is due from us? The Apostle makes this clear for us, in Romans 12. 1, 2:

"I beseech you . . . brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service.

Our only spiritually reasonable, intelligent service is to place our bodies at God's disposal for the help and blessing of others. Have we done this? If not shall we not do it now?

Your body is His by purchase,

Your body is His by redemption,

Your body should be His by your glad and willing presentation to Himself.

SOME RESULTS OF THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

T. Oliver.

No. 1. MOUNT ZION.

"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched (i.e., tangible, viz., Sinai) . . . but ye are come unto Mount Zion" (Heb. 12. 18—22).

THE contrast between Sinai and Zion has an important place in Scriptural exposition. E.g. the allegory of the Two Covenants (1) Mount Sinai which genders bondage . . . answers to Jerusalem which now is in bondage with her children. (2) But Jerusalem which is above, is free, our mother (Gal. 4. 24-26). So the passage from Hebrews would emphasise the double antithesis between the dispensations, signalling the first as in the realm of sense, concerned with natural phenomena, a dispensation of fear, while the second is of heavenly order thus outside the realm of sense, and introduces the dispensation of grace. Sinai was typical of the first Covenant connected with material things (tangible) of terrible nature, inspiring apprehension, relative to broken responsibility. On the other hand, Mount Zion is typical of what is consequent on the death and resurrection of Christ.

In Scripture a mountain was symbolical of what could be depended upon. Mount Sinai revealed the character and consistency of God. He demanded consistency on the part of the people relative thereto. Their inconsistency was demonstrated very shortly afterwards. But Mount Zion demonstrates God as a giving God, no longer manifested on the line of demand. Man's period of probation was ended in the cross of Christ. God is faithful, i.e. absolutely reliable or consistent. Hence we are delivered from the necessity and bondage of preserving a reputa-

tion, because we are linked up with One who has never varied.

Zion has a great place in the Old Testament, e.g. "Beautiful for situation the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion . . . the city of the great King" (Ps. 48. 2). "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined" (Psalm 50. 2). Mount Zion was really nothing as a geographical feature. Naturally it was merely a flat top mountain rock with precipices on one side, easily defended in those days of feeble engines of attack. It would not have been sought as a place for comfortable living. But it took its real significance from the Ark having been brought there by King David after its absence of nearly a century, amongst the Philistines, and then subsequently in various resting places. What made Mount Zion was not its physical beauty, but that it was invested with the glory of God, because God was pleased to dwell there. So in the epistle of Peter the mount of Transfiguration is referred to as the "Holy Mount," because the Lord's glory and presence was manifested there; so we have come to the real Mount Zion which is a spiritual conception in contrast to the provisional Zion which was material.

The real Zion is seen in Christ risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of God as the centre of attraction for the people of God. He is the perfection of beauty from which the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines forth, and

thus is the joy of the whole earth of redeemed souls. The realm of responsibility before God was finished in the death of Christ, so that man doing his best to merit the approbation of God is now nineteen hundred years too late to have a reasonable pretext for the achievement of his purpose.

The secular powers of His day crucified the Lord of glory, so the world has come under condemnation. But the One who passed through "death's dark raging flood" has emerged on the other side a complete victor. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6. 4). That is a remarkable statement! The Apostle adduces the irrefutable argument that the necessary consequence is that we should walk in newness of life. The experimental effect is that we are delivered from the necessity of having recourse to the world to supply our needs, whether material or spiritual. We are now of God's universe, the illumination and centre of which are found in the Man at the right hand of God. Therefore the Apostle insisted that the Colossian Christians

were to set their mind on things above. Why? Because that is where Christ sits. All our real interests are there!

Every hope connected with the world as a permanent entity was lost in the death of Christ. So that a new sphere is introduced in the resurrection of Christ. Mankind was under death and the curse of the broken law, but the redemption which is in Christ Jesus has met all that man was, and a way of escape has thus been made on an irrefragable foundation.

Our bond with Christ is established in the Spirit. Every bond on earth, no matter how precious, will be snapped by death, but we are bound up in a new entity from which no agency, physical or spiritual, can extract us or separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8. 39). God is faithful who has called us unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1. 9). He is to us the real Mount Zion, on whom we can rely implicitly!

Strangers.

"The Lord your God . . . loveth the *stranger*, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the *stranger*; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 10. 17—19).

"Be not forgetful to entertain *strangers*: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13. 2).

"Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to *strangers*; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for His Name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." (3 John 5—8).

“A MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE.”

F. B. Hole.

ALL that we know of Abel is compressed into a few verses in Genesis 4, supplemented by one verse in Hebrews 11. His name is mentioned in a few other verses of the New Testament, but not in a way that adds anything to our knowledge of him. The facts concerning him are given in Genesis, and then Hebrews 11. 4 illumines the facts, making clear their deep significance.

We might almost have written *fact*, rather than facts. We are told that he was “a keeper of sheep,” but this merely makes it certain that when he brought as an offering “the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof,” it was an offering of lambs. We are also told that “the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering,” and this shows that he and his offering were accepted in the sight of God. The central fact is that he found the way of acceptable approach to God by means of a sacrifice, which involved the death of the victim. He was the first man to die; yet, because his act set forth the true ground of approach to God, his name is still remembered and his voice is still heard.

Cain’s offering and his hatred, culminating in murder, furnish a dark background to the picture, against which Abel’s sacrifice stands out the more clearly. Cain brought his offering on rational and natural grounds. His father Adam had been driven forth from Eden “to till the ground from whence he was taken,” and of the two brothers Cain was the one to follow this out, for he “was a tiller of the ground.” In this he was quite unimpeachable; but, in assuming that God would be pleased with an offering of some of the fruits of

his tillage, he evidently forgot that the ground had been cursed, and that he himself was under the sentence of death, and that no fruit of the labour of his hands, not even the best could lift that weighty sentence and put him right with God. Since God paid no attention whatever to his offering, he found himself rejected.

The excellence of Abel’s sacrifice lay in the fact that it was of such a nature as to acknowledge his own place as a sinner before God under sentence of death. He did not bring the firstlings of his flock alive, as is shown by the words which follow, “and of the fat thereof.” Read these words in the light of such a verse as Numbers 18. 17, and the significance of them is clear. By bringing an offering of this character Abel owned the truth as to himself and took his true place before God. He did in principle what the publican did, as related by the Lord in Luke 18. 13, and the same happy result followed in both cases.

And further, the greater excellence of his sacrifice is seen in this: it was the first clear foreshadowing and type of the death of Christ. We say, *clear*, because there was a dim announcement of His death in the words of the Lord God, as to the bruising of the heel of the woman’s seed, and a dim type in the clothing of Adam and Eve in the coats of skins. Now however what was involved in these two things comes clearly into view, and there can be no mistaking the fact that Abel’s slain lambs, with their fat offered to God, pointed on to the great sacrifice of Calvary. The excellence of a calm full moon in winter is borrowed from the sun, which is for the mo-

ment invisible to us; so the excellence of Abel's sacrifice was largely attributable to the fact that at the dawn of the world's history it was radiating the light of the far-distant sacrifice of Jesus, which was yet to come.

Consequently, in Abel's sacrifice God found pleasure. Finding pleasure in his gifts, He testified to His acceptance of them in no uncertain way. Genesis tells us that God "had respect to" his offering, and Hebrews states that God testified "of his gifts," but in neither place are we told how God rendered this testimony. It may have been by fire from heaven, as on other occasions, or it may not. The *mode* by which He did it does not signify; the *fact* that He did it is of the utmost significance.

It meant much to Abel, since thereby he "obtained witness that he was righteous;" or, in other words, that he was right with God. It means much to us also, since in just the same way do we get evidence of our own justification. God did not testify to Abel or to the excellence of his character, but He did testify to the excellence of the sacrifice which he brought, and on the ground of which his approach was based. The moment that Abel knew that his sacrifice was accepted, he knew that he was accepted, since he stood or fell by the offering that he brought. His sacrifice being accepted, he knew that he was right with God.

Our assurance of being right with God, if it is to be solid and lasting, must be based upon the fact that our approach to God is on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ, and that His sacrifice, made once for all upon the cross, has been accepted by God.

How did God testify His acceptance of the atoning sacrifice of Christ? We can answer this question, thank God! without any element of uncertainty. We do not know exactly how God testified His acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, but we know without any doubt how He testified as to the sacrifice of Christ. Verses 12-14, of the previous chapter have told us that Christ "having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God . . . for by one offering He has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified" (Darby's New Trans.). His resurrection and session at the right hand of God is the Divine testimony to the supreme worth of His sacrifice.

God's testimony to His acceptance of the offering is evidence to the offerer that he is righteous. This is what Hebrews 11. 4 states in regard to Abel. The same thing exactly is true in regard to us. As the believer fixes the eye of faith on Jesus seated at the right hand of God, he has all the evidence he needs as to his complete justification before God. We cannot be too clear on this point. If we attempt to obtain evidence of being righteous in any other direction, focussing our attention upon our feelings, our experiences, or even our faith, we are bound to be landed into uncertainty. God bears no witness to any of these things, for none of them is perfect; and so any witness that may be borne as to them must be *human* at best. *God's witness* is borne to the perfect sacrifice of Christ. Perfect certainty is found in God's witness, and here we can safely rest.

Abel offered his more excellent sacrifice by faith. He brought the right kind of offering, but he did not do this by good fortune or a happy

inspiration, but by *faith*. Now it was just this that Cain lacked. In desiring to draw near to God, he may have meant very well, but he had no understanding of God's way and his darkened mind led him to stumble along a way of his own. But, if Abel had faith, we may ask, in what did his faith rest? Faith simply takes God at His word, simply receives the light of the Divine revelation. Now where was the word or revelation that could be laid hold of by Abel's faith?

The only revelation which is disclosed to us in the Scriptures is that provided by God's action on the day sin entered Eden, when He clothed Adam and Eve in coats made from skins. These coats must have involved death falling upon the animals whose skins were taken for this purpose. So on the very day that sin entered the Garden, death entered too; only it was not the death of the man and woman who had sinned, but rather the death of innocent victims, whereby was provided the covering needed by the sinners. This action of the Lord God was deeply significant. It was one of those occasions when actions did indeed speak more loudly than words. God presented His mind in a pictorial way.

There was something very suitable in this since the human race was at that moment in its infancy. We all know that to human individuals in infancy a picture conveys much more than a multitude of words. God set forth His way of covering guilty sinners, so that they might be able to abide His presence, in this pictorial way, and Abel had the faith to grasp and understand the Divine way. It

is only by faith that we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; and only by faith did Abel understand the right way of approach to God, or do we understand it to-day. Again and again we witness the sad spectacle of the wise and prudent of this world stumbling in complete darkness where the way to God is in question, and quite unconscious of the darkness they are in. They have first-class intellects and even prodigious learning, but no faith.

Though in point of order we have dwelt upon faith last, it comes first in Hebrews 11. 4, since there everything begins on our side. On God's side the sacrifice of supreme and eternal value stands first: first in His mind, and first historically, if we think of ourselves, antedating our very existence by many centuries. Still on our side faith rightly stands in the first place, and there we begin, and then the other items fall into their places.

The order of our verse is this:—*faith, sacrifice, witness, righteousness, speaking*. Does not this order suit us exactly? Our faith being centred in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, we find in His resurrection and exaltation God's witness to its supreme sufficiency, and thus the peace-giving knowledge of righteousness takes possession of our hearts. Then, and not till then, can we open our lips in testimony, and speak that which we have discovered for ourselves.

Abel's blood spoke, and cried for vengeance. The blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel.

THE PERSON OF THE LORD.

A. E. Booth.

(Continued)

FROM the first entrance of the Son into this world we learn that "God was in Christ," hence there was no change in His Deity.

The Babe was "God in Christ," the Child twelve years of age was "God in Christ;" when He came forth from the thirty years of quiet retirement and approached the Baptist, it was "God in Christ," and the Father expressed His perfect delight in Him, the eternal Son: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." At the well of Sychar, it was "God in Christ." Yea, even at the Cross, when in suffering and death, it was the same glorious Personage, "God in Christ," "God manifest in the flesh" (2 Cor. 5. 19—I Tim. 3. 16), and now that atonement has been made by His suffering and death, and He has risen *bodily* from the dead, He is in heaven the self-same Person; "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead *bodily*." (Col. 2. 9.)

In every step from the first the conditions changed, but He remained the same Person. In eternity He was surrounded by divine glory, but in Bethlehem it was the Bondman's form.

In Jesus, our Lord, we see the perfect Servant replacing Israel, the imperfect servant; the perfect Man replacing Adam, the imperfect man. Yet at every step, at every stage, He was ever "*God* manifest in the flesh," and the miracles wrought by Him throughout His whole life-period on earth are the full proof.*

When He thus took His place on earth as the Bondservant, He entered a new condition, a new experience, a new history. It was the dawn of a new day for God's perfect Servant. Here we may pause and inquire, why was such a purpose, such humility necessary?

Prophecy

One passage we will now consult, a passage which to many has been rather obscure: "But He shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman, for man *taught me to keep cattle* from my youth" (Zech. 13. 5). If the whole prophecy is carefully consulted it will be seen that Christ, our Lord, was before the Prophet from the third chapter, again and again, but in this passage the A.V. has a faulty reading, but when corrected; it sheds light upon our theme: "But He shall say I am no prophet, I am an husbandman, for man (Adam) *acquired me as a slave* (or *bondservant*) from my youth."*

With this change in the reading, and placed side by side with the New Testament passage: "taking His place as a bondservant," all the difficulties of the obscure reading pass away, and light is shed upon the New Testament teaching.

It was the one act of Adam's disobedience that brought in the Fall. death by sin, hence to clear the

a perfection of His manhood was, that He never exercised His God-head prerogatives, His divine power, independently or apart from the Father's will and pleasure, yet again and again, He did exercise them, and this exercise of them was a continual proof of His Deity.

*"When occasion demanded He exercised His divine attributes" (Moorehead). But

*See J.N.D.'s note in Synopsis and his Translation.

world of the results of Adam's fall, and to fill it with the glory of God, and to fill the new heavens and new earth with a new race of redeemed men, there was a necessity that the Son of God should come to earth, and from His youth we observe Him here in the bondman's place. He divested Himself of a form that was His in the past eternity and took another form on earth: this to fulfil the counsels of eternity and to fulfil the prophetic Word written prior to His coming.

The Hebrew Servant

(Exodus 21. 2-6).

We have seen how that the prophecies held in anticipation the *Bondservant*, and the epistle to the Philippians shows us its fulfilment. We will here add another witness from the typical part of the Old Testament, that of the Hebrew servant.

He served his master seven years, then he might go free, but if he declared plainly that he loved his master, his wife, and children, and desired to remain in such service, the prescribed law was that he should go to the door-post and have his ear bored with an awl. This would be the perpetual sign that he was a servant forever.

We have seen that Christ became by birth the Bondservant. He was a Servant the whole period of His sojourn on earth. Then at the close of that eventful life, personally He might go free. He had no sin, never sinned, and it was not necessary that He should die. The penalty of sin had no claim upon Him. He said that He could call a legion of angels to assist Him at the close, but here one mark of His perfection was displayed. He did not consider Him-

self alone, He thought of God's glory first, and then the blessing of others hence He said: "Not My will, but Thine be done." He was the true and perfect Hebrew *Bondservant*. He declared, "I love My Master, My wife, and My children." He loved His Father with a perfect love; He loved the Church with a perfect love, and He loved the whole redeemed family with a perfect love, hence He went to the Cross, offered the Sacrifice. He endured the sufferings and, as the Hebrew servant, had placed in His body the mark that denotes now that He will be a *Servant for ever* (the bored ear).

Perfect Manhood

Added to the bondman's form, we further read that He took His place "in the likeness of men." He did not come to earth clothed with the glory of an angel. They were the highest form of God's creatures. They served the triune God from their creation, but when He came to earth to serve, He came in "the likeness of men." His mission was to *men*. He came in love to *men*. When He thus assumed the form of humanity, it was a perfect, sinless humanity. He became flesh and possessed a human spirit, human soul, human body, but without sin.

The Ark

(Numbers 4. 5-6).

There are enshrined in the Old Testament many illustrations of these sacred themes, showing us that these great truths were ever before the mind of the Holy Spirit long before the Saviour came, and now we read those typical foreshadowings with the light of New Testament revelation.

The ark had an important place in Israel's history, and it was a

marked type of our Lord, and the mercy-seat over it sets forth the value of Christ's atonement before God. The two thus typify the Person and work of our adorable Lord. The ark was the foundation of God's Throne, the very basis upon which Jehovah dwelt amongst them, and it led the way and guided the nation to the land of their inheritance. When they began their wilderness journey, Aaron the high priest, and his sons took the beautiful veil of the Tabernacle and covered the ark with it. This is highly instructive, because we get the typical import of the veil by the Apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews, "the veil, that is to say His flesh" (Heb. 10. 20).

In this we trace the lessons of the *incarnation*. The Son of God from heaven was clothed ever with a veil of humanity, and that humanity perfect and sinless, hence we read:

(1) "That *Holy Thing* that shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God*."

(2) "The Word *became* flesh."

(3) "A body hast Thou prepared *Me*."

(4) "The *Second Man*, the Lord *out of heaven*."

(5) "*Taking His place* in the likeness of man."

In this array of the Sacred Scriptures we see, throughout the Old and the New, how the truth is dove-tailed. There is a consistency throughout. The true ark was the Son from heaven. The perfect veil, our Lord here in human form, a real, perfect Man amongst men.

This veil covering had its different colours, so our Lord had His vari-

ous perfections and glories as a Man, and to discern such we need only to study the Gospel records. They are there displayed at every step in His pathway on earth. But further, this beautiful veil had placed over it the plain "badger skin." This was a suited cover to preserve the beautiful veil from becoming soiled by the journey, and we read concerning our Lord when here amongst men, and in the midst of the representatives of that Nation "He had no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire of Him" (Isaiah 53. 2-3).

The moral excellencies of His nature as Man, the glories of His perfect Manhood, were not observed nor appreciated by the mass, but where there was faith, the eyes of the heart penetrated beyond the outer cover, and the disciples saw these beautiful displays of His perfections. "The poor of the flock that waited upon Me knew that it was the Word of the Lord" (Zech. 11. 11).

Then again, over the badger skin was placed a cloth wholly of *blue*. It was a lovely sight to be permitted, as the disciples were, to view the Son of God on earth, to walk by His side, to hear Him speak, teach and preach, and hear Him breathe out His heart's desires to His Father in prayer. In all these exercises of the whole pathway on earth with Christ our Lord, while men may have observed but the plain badger skin, in all He said and did there was the heavenly display of His perfect nature; the blue could be seen throughout the whole pathway. He ever bore the *heavenly* character before men when on earth.

(To be concluded)

SCRIPTURE NOTES

1 *Thessalonians*

THE first Epistles to the Thessalonians is the oldest of all the writings of the New Testament. It was written somewhere about twenty years after the Crucifixion, and long before any of the four Gospels. This gives it a special interest, and shews how Paul, who had received his commission and gospel directly from the Lord in heaven, was in full accord with the Gospels and other inspired writings.

The four great facts of our Christian faith stand out in the Epistle with a boldness and simplicity that is impressive. They are

(1) The Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) His death as the Saviour for sinners.

(3) His actual resurrection from the dead.

(4) His coming again.

1. The letter begins, Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. This could only mean that the Lord Jesus Christ is one with and co-equal with the Father.

Twenty times in this short letter Jesus is spoken of as the Lord. This is the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament *Jehovah*; that incommunicable Name is His.

Then we read "May our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you" (3. 11). Plainly here prayer is offered to the Lord even as to God the Father. And the word "direct" following upon this *plural* subject is a *singular* verb. Could anything prove more

definitely the proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ? These incidental allusions to the truth as to the Lord's person shew us that this the foundation of our faith was the faith of this church so recently won from idolatry.

2. We read of the Jews, "who killed the Lord Jesus" (2. 15). The historical fact of the death of the Lord is here given, and in the same incidental fashion the meaning of the fact is given. "God hath not appointed us unto wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, *who died for us*" (5. 9, 10).

Ch. 1. 10 tells us that "Jesus, delivereth us from the wrath to come," (R.V.) plainly shewing that His death for us was a vicarious death. He bore the wrath for us.

3. We have clear testimony to the resurrection and ascension of the Lord. We read, "Ye turned unto God . . . to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead," (1. 10).

And again in ch. 4. 14, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again."

4. Finally, it is to this Epistle written to this church of babes in God's family that we turn for the clearest statements as to the coming again of the Lord. In every chapter there is a reference to this great Christian verity. "To wait for His Son from heaven (1. 10). "For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of life? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (2. 19). "To the end that He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of

our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints," (3. 13). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ," (5. 23).

But it is to chapter 4. 16, 17 that we turn for the wonderful revelation as to how this coming will affect those who like these Thessalonians

had believed to the saving of their souls. "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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

"JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."

Moule.

Romans 8. 35-39.

FOR Thy sake we are done to death all the day long; we have been reckoned, estimated, as sheep of slaughter. Even so. *But in these things, all of them, we more than conquer;* not only do we tread upon our foes; we spoil them, we find them occasions of glorious gain, *through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, life with its natural allurements or its bewildering toils, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers* whatever orders of being unfriendly to Christ and His saints the vast Unseen contains, *nor present things, nor things to come,* in all the boundless field of circumstance and contingency, *nor height, nor depth,* in the illimitable sphere of space, *nor any other creature, no thing, no being,* under the Uncreated One, *shall be able to sunder us,* "us" with an emphasis upon the word and thought, *from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*—from the eternal embrace wherein the Father embosoms the Son, and, in the Son, all who are one in Him.

So once more the divine music rolls itself out into the blessed Name. We have heard the previous cadences as they came in their order; "Jesus

our Lord, who was delivered because of our offences, and was raised again because of our justification" (Rom. 4. 25); "That grace might reign, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (5. 21); "The gift of God is eternal life, in Jesus Christ our Lord" (6. 23); "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (7. 25). Like the theme of a fugue it has sounded on, deep and high; still, always, "our Lord Jesus Christ," who is all things, and in all and for all, to His happy believing members. And now all is gathered up into this. Our "wisdom, righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1 Cor. 1. 33), the golden burthens of the third chapter, and the sixth, and the eighth, are all, in their living, ultimate essence, "Jesus Christ our Lord." HE makes every truth, every doctrine of peace and holiness, every sure premiss and indissoluble inference, to be life as well as light. HE IS pardon, and sanctity and heaven. Here, finally, the Eternal Love is seen not as it were diffused into infinity, but gathered up wholly and for ever in Him. Therefore to be in Him is to be in It. It is to be within the clasp which surrounds the Beloved of the Father.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

Chapter 26, continued.

THE prophetic address being finished the Lord now turns to the circumstances connected with His betrayal and death. He turns to meet the whole source of evil, and Satan himself as the hidden source of all evil, and beyond all the stern judgment of sin. First of all desertion, denial by His friends, next a mock trial with smiting, scoffing and spitting by His people, the Jews, and then every coarse and brutal indignity at the hands of Gentile soldiers. Along with this the whole power of Satan pressing death as the judgment of God on His spirit in the garden, and last of all the meeting God about sin. This last stands alone in its solemn majesty, a mystery of mysteries which forbids at once and for ever all creature power to apprehend. The Holy One must be there alone. Alone, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He must in that hour of deepest extremity know what it is to cry in agony of soul as the forsaken one and not have an answer because He is bearing sin, made sin for us. He who knew no sin must be made sin, and be engulfed in the darkness and horror of that darkest of all hours with none to pity or no one to help. He must be led as a Lamb to the slaughter to suffer and to die. We rightly say no created being could endure what He endured, but let us add, there is no creature that can form an estimate of what took place there. We gaze with wonder and amazement and worship and adore while we share in the fruits and blessings of that stupendous work but into the depth of what our Lord Jesus Christ suffered or the measureless distance into which He went under God's

judgment of sin no creature shall ever be able to conceive.

In turning to the circumstances which led up to all this it is striking how the events seem to fall into a certain order which seem to admit a kind of a threefold classification. Chapter 26 opens with a gathering of His enemies, followed by the supper in the house of Simon the leper, and then the coming together with His disciples to celebrate the Passover. In the first were the priests, the ecclesiastical rulers, the scribes, the learned of the nation; and the elders as those marked by age and maturity. There were the heads of that nation which had been for long under the public culture of Jehovah; to whom pertaineth the adoption and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen (Romans 9. 4, 5). There they were gathered together "Consulting that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill Him." What a sight! Enough, indeed, if such be possible, to make the angels weep. Weeping, indeed has been theirs and their children's; a weeping that still goes on and will continue till the blessed One whom they were about to kill comes back again to put an end to all their sufferings; but for the moment it is *His* time of weeping. The blessed Saviour Who wept over Jerusalem is now nearing the agony of Gethsemane when in the agony of that sweat of blood He will pour out His cries and tears. But ere that moment comes He, the adorable Centre of all these scenes

must be feasted, for the Father has prepared for Him a feast. This leads to the act of the woman who came with her alabaster box of very precious ointment and poured it on His head as He sat at meat.

At a time when various classes are showing their estimate of the Saviour the Father shews His appreciation of His beloved Son. He prepared one who did all that lay within her to glorify and honour Him and amidst the gathering gloom He is seen to be loved and appreciated in an act that none but Himself can measure. Where were the disciples? Where the ardent Peter and where the beloved John that could pillow his head on His blessed bosom? These two with James, belonged to the inner circle of intimacy, but they are left far behind by this woman. What of the rest of the disciples, and saddest of all, what of Judas Iscariot? "The Lord is a God of knowledge and by His actions are weighed." Giving to the poor has a large place, yea, with such sacrifices God is well pleased, but what is this world with all its charity and philanthropy compared to the Son of God. This woman anticipated the day of His glory when to Him shall be brought the wealth of the Gentiles, when the kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, and the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts, when all kings shall fall down before Him and all nations serve Him. All this will be fitting in its time but the act of this devoted woman surpasses all; she lighted up the whole moral scene by anointing Him for His burial in that dark hour of His betrayal and dishonour and death.

It was the unerring accuracy of spiritual instinct that flows from personal occupation with her Lord. She spent upon Him her all. She did

the proper thing in the proper way at the proper time, for she anointed Him for His burial: an act which stands alone by one who can say nothing for herself; well knowing that He upon Whom the sacrifice was performed alone would estimate it and vindicate her. This world goes on with its charity and philanthropy, all right and beautiful in its place, but here is something which must be proclaimed through all time and in every land, an act which will be remembered to her credit through all eternity. "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. The gold and crystal cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold" (Job 28).

The third meeting (ver. 20-25) was with the twelve in the upper room to celebrate the passover. He sought seclusion with His own in a touching farewell meeting. The time is near when He and they must be parted: parted indeed as after flesh and blood for ever. His heart goes out to them in the words, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." It was then that the Supper was instituted which would serve as a memorial, a calling of Him to mind. His death being the basis of all, and around which revolves the deepest and richest feelings of the heart of God and the wealth of eternal counsel. Many things came out concerning His death and resurrection, and the Spirit's presence here consequent on Him being glorified on high as we learn from John; but even here while the storm of evil was rising outside there was that which brought deepest distress to His heart. One would betray Him (verse 25), another would deny Him (verse 34), and all the rest would forsake Him and be scattered.

The case of Judas is a tragedy beyond compare. Who can fathom the depth of our Lord's words, "It were better for that man he had never been here." And again when speaking to His Father:—"None of them is lost save the son of perdition." His was a place of richest favour, companying with the Son of God. May we not say that he was the product of His generation and the representative of fallen humanity? The way was opened in the act of disobedience in Gen 3, which ended in the betrayal of the Son of God with a kiss. With Peter it was different: boasting self-confidence led him beyond his faith, and breakdown followed in the most deplorable way. Viewed from the place of intimacy in which he stood Peter's fall seems to go beyond even that of the Iscariot. Well for him however that his fall did not put him beyond the ground of mercy. Peter had to weep bitterly, but Judas, like Ahithopel of old (2 Sam. 17. 23), went out in the bitterness of remorse to end his own life. The forsaking by the rest of the disciples completes the humiliation of the Apostolic band, and the Holy One is left in the hands of His foes.

The Lord took occasion at the feast to transfer their thoughts from the type, that is the deliverance from Egypt and the Covenant at Sinai, to the commemoration of His death and

the covenant of grace, a covenant which may be seen in its spirit and principle (Gal. 3. 14-18) long before the covenant given at Sinai. This new covenant though not yet made can be spoken of as eternal (Heb. 13. 20). It was promised in Jeremiah 31. 31-34, and is marked as springing from the nature of God coming to man on the principle of grace. It was necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with blood, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these (Heb. 9. 23). The Blood of this New Covenant was shed at Calvary and is here spoken of symbolically by the Lord as the cup of the New Covenant in His Blood. That cup is later called the Cup of Blessing, indicating surely the whole range of divine blessing brought to us in the death and blood shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is touching how He speaks of it at the time of the break up of all earthly associations in view of its renewal with them in the Father's Kingdom as connecting them with Himself in the highest and richest place in the heavenly order of things. It was at this moment, according to the account of John, that the Lord began to let His heart out to His disciples concerning their place with Him in that which is heavenly and eternal in a way which culminated in the sublime words to His Father in chapter 17.

The more you nourish your soul by feeding on the Word of God, the more likely He is to use you in blessing to others.

If faith is not nourished by the Word of God it sinks down and fades away, for nothing can maintain faith in strength and vigour but the Word, it cannot feed on what it sees.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

Are some appointed to disobedience?

“Some of us are troubled about the statement in 1 Peter 2. 8, where the Lord is spoken of as “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence even to them that stumble at the word being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.” Does this mean that those who reject Christ were appointed to do that, and so could do no other?”—AUS.

THE doctrine of reprobation, i.e., that some are appointed from the beginning to be disobedient and lost is not in this text or in any other in the Scriptures. The apostle is speaking of a generation that rejected Christ when He appeared, and is quoting from Isaiah 8. 14, and Psalm 118. 22.

“Both houses of Israel” had always been disobedient; test after test proved them so; but the greatest test of all was the coming of Christ. This was God’s best, and it brought out the worst that was in them. They were not appointed to be disobedient, but being disobedient God so ordered it that they should be tested

finally and conclusively. Their disobedience was made manifest beyond all question by the coming of Christ, in rejecting Him they rejected their one and only hope. The appointment was that they should be fully tested by this one great test. The result was that they were rejected as a nation, the remnant that believed coming in for the blessing that the bulk refused.

It is equally true of course that individuals who won’t have Christ as their Saviour must inevitably be lost. Christ is the test. If God’s grace is rejected, nothing remains but His judgment.

Eternal Life.

Questions as to eternal life have been sent to us. We summarize our answers.

ETERNAL life is the gift of God, it cannot be obtained by works (Romans 6. 23; 1 John 5. 11).

It is ours now by *faith*, and we may know that we have it. He that heareth My Word and *believeth* on Him that sent Me *hath* everlasting life” John 5. 24. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5. 13).

John always speaks of it as a present possession, Paul presents it as that which lies ahead of the believer in the glory, (Titus 1. 2), or as some-

thing to be laid hold of now (1 Timothy 6. 8). John speaks of its characteristics and the relationships that belong to it in a world of death. Paul looks onward to the time when we shall have reached its home and shall live it in its heavenly sphere; for us this is the Father’s house.

We may not have a definition of it, for life seems to defy definition. That which comes nearest to definition is, “And this is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17. 3).

It is the life of the divine nature

which all possess who are born of God, this nature is love, and "we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" (1 John 3. 14).

"He that hath the Son hath life"; this life is in His Son (1 John 5. 11, 12. We cannot separate eternal life from the One in whom it is; if we were cut off from God's Son, which of course is not possible, we should no longer have eternal life. We have it because we are bound up with Him eternally.

Scripture speaks of it as a life communicated, and life to be lived, (1 Timothy 6. 8), and also a sphere of existence, (Matthew 25. 46).

The eternal life that has been given to us here is the same life that we shall have in heaven, but there it will be in its own sphere and environment.

Since it is in the Son our faith must reach out to Him where He is, we could not have had it at all if He had not brought life and incor-

ruptibility to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1. 10); but for this He had to die and rise again from the dead, and it is as those who are risen with Christ that we enjoy it now (Colossians 3. 1—3). The life within us reaches out by faith and the Holy Spirit to the things that belong to it, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

It would be absurd to say that only those who can give an account of eternal life have it. A child has life and enjoys it and a babe in God's family knows the Father and loves the brethren, two of the chief characteristics of eternal life, but he may not be able to say anything at all about it; nevertheless the Holy Spirit dwells within us to teach us these things and enable us to talk of them together. But it is better to enjoy life than to analyse or define it.

If we would learn what eternal life is in its full blessedness and power we must learn it in Christ for He is the true God and eternal life.

JESUS.

W.B.D.—y.

Ruler of rulers by the right Divine;
 Slayer of death, and Conqueror of fear;
 Lord of creation, save the outward sign;
 And to His Own, above all else most dear.

Who hears His call, none other voice will know;
 Who tastes His love, seeks for none other grace,
 Though the sterile gods fetter the world below
 And men fall worshipping before their face.

His cause shall prosper and His right prevail,
 Though princes perish and the empires break;
 Who trusts His strength shall never faint nor fail;
 Who seeks His Will, no force shall ever shake.

“JESUS SHEWING HIMSELF.”

J. T. Mawson.

John's Gospel, chapter 21, continued.

BY the last words of chapter 20, John seemed to bring his wonderful story to a close, but this was not to be. There were other resurrection incidents that the Holy Ghost brought to his remembrance and of these He inspired him to write: the Gospel would have been incomplete without them and we are greatly enriched in our knowledge of the Lord by the record of them. They give us the final shewing of Himself to His disciples before He left them in the world to witness and suffer for Him. Notice how the emphasis is laid upon this shewing of Himself. We read “After these things Jesus *shewed* Himself again to the disciples . . . and on this wise *shewed* He Himself,” then again in verse 14 “This is now the third time that Jesus *shewed* Himself to His disciples after He was risen from the dead.” He shewed Himself to His disciples to confirm and strengthen them in view of all they would have to face for His sake in a hostile world, but the shewing has been recorded for us also that we might contemplate Him and have our hearts moved and our faith confirmed also by what we see.

The scene had changed from the upper room in Jerusalem to the sea of Galilee, where we are on familiar ground. It was in Galilee that He had begun to shew forth His glory when by His first miracle He met the need of His friends at their marriage, and now in Galilee again His glory shone forth with a greater splendour when He wrought His last miracle to meet the needs of those He called “His own”.

We may conclude that the disciples had gone to Galilee in response

to the Lord's appointment to meet them there (Matthew 28), but in the estimation of Simon Peter He was long in coming, and he was not a man gifted with patience, nor was he a lover of idleness. The sea, the old boat, the nets, his wife and his mother-in-law and all the old associations urged him to action and he could not resist them; then of course they must live, and the sea abounded with fish; so the old Simon spoke out, “I go a fishing.” Whether his brethren had been waiting for just such a lead as this or not, they heartily responded “We also go with thee.” They lost no time in setting to work, out came the nets and they launched forth immediately, an enthusiastic crew, back to their old job. “*And that night they caught nothing.*”

Had they forgotten the art of catching fish or had their hands lost their cunning? Not so, but wise and loving eyes were on them, and the Master of sea and land controlled the fish that night that He might teach them lessons that they would never forget on earth, lessons that we may also learn for our good and His glory.

The hands and muscles of these men must have grown soft since they forsook their nets and followed their Master in His journeyings through the land, and their night of hard and fruitless toil must have made them tired men and dispirited. Then it was that Jesus stood on the shore. They did not know Him, but He spoke to them in familiar terms, as a father might speak to disappointed boys. “Children, have ye any meat? They answered, No. He

said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find." They did not know this stranger who seemed so solicitous for them, but His tone was gracious and He spoke with authority, so they did as He bade them, and they cast their net, and enclosed such a multitude of fishes that they were not able to draw it.

Who could this be but the *Lord*? The disciple whom Jesus loved had no doubt about it, and with wonder and with joy he said to Peter, "It is the Lord." Yes, He was the Lord, and their Lord, and the Lord of all creation, but at that time most particularly interested in them.

Peter recognised Him then, and nothing could keep him from Him. On a former occasion, at a word from the Lord he had stepped out of the boat to walk on the water to go to Jesus, but now he waits for no command but flings himself into the sea to be the first at His feet. We may be sure that the Lord appreciated his ardent affection. There is much in Peter's story that stands to his discredit, but surely this energy of affection in him went to the credit side of his life.

"*And as soon as they were come to land they saw a fire of coals there and fish laid thereon and bread.*" Was it doubt of Him and His care for them that had driven them out to that night of fruitless toil? Did they think that death and resurrection had changed His love for them and that now they would have to fend for themselves? If so, what a rebuke was there waiting for them on the shore; or was it not rather His own gracious way of shewing them that He was that same Jesus; death and resurrection had not changed

Him. He had said to them in those former happy days, "I am among you as He that serveth." Most amazing word! It surely meant that He thought of their needs and ministered to them continually; that He had often risen up a great while before day and while they slept had prepared their breakfast, and here again, in resurrection life, He had considered them and provided for their needs. They were cold, He knew it and had lit a fire; they were hungry, He knew it and had prepared fish and bread for their breakfast; they were awed at His presence and perhaps abashed because caught at their old trade from which He had called them to follow Him wholly. He knew it, so with gracious words He invited them to draw near, and not that only but He took the bread and fish and gave it to them. Yes, He was their servant still. His love that exceeded all their thoughts could not rest until their need was met. Those hands, now bearing in their palms the nail wounds were as ready to serve them as ever they had been, and "on this wise He shewed Himself to them."

"*And none of the disciples durst ask Him, who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord.*" Who could it be but He? Who else could command the fish of the sea as He had done? The power of the Creator was His. And who else would have known of their needs and so well provided for them, and spoken to them so graciously as He had done? the grace of the Lord was His. They could doubt no more, the way He shewed Himself to them convinced them that He was the Lord who changes not. We are sure that the hundred and fifty-three great fishes were not wasted. Many a poor home and hungry child would be made

happy as the fish was shared amongst them, but it would not be the fish that occupied these men, but the Lord, He taught them there and then that He would have them without anxious care, and free from all self-consideration that they might give themselves wholly to the mission on which He would send them.

As He shewed Himself to those men, so He abides for every one of us. Do not doubt Him, burdened and troubled believer. His eye has been upon you during your night of trial and apparently fruitless toil, and He waits to meet your need, to restore and to refresh you, and to give you such evidences of His care that you will cease for ever to doubt Him. He arises a great while before day on your behalf, and if you awoke hours before you do, and your needs were ten thousand times greater than they are they would not exhaust the resources or the grace of the Lord.

The unchanged love of the Lord for His own and His solicitude for their needs lies clearly on the surface of the incident of the fire and the prepared breakfast, but what of the netful of great fishes? The casting of the net into the sea is a familiar figure of catching men for Christ by the gospel. When the Lord called these men to follow Him He said, "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." The fact that they were fishermen before He called them was no qualification for this new and greater work. They could only accomplish it as they kept His company and learnt of Him. He was to be their Teacher as well as their Lord. They had to learn that the expenditure of natural energy and youthful enthusiasm apart from Him would be but fruit-

less toil. "Without Me ye can do nothing," is as true in winning men for Him, as it is for a fruit-bearing life.

Simon Peter had gone forth on that toilsome night without any reference to the will of the Lord; His will was that they should wait for Him, and later, that they should tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. (Luke 24). These men who were to pioneer the gospel and to be examples to all who should follow them had to learn to wait for the word of the Lord and depend wholly on Him. What a difference that one word from Him made! Weary and disappointed hearts and empty nets gave place to a harvest from the sea and we may be sure it turned them into worshippers.

Nature and self are tested by the waiting times, only faith and submission to the will of the Lord can carry His servants through the testing; but what presumption it is for anyone to imagine that by his own skill he can do this great work, or that he can do it just when and where he pleases without reference to the will of the Lord. Fruitless toil must be the result of such folly.

How wonderful is the thought of the Lord. He would not have His servants to serve Him at a distance from Him. "Come ye after Me" is His word to every one of them; then their service becomes the outcome of communion more truly than of commands. They know not only what He would have them to do, and how He would have them to do it, but they know why it has to be done. In our Gospel He had said to them, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth

I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." Nothing could be more attractive to those who love Him and

desire to serve Him than this. To serve as His friends, subject to His holy will, by the power that the Holy Ghost gives, in the fulfilment of the Father's purposes, to this He has called us. Blessed be His Name!

To continue.

God our Refuge and Strength.

J.N.D.

"If God be for us, who against us?" (Romans 8).

PSALM 46 gives us one most simple truth, but a most solemn and weighty one—one much needed by Christians in the heavings of this world, and in the tendency to seek relief by human resources "Be still, and know that I am God." That is the exhortation. The encouragement is this, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

If God takes this character, the waters may rage and be troubled, and the mountains shake with their swelling, yet we can be still. For, no matter what power or swelling there is, if God be there, our refuge. Only we must wait and wait till He comes in: and here it is faith is tried. Hence, "and know that I am God." Faith looks to God and waits for Him.

It implies that nothing else but God is a refuge, and this is perfect reliance, and implies that all else may be against us.

The great point is, that it is God as such who is our refuge and strength.

God Himself is looked to; and the fact that we are left wholly to Him,

and that no other resource is there, makes all the power of evil immaterial to us; for it is nothing against God.

Other help we might calculate and compare the value of. This only requires faith. "Ye believe in God." Against this help all human help is unavailing; only we must wait for it. Human efforts shut this help out. It is another kind of resource which is not faith.

When there is not a duty, then our path is to be still, and we shall soon know that He is God. Human effort only spoils all. No human planning is ever right: in His own time and way God will come in.

There *are* duties. When there are, do them; but when the power of evil against us is there, and there is not a duty, the path is to be still. Human efforts prove want of faith, restlessness and planning is mere flesh.

Integrity is needed to trust God, because it is God's holy nature which is trusted.

Endurance till deliverance is the path of the saint.

THE PATTERN SAINT AND SERVANT.

"I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26. 29).

HE was a happy man, this Paul, the joy of the Lord filled his soul as he spoke of Him; and true divine joy is full of goodwill and love, even to enemies.

What made him the happy man he was? He had told that proud and splendid audience how he had become acquainted with Jesus, a sight of Him in the glory had changed the wolfish persecutor into a man who thought no more of himself, but lived only to win others to the same happiness that he had found in His Lord.

The pomp and pride that surrounded him had no attraction for him; he had seen the face of Jesus, and the glory of man was the veriest tinsel, tawdry and tarnished. His heart was satisfied. It is true he was in chains, but the iron did not bind his soul, he was the Lord's free man, and those who sat before him were bound in the fetters of sin; he longed for their deliverance.

What a testimony he was to the Lord's power to lift a man above his circumstances. Everything was well calculated to depress him; so long a prisoner, unable to carry on his life's great work, and yet a spring of joy within him that made him superior to all. His words were powerful words, but the joy of his soul con-

firmed every word that he spoke.

He was a courteous man, grace had made him a true gentleman; he would give due honour to men of high degree, but he was no sycophant; he was not there as a suppliant, he was the greatest man in that august assembly that day; the grace of God that was in him made him great; his love for their souls made him great; he was the Lord's witness, His ambassador to those poor, devil-blinded sinners, this made him great, and his words were consistent with his greatness.

He is a pattern for us, Festus had said to King Agrippa, *"Ye see this man."* Yes, they were compelled to see him, and let us see him as he stands there. Can we say to those who surround us, as he said, *"I would to God that not only thou but all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am?"* If not, we have not known the joy of the Lord or have backslidden from it.

He desired only the joy, the blessing for them, not the chain, but how willingly he bore that chain for Christ's sake, it adorned him, it became him better than the royal robes became the corrupt Agrippa. He was a happy man and his happiness in the Lord made him a channel of blessing to others.

"I will guide thee with Mine eye" (Psalm 32. 8).

We have to go through a wilderness in which there is no way; and, in the midst of snares and dangers of false ways, God guides and teaches. The eye of God rests on and guides us. It is not a way marked out and left; it is God Himself who watches over and guides us in a way that suits Him.

BEHAVIOUR IN BEREAVEMENT.

A. J. Pollock.

THERE is not a family on earth that is immune from death.

Death visits alike the homes of the poor and the palaces of the noble. It is no respecter of persons.

But happily the Christian circle stands in a position of positive triumph in the presence of death. We have been at scores of funerals where triumph was much more in evidence than sorrow. Death is **OUR'S** (see 1 Corinthians 3. 22). What an absolute reversal of things! Death is no longer an enemy, but a friend. The death of our Lord has changed everything for the believer.

And yet, for the believer death is often dreaded. It is true that an aged saint, whose physical powers have waned, whose tether has been shortened more and more, wishes and longs and prays for the moment when the Lord will give release from a body of weakness, weariness, and disabilities. But when a parent dies, or a wife, or a husband, or a child, the snapping of the earthly link is a sore and great trial.

How we behave in such circumstances depends largely on our true and real link with the Lord. If we are self-centred, we shall certainly fail in our behaviour. We have known many a sorrowing one triumphing in their bereavement as they received the sorrow from the hand of the Lord, and as they dwelt on the happiness and bliss of their departed Christian relative. Others again have behaved in a way that reflects on God's goodness by excessive grief that rendered them unfit for the very duties of life.

In every circumstance of life we find instructions and help in the

Scriptures. If we turn to Bible incidents, we shall see how saints of God behaved in bereavement. We may get comfort and help thereby in our own sorrows, for who is there without sorrow?

There is one case in Scripture where a mother gave her life for her child. There is a fine lesson to be learned from this case. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died in giving birth to her second son, Benjamin. The father was sorely bereaved, for Rachel was his deeply loved wife. In her anguish when departing she named the child, **Ben-oni** (the child of my sorrow). Did **Jacob** accept this name, which would have reminded him for the rest of his life of the tragic circumstance of his wife's death, the most terrible for any devoted husband? No, he named the child, Benjamin (the son of my right hand). He got comfort out of this precious legacy given to him by the Lord.

Is this not an illustration of something far higher? Was not our Lord **Mary's Ben-Oni**? Could any mother have more poignant sorrow than she had when He hung on the cross of shame? Was there any earthly sorrow of any mother's like to her's? Yet at His birth the angel said to her, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1. 28). Her sorrow was well born, a wonderful privilege did she but realise that our Lord was but Benjamin to God, the Son of His right hand. What a field of thought this opens out. The woman in all the world, who had more joy out of her Son, and more sorrow, was Mary. Her's was a unique case. But how sanctified was her grief

when we think of the blessing the unparalleled sorrows of our Lord brought to men, and how He glorified God in the carrying out of His holy will.

How good it is to realise that pain may be a higher honour than aught beside that God can give. At any rate God makes no mistakes. If sorrow comes the knowledge of this keeps the heart in peace.

King David is a striking case of behaviour in bereavement. The nameless child of Bathsheba was taken from the earth in the government of God upon the father for his sin. David sought by fasting and earnest prayer that the child might live. The elders of his house sought to raise him from the ground where he had prostrated himself, but he refused to be raised up, or to eat bread. His anguish was sore. He felt he had brought this judgment upon the child.

On the seventh day of the child's sore sickness, the little life flickered out. David's servants were afraid to tell the anguished parent the truth. If he sorrowed so while life was there, what would he do when hope was gone? David noticed the servants whispering to each other, and asked, Is the child dead? They said, He is dead. How then did David behave in his sore sorrow?

His conduct was beautiful. He arose from the earth, washed himself, changed his raiment, and came into the house of the Lord and **WORSHIPPED**. There was no giving way to unmanly grief. Grief there was, and sore grief, and God would not chide him for this. But in his touch with God he triumphed. **He WORSHIPPED**.

Are we tried in sore bereavement? If we worship, give God the glory,

accept the trial at His hand, we shall be immensely helped to bear the trial.

We sometimes look rather pityingly on Old Testament saints as those having little light. True our privileges as to truth and light, our access to the Word of God in its completeness, are far greater than any Old Testament saint ever had. But here is a lesson we New Testament saints might well ponder over and profit. Moreover David comforted himself with the thought, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." We part but not forever. We part but for a very little while.

We come now to another case. Often the woman of Shunem, described as "a great woman", had given a meal to Elisha, the prophet of God, as he passed her home. The knowledge and friendship this brought about occasioned the building of a little chamber on the wall of her house where the prophet could repose for the night. Wishing to be grateful for her kindness, one day he called her into his presence and said, "Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?" (2 Kings 4. 13). She answered, "I dwell among my own people." Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, "What then is to be done for her?" He replied, "Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old." Then Elisha called her into his presence and said, "About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son." And so it fell out.

We can imagine what a joy this was to the childless woman. His parents watched the babe grow up to sturdy youth. One day he was

with the reapers in the field. He complained of his head. He was carried to his mother. He lay on her lap till noon and died.

What a tragedy! For a mother with deep affection for a son, given to her under such sacred circumstances, this was indeed a staggering blow.

She laid the child on the bed of the man of God, got her ass saddled, and accompanied by her servant rode quickly to Mount Carmel where Elisha was. The prophet saw her coming and told Gehazi to go forward and enquire, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" She answered, "It is well." Her anguish was so great that Elisha marked it before he spoke to her, and yet this was her answer. We all know the story of how the child was raised to life again, but the point we wish to emphasise is her remarkable answer as to the child, "It is well."

We sorrow not for our departed friends as those that have no hope. If we think as the Word of God instructs us, there is ever more cause for rejoicing than sorrowing when a loved one, who is the Lord's or a child, not grown to years of responsibility is taken. We know that our loved ones are happier than ever on earth, and happier and safer than we could make them. It must be so for they are with the Lord. It is well with them.

We come now to the case of Job. What a stripping was his. One day a messenger came to him with the alarming news that the Sabeans had fallen upon his servants, had put all to the sword, save the messenger, who alone escaped, and taken away five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she asses. Before the messenger had time to finish his doleful

tale, another messenger came with the alarming news that the fire of God had fallen from heaven and burnt up sheep, seven thousand in number, and the servants in charge of them, the messenger being the only one who had escaped. While the second messenger was telling his tragic story, another messenger arrived telling Job that the Chaldeans had arrived in three bands and had taken his three thousand camels, slaying all his servants, only one escaping to tell the tale. It would be no wonder if under three such bewildering and lightning strokes of ill fortune his mind should reel under the awful shock.

But worse was to come. His seven sons and three daughters were feasting in their eldest brother's house when a great wind from the wilderness smote the four corners of the house. In its collapse it killed the seven sons and three daughters. Was there ever a more tragic story? Can we realise the feeling of Job at the time? All his vast wealth gone, but worse, far worse than all beside, his whole family swept away in one fell stroke in one short day.

What did Job do? His conduct was perfect. We read, "Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and **WORSHIPPED.**" Could it be so? It was. What a rebuke to some, who would blame God for the blow that has fallen.

A man with such a touch with God as that, with no copy of the Scriptures as we have, with no knowledge of Christ, for He was still to come, but in touch with God, is an object lesson of a very powerful kind to each one of us. Listen to his words, "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." Sublime words uttered in the presence of such awful devastation.

The remembrance of these cases of behaviour in bereavement may be a help to us all when the dark days of sorrow and trial come. We pray that it may be so.

But let us turn from these cases of behaviour in bereavement, and see how our blessed Lord on His side acted in such circumstances. We refer to the sickness unto death of Lazarus. Read the narrative in John 11. It is remarkable for it tells us that the Lord is the Chief Actor throughout, as He ever is. We read, "Jesus heard (verse 4). "Jesus loved" (verse 5) . "Jesus answered" (verse 9). "Jesus spake" (verse 13). "Jesus came" (verse 17). "JESUS WEPT" (verse 35).

This last sentence, the shortest verse in the Bible, but pregnant with such wondrous meaning, a verse that has been of the greatest comfort to unnumbered of God's sorrowing

people, we would emphasise. We read that Jesus loved, and if He loved He sympathised, not mere lip sympathy, but with divine feelings, that shewed themselves through tears. The Lord is just the same to-day in the glory. True, there are no tears shed in heaven, but the sympathising heart is just the same.

Moreover His word of power brought Lazarus from the dead, back to the embraces of the sorrowing sisters. The same word of power will one day, and that we believe soon, very soon, bring from the dead our loved ones, who have died in faith, and then we shall be ushered into a scene where there is no parting, no tears and no death. Hallelujah *Hallelujah!! HALLELUJAH!!!*

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." HALLELUJAH! (1 Corinthians 15. 26).

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things NEW" (Revelation 21. 5). HALLELUJAH!

The Cross.

If we come to the cross, we must come with our wants and our sins. No one ever came truly to the cross except as a sinner; but when we have peace with God through the efficacy of the sacrifice made there we can contemplate it in all its glory and excellency. There we see the absolute perfectness of Jesus, His love to the Father and His obedience to His will; we see God's love in giving His Son for us—infinite, unspeakable gift! we see that love triumphing over all the hatred of man, we see the holy judgment of God against sin, which could not spare the spotless Sacrifice when He was made sin for us; we see God's majesty vindicated, His justice maintained in its full inflexibility, and God's heart set free to pour forth eternal blessing upon men. In the cross there was laid the immutable foundation in righteousness for the fulfilment of every thought and purpose of God. Every challenge that could be issued as to His right to bless was answered at the cross. The adversary was silenced, angels were enriched, sinners redeemed and God eternally glorified by the cross. We come to it as sinners, we abide in the presence of it as worshippers. J.T.M.

THE GALATIAN EPISTLE: Chapter 4.

Summarized Notes of monthly Bible Readings in London, February 12th.

THE distinction at the beginning of this chapter is not between a babe in God's family and one of more mature growth, but between two dispensations—the past dispensation of law and works and the present dispensation of grace and faith. The greatest saints of the old dispensation were all alike under age, they were minors, the youngest child of God at this present time is a son. The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, though he was the greatest born of women, so said the Lord. They are not greater morally, but the relationship in which they stand to God is nearer and greater. In the old dispensation they could not cry, "Abba, Father," we can.

The "when we were children," of verse 3 refers to the position of the Jew before Christ came; they were all under age and bondage; they could not know the liberty wherewith Christ has made all free who believe in Him. Those who were truly saints were born of God and were heirs of the promises, but they were *minors*, they were not in possession of the estate and had no intelligent communion with the purposes of the Father. They were kept under bondage, under the restrictions and limitations of the law and its ordinances which are now spoken of as "the elements of the world." The law was given to test men and to control them where they were. "Thou shalt not" is one of the elements of the world; as Colossians 3. 21 puts it, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself to deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God

and our Father, ch. 1. 4 He delivers by imparting a new life which is a life of liberty and against which there is no law.

We are spoken of both as children and sons, but it is not as children in the sense in which the Old Testament saints under law were children. As being born of God we are called children. John speaks of us in his writings in this way. I John 3. 1, 2 where we are said to be sons, should be children. Children in John's sense of it carries the thought of relationship, nearness, the knowledge of the Father and His love. Paul speaks more of sons, he speaks of the same people, but has in view the dignity of the position, its glory, and from his point of view we are adopted. Every Christian is born of God and adopted. They are all born with the nature of children and adopted into the position and dignity of sons.

The great change between the old and the new came when God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. He came of a woman and thereby identified Himself with the whole race of sinful men, though Himself ever sinless and holy, and He came under the law that He might bear its curse for others, though He Himself in His lifetime magnified it, and maintained its honour by bearing its penalty vicariously in death. God's object in sending Him was that He might redeem all who were in bondage, that they all, whether Jew or Gentile who believed, might receive sonship, with the liberty and dignity of that relationship and position.

And God has done more, He has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, by whom we cry, Abba Father. The Spirit of His Son is the Holy Ghost, in this special character. So that we not only have the relationship, but the Spirit and the power of it. Great as the blessing of forgiveness is, this far surpasses it. It gives us not the desire only to enter into God's thoughts and feelings but the capacity and the power also. And if we would know the blessedness of it we must see it set forth in the Lord Jesus. He said "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." When in the Garden of Gethsemane He cried "Abba Father," and the very words are put into our hearts and mouths. The name, Abba, has been left for us in the very language that the Lord used, when He gave expression to His full and unshaken confidence in His Father's wisdom and love.

It is because we are sons, and not to make us sons that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. We are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, ch. 3. 26; but if we are sons we are no longer slaves, we are free from bondage and are heirs of God. The Lord said, "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed." This is that freedom. It is access to the Father, the liberty of sons in His presence.

No distance now.

"So near, so very near to God
I could not nearer be—
For in the person of His Son
I am as near as He."

How senseless these Galatians were in wanting to go back to the law and put themselves under its bondage. In doing so they were turning to the weak and beggarly elements in their observations of days and months and times and years. It was Satan in the guise of an angel of light who was luring them back into their former darkness by the way of the law. And they were very zealous about all this religiousness. The Apostle has to tell them that he feared he had laboured in vain amongst them, and it seemed as though he would have to begin at the very beginning with them again for he travailed in birth for them again until Christ was formed in them, v. 19. Their turning back to law was the cultivation of self—the flesh, it shut Christ out, and their entire dependence upon and obligation to Him.

The Galatian position is the position into which Christendom has drifted. It is seen full blown in Romanism, but it has gained a footing also in Protestantism; it is a sad mixture of Judaism and Paganism from which the truth only can set free.

"First love" yearns after Christ, it says to Him in unison with the Holy Spirit, Come. But the true heart must do more, it cannot be satisfied to see fellow saints indifferent to Christ, it will desire that they all shall be saying, Come, to Him, and further it will want the unsatisfied world to share in its joy; it will bid the thirsty to come, and whosoever will to take the water of life freely. This largeness of heart and God-likeness will be features of those who are in the power and joy of first love.

GOD'S REST AND OURS.

J.N.D.

Hebrews 4.

The heart of man naturally seeks *rest*, and seeks it here. Now, there is no *rest* to be found here for the saint; but it is written, "there remaineth therefore a *rest* to the people of God."

To know this is both full of blessing and full of sorrow: sorrow to the flesh, because it is always seeking its *rest* here—it has always to be disappointed—blessing to the spirit, because the spirit, being born of God, can only *rest* in God's own *rest*, as it is said, "If they shall enter into my *rest*." God cannot *rest* in the corruption of sin. He can only *rest* in that which is perfectly holy. And because He who thus *rests* is love and loves us, He makes us understand that He will bring us into His own delight.

Now let the soul once know what the *rest* of God is, let the heart be once set upon it, there will be joy unspeakable in understanding, that God's love can *rest* in nothing short of bringing us into His own delight. There will then also be the full settled consciousness, that we cannot find *rest* elsewhere.

There are indeed joys by the way, but the moment we *rest* in them, they become, as the quails to Israel (Num. 11), *poison*.

Whenever the soul loses practically the knowledge that its *rest* is in God's *rest*, the moment the eye is off that which "remaineth," we begin to seek *rest* here, and consequently get uneasy, *restless*, and dissatisfied.

God loves us too well to let us *rest* here.

Are you content, to have or seek your *rest* nowhere save in God's *rest*?

What is the secret of unhappiness and *restlessness* of many a saint? a hankering after *rest* here.

Circumstances would not trouble, if they did not find something in us contrary to God; they would rustle by as the wind.

His discipline is the continual and unwearied exercise of love, which *rests* not now, in order that we may enter into His *rest*. If He destroys our *rest* here, if He turns our meat into poison, it is only that He may bring us into His own *rest*, that we may have that which satisfies His desires, not ours. "He will *rest* in His love" (Zeph. 3. 17).

This is not a question about justification or *rest* of conscience as to judgment: that is all settled. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14). There we *rest*, and there God *rests*. The believer has already and altogether come to *rest* on Christ's work, as to that. He has peace through the blood of Christ.

The exhortations:—"Let us therefore fear," "Let us labour therefore" (Heb. 4. 1, 11), are plainly inconsistent with a state of *rest*. God never ceases to warn in order that there may be the exercise of responsibility towards Himself, while we are on our way to the *rest*.

This "fear," and this "labour" begin when that question (justification) is settled, and settled for ever.

An unconverted man has, properly speaking, no dread of Satan; but, if not quite hardened, he has great dread of God. The saint of God has no fear (that is, dread) of God, whilst he has great fear of Satan.

It is not then from any uncertainty about God's love; but from the certainty of being in the desert, that we are to "fear" and to "labour" (Heb. 4. 1, 11).

Redemption from Egypt brings us into the desert. If we have not God there, we have nothing. There is nothing in this wide world, or of it, which can refresh the new man, any more than there is in heaven to satisfy the old.

Everything proves to us that our *rest* is not here. Fearing, because I am in the desert with a heart prone to depart from God, is not *rest*. Having to conflict with Satan is not *rest*. Labour is not *rest*. "There remaineth therefore a *rest* to the people of God."

When we are poor in spirit, and are labouring to enter into God's *rest*, there is a reality to be found in the

riches which are in Christ Jesus, that many a saint has no conception of.

We have a sphere in which the divine life communicated to us can exercise its own faculties, and find its own resources. The church has its own joy, its own interests, its own treasures, its own sphere of life, its own field for affections, its own topics, its own world.

It is not *rest* to be searched and tried. *Rest*, blessed be God, is not our portion here. His holiness will not let us *rest* where there is sin; His love will not let us *rest* where there is sorrow. "There remaineth a *rest*," for us (Heb. 4. 9). His own *rest*—God's *rest*. There will be neither sin, no trouble, nor sorrow, in God's *rest*. There will be Himself there. And we shall *rest* in Him.

Let us not be satisfied with small portions of blessing—low measures.

Christ did not say, "I am the life and the resurrection," but "I am the resurrection and the life." Death has come in; therefore He must bring in resurrection first. He is the living One who has come in and destroyed the power of death, we have life in Him because He died and rose again.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Isa. 40).

E'en as the eagle leads her young—
 With tender care to soar on high;
 To look upon the noonday sun
 With fix'd and steady eye.
 To bathe their wings in dazzling
 light,
 Then swoop to scour the darker
 plain,
 And then to wing with rapid flight,
 Their home of light again.

So may our souls Thy glory know—
 That glory brighter than the sun;
 Then stoop to shed in scenes below,
 The light our souls have won.

And oft retreat to that bright place,
 Unknown, unsought by mortal eye
 To bow our hearts before Thy face,
 Our secret home of joy.

“MY CHURCH,” “MY SHEEP,” “MY BRETHREN.”

W. Bramwell Dick.

Matthew 16. 18.

John 10. 14, 26-30.

John 20. 17.

(1) MY CHURCH.

HERE is a suggestion of proprietorship and of divine affection in that word “MY”. We can understand, if only in measure, with what glad anticipation the Lord Jesus must have spoken of “MY Church,” or “MY Assembly”. With what tender Shepherd care He must have spoken of “MY Sheep”; and with what triumph of “MY Brethren”. In this paper we invite our readers to consider the first.

We propose to use the word Assembly, first, because it helps to disabuse our minds of a prevalent idea that the church is a material building; and, second, because it so clearly expresses what the church is, namely, a company of called-out ones, and, as we shall see later, that includes every true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first mention we have of it in Scripture is in Matthew 16, and how fitting that it should come from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself. In the preceding chapters we see how He was refused by the Nation of Israel, and how He, in turn, set them aside. By way of leading up to this momentous declaration, He asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I *the Son of Man* am?” (verse 13). He took to Himself the title that spoke, on the one hand, of His rejection; and, on the other hand, of His coming glory in the widest sense. Speculation in that day was as varied, and as wrong, as it is in this day. Then came His pointed question to His disciples: “But ye, whom do ye say that I am?” Call-

ing forth from Peter the splendid confession: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (verses 15, 16, N. Tr.).

How gratifying this must have been to the heart of the blessed Lord! Might not this have been one of the occasions in which He, as the lowly, rejected One, in His lonely path, “drank of the brook in the way?” (Psalm 110. 7). Then followed the great declaration:—

“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in the Heavens” (verse 17).

Observe, “The Son of Man,” is “the Son of the living God,” as such He spoke of “MY Father”; as such He used words that only a divine Person could use—“I WILL”; and as such He announced Himself as the Builder of an indestructible structure pulsating with life. Let us proceed:—

“And I also, I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I WILL build MY ASSEMBLY, and Hades’ gates shall not prevail against it” (verse 18).

The building was planned in the past eternal ages; He came into Manhood that, by going into death, He might receive for Himself those who would compose that building; that by rising out from among the dead, taking His place as Man at the right hand of God, and sending down the Holy Spirit, He might proceed with this great work of building His Assembly.

On the day of Pentecost this work commenced and from that point it continued (Acts 2. 47). The work went on apace without the workmen knowing His objective. Then Saul of Tarsus was called and converted; and to him the secret of eternity was to be disclosed. This we learn from Ephesians 3, while in chapter 4 we see how the great Master Builder did His work, and that work is being carried on in the same way in this year of grace 1939. Looking then at verse eleven of chapter four, and comparing it with verse twenty of chapter two, we see that apostles and prophets form the foundation of the building. Now let us "View the vast building, see it rise." We read of evangelists, pastors and teachers. The evangelist necessarily comes first. He is the quarry man who, going forth with "the glad tidings" which is God's power to salvation, to every one that believes," (Rom. 1. 16), secures stones for the building—"living stones," (1 Peter 2. 5); the Pastor may dress them; and the teacher may engage in the work of building them in. All work under the direction of the Head of the Assembly, and in view of the building, as well as the building up, of the Assembly. The evangelist, who is divinely taught, will realise this; will have a great sense of the dignity that attaches to his work as having the assembly ever in view; and he will be encouraged by the knowledge that not a stone will be missing for the building in the coming day of display.

This brings us to our last point. To-day the Assembly is "the habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 22). God has a dwelling place upon earth to-day and that is the Assembly. Is it not wonderful that we who were "dead in sins; having no

hope, and without God in the world," (Ephesians 2. 5, 12), now form part of that habitation in which God dwells. What grace is this! How can we adequately praise Him for it! Against this structure the enemy has been directing all his power from the day of its inception, and he is still as active as ever. We look abroad and it seems as if he had succeeded in bringing it down. But the words of our Lord come to us through the ages: "Hades' gates SHALL NOT prevail against it." Notwithstanding the ceaseless attack of the powers of darkness for well nigh two thousand years, "Principalities and powers in heavenly places" take account of that assembly "NOW," and through it they learn "the all-various wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3. 10). He who gave Himself for His Assembly because He loved it, never ceases to care for it, manifests His constant love by sanctifying and cleansing it with the washing of water by the Word, and He will very soon present it to Himself, "A glorious Assembly, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5. 25-27). And then?—Having presented it to Himself, the object of His eternal love, He will display it to the universe as the vessel for the display of glory, for to Him, that is to God, there will be "glory in the Assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of the ages. Amen" (Ephesians 3. 21, N. Tr.). The triumph of God will be complete. That which was designed in the past eternal ages; which has been brought to completion, notwithstanding the relentless opposition of the enemy, will be seen for the display of the glory of God, for the delight of the heart of Christ in the coming eternal ages.

THE PERSON OF THE LORD.

A. E. Booth.

Philippians 2 (*continued*).

WE have seen the Lord at His highest glory (ver. 6), then the divesting Himself as the eternal Son, taking the form of a bondservant. This was indeed humility of an excellent order, and beautiful for a spiritual mind to behold, but His perfect love must have a fuller display, and we must view Him in deeper depths of humiliation. He must take another step in His descent *as a Man*, "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." In this we behold Him at the lowest step; lower He could not go.

The Cross

The New Testament Scriptures, from the four Gospels to the Book of Revelation, keep this great theme ever before us. The whole typical Scriptures of the Old, as well as the marvellous array of prophecies, must all be searched with a prayerful reverential spirit, to be able to view the Cross of Christ aright, for there the Sacrifice was offered; there the penalty of sin was borne by a perfect Substitute; there He took His place in the deepest depths, and when, in suffering and death, made a perfect atonement for sinful men.

The Cross is viewed from two standpoints. From man's hands it is written, "Whom ye have crucified and slain." There the hatred, the enmity of the human heart was fully displayed, but in the place where men were seen in their very worst form, God displayed the very best; His love, grace, mercy, as also righteousness and holiness, find their perfect expression in that Cross. The death of the Son of God was a fulfilment of the counsels of the past

eternity, the fulfilment of the prophetic Word written prior to His coming, and the full and perfect display of God's love for men, and further, there the love of Christ for the Church and for each believer was expressed, "Though He was rich," that touches His Godhead glory, and who can fathom the immensity of that wealth? "Yet for your sakes He became poor"; here again, who can penetrate into the depths of His poverty? The Nation to whom He came in love gave Him up, the disciples forsook Him and fled, then, when under the heavy weight of our sins and bearing the penalty of them, God forsook Him. But there in the darkest hour He repaired the breach. Atonement was made, and a perfect foundation was firmly laid, so that God could come to men in righteousness, grace and love, and present Salvation in the gospel for all men. This was the Son in the likeness of man, working for man. The theme is most marvellous, and in its contemplation there is edification, and it will fill our hearts with wonder, love, and praise throughout eternity, as we still learn there the deepest depths into which He entered for us, depths that here we but faintly apprehend.

Highly Exalted

"Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name above every name." We have seen that He could not surrender Deity, so now God has highly exalted Him; exalted Him as a Man, and thus humanity will ever abide. He will ever abide a *Man*, and ever continue as the perfect *Servant* of the Father's will and pleasure. This is our Lord in the very highest, and

unto Him there is given a Name above every name — the Name of Jesus. This one Name expresses the glory of His Person—Jehovah, the Saviour.

From the pen of the same apostle we learn further, "And He set Him down at His own right hand in the Heavens, above every principality and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come, and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the assembly. Which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all" (Eph. 1. 20-22, N.T.).

From the pen of another apostle we also read, "Who has gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him" (1 Peter 3. 22, N.T.).

In these passages there is sufficient light thrown upon His exaltation; He descended into the deepest depths, first, for the Father's glory, and, second, to serve the highest blessings of those who believe on Him. God has answered this perfect devotion and obedience unto death, the place where a perfect atonement was made, and God's answer came soon. The veil was rent, the earthquake followed, the tomb was vacated, and now, in the Lord risen from amongst the dead bodily and glorified at the Father's right hand, and everything loyally subjected to Him there, is God's perfect answer to His humiliation. Adam was placed in dominion and fell. Noah, after the flood, was placed in authority, and he failed also. Man everywhere failed, save when we look upon the second Man,

the Lord out of Heaven. In Him there was absolute perfection from first to last, and on the throne now in the Heavens we see God's appreciation of, and pleasure in His beloved Son. Since then the Holy Spirit has been sent down to earth (Acts 2—). He is here now, and the church is being called out (Eph. 3. 1-11), and soon the rapture will take place (1 Thess. 4. 13-18). Then in due time the universe will be placed at His feet, and a scene of universal bliss shall abide for ever and ever.

The Future

"That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, and earthly and infernal (beings) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory" (J.N.D.). In this we see the goal that was ever before Him when on earth, and from the past eternity, He could view, as in a glass, the future eternity, when He would "see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied," and when here "for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despised the shame."

The future is here described. The full glory of His Name; His Person shall be owned by all. His Godhead glories, His acquired glories as Man, all shall shine forth with perfect splendour. Angels, Old Testament believers, the Church, all shall confess Him Lord, and as they do so, they shall worship Him as the worthy One. The earth also will unite in acclaiming the glory and worth of His Name, "all in heaven and all in earth"; Israel restored to their land during the Millennium; the Nations converted during that period; and finally, in the eternal state. The Father's will shall be done on earth as in Heaven. Pro-

phesies anticipated this (Hosea 2. 21-23). The Lord taught the disciples to keep this in mind in prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven," and the New Testament revelation again and again assures us of this. The unity between Heaven and earth in the eternal state will be perfect, a unity never to be again broken, but held and maintained by Him whose glories will fill eternity.

The Lost

But this revelation concerning the new heavens and earth affords no comfort for *Satan, demons, and men* who die in their sins. There is not the least shadow of hope held out for them after death. Christ, our Lord, has informed us concerning three things for all unbelievers:

(1) "If ye believe not that I am He (The Son of God), ye shall die in your sins."

(2) Then further, "If ye die in your sins, where I go ye cannot come" (John 8. 21 and 24).

(3) Then final, "And these (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25. 46).

These words of our Lord are con-

clusive and need little from our pen; for the blessing of the saved, and the punishment of the lost, both stand or fall upon the authority of the Lord Jesus and His inspired Word.

Then in this place of punishment "those under the earth," or infernal beings, all will bend the knee, and all shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to God the Father's glory. Satan, demons, and unsaved men, shall own the supremacy, the authority of Christ as Lord, but not as in heaven and earth, where all bow and worship with devotion, loyalty, as purged worshippers. With the unsaved there shall be remorse, yet subjection under the sentence of the White Throne judgment, and under the judgment and suffering of that Throne *they shall abide for ever*. Thus the whole eternal state will be filled with the glory of His Name and Person. All then in heaven, earth, and hell shall know and own that the One Who came from heaven to such depths of humiliation is the Sovereign Master of the whole universe, "God over all, blessed for ever." May our hearts, even now, lay hold more and more of the richness and fullness of this sacred theme to God the Father's glory.

"If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink."

We cannot drink for others and others cannot drink for us. I must feel my own want and bring it to Christ myself. There must be thirsting before there can be drinking. Have I a want in my heart that Christ cannot meet? Not one. Then no matter what the want be, He says, "Come unto Me and drink." Which of us would stay away from Him? He invites us to come and open our hearts to Him and let Him read within them all their need. When we come He welcomes, and gives His Spirit so that we are not only satisfied but overflow with blessing to others.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

Chapter 26, continued.

WE now reach the distress in Gethsemane. The three disciples who were with Him in the holy mount are permitted to be with Him in this solemn hour. The pathos of it seems well touched by another who said:—

“Thou soughtest for compassion,
Some heart Thy grief to know.
To watch thine hour of passion,
For comforters in woe.
No eye was found to pity,
No heart to bear Thy woe:
But shame, and scorn, and spitting;
None cared Thy Name to know.”

Satan had tried Him in the desert. Defeated then, he had come back to press upon the Lord all the power of death as the judgment of God. There were sin, death, the curse, judgment, condemnation, and the power of Satan: all had to be met, and indeed formed ingredients in that cup which the blessed One must drink as having offered Himself for that work. Here, in the Garden it was Satan who assailed Him, but on the Cross all had to be met with God. Whatever was the extent of suffering here, and we gaze with deep amazement at it, still He was with His Father in it all.

Three times over in the immeasurable anguish of His soul He besought His Father that the cup might pass from Him, but added, “Thy will be done.” It was indeed part of His perfection to seek that all that cup involved might pass from Him, but thus it must be. What humility ought to mark us as we stand before this profound mystery. Confessedly our words must be few. The words of a hymn:—

“When we see Thee in the Garden
In Thine agony of blood,”

may well touch our souls with such

deep solemnity as to pass beyond all words to that silent adoration which so becomes us and which He alone can understand.

The failure of the three disciples closed the scene to them and left the Lord alone with His Father, and now in perfect tranquility He meets Judas and the band that came to take Him. In the kiss or kisses of Judas, for the word means more than a kiss, we have surely the blackest spot in the blackest of all deeds. “Hail, Master,” said the traitor, for he did not own Him Lord. “Friend,” said Jesus, “for what purpose art thou come?” Blessed Lord, well do the prophetic words of the Psalm fit in here:—
“For it was not an enemy that reproached Me; then I could have borne it . . . But it was thou a man Mine equal, My guide, and Mine acquaintance.” (Psalm 55. 12-14).

Between the scene of conflict in the Garden where Satan made His final and greatest bid, and the last of the dark tragedy at Calvary there comes in the arrest and trial if such it can be called. The Lord is first arraigned before the Jews, His own people, next before the Romans, the ruling government of the land, and lastly before the common people. The glory of His Person and relationship with the Father is the test before the Jews. Here again we meet with three links in the chain. They brought Him first to Annas, (John 19. 13), then before Caiaphas and the council. Having left Him in the hands of the rabble in the night, the leaders came together in the morning to finish their desperate deed. When put upon His oath, the Lord confesses Himself Son of God,

at which the high priest rent his clothes and charged Him with blasphemy. The deep feelings of the heart of the blessed Lord may be observed in the dignity of His confession and the words:—‘ Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.’

Chapter 27. The formal coming together of the rulers in the morning completes the Jewish part and the Lord is brought before Pilate. It is the second part of the trial for He has yet to stand before the people alongside of Barabbas. Having judged Him guilty on the ground of His personal glory they seek the ratification of their sentence on the ground of His royalty. Their charge as recorded by St. Luke is threefold. “We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He, Himself is Christ, a King.” It would have availed little to make His royalty a test before the Council and there could be no point in speaking of Him as Son of God before Pilate and so they resort to the Satanic attempt to charge Him with rebellion against Caesar. This trial proved a very sore trial for the Governor and indeed throughout the whole proceedings his manifest restlessness marks him out more as a culprit than Judge. The message of his wife but deepened his perplexity while the mention of the name of Herod seemed to hold out relief. This too proved a failure and the last outlet for him seemed to be an appeal to the people in connection with a custom of releasing a prisoner at that important time. This leads to the third part of the trial and may be called the democratic aspect. But what a sorrowful sight is here! A notable prisoner, one who had com-

mitted murder in the insurrection, a guilty one, and whose name was Barabbas, meaning the son of the father, this one is released by the voice of the people and Jesus the blessed One, the Son of the Father, God’s well-beloved Son is handed over to be crucified. “What will ye then that I shall do unto Him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify Him.”

This brings us to the closing part in this dark tragedy in which the blessed Lord is handed over to the Roman soldiers to be subjected to their coarse brutality. It was then that dogs compassed Him and strong bulls of Bashan beset Him. A mock robe, a crown of thorns, and a reed in His right hand; the scene is such that we have to cover our heads in shame, for this was the darkest crime in the history of humanity. In ordinary circumstances men’s hearts would have been moved to indignation by all this, but, alas, it is not so; not only do the passers-by revile Him but the priests who seem to have followed the procession are still steeled against Him and not only deride Him saying, “He saved others but cannot save Himself,” but seem to think God was on their side against Him in the words, “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him.”

We reach the part now which stands alone for ever, namely; His suffering for sin at the hand of God. Having been subjected to every conceivable kind of suffering from the creature He is now to bear the weight of divine wrath against sin upon the cross. We shall come at this by noting the Lord’s sayings on the cross. Seven times He spoke while hanging there, beginning and ending as recorded with the word “Father”.

“Father forgive them for they know not what they do (Luke 23. 34). Next the blessing of the dying robber (Luke 23. 39-43), followed by the committal of His mother (John 19. 26, 27). The cry of abandonment stands by itself in the centre of the seven. Then the last three; the first was “I thirst,” the second, “It is finished,” and the last; “Father into Thy hands I commit My spirit” (John 19. 28, 30. Luke 23. 46. Psalm 31. 5).

Our Lord’s cry of abandonment stands at the centre of His seven recorded sayings upon the cross and was uttered at the close of the three hours of darkness. Arising out of the solemn transaction between God and the Son, it refers to the bearing of divine wrath. Prophetically given in Psalm 22. 1, it is historically recorded both in Matthew and Mark. The connection with the sufferings from the creature is seen in Psalm

22, where verse 1 gives the divine side and the rest of the Psalm down to verse 21, the awful part of the creature. Here we stand before that which is the Centre of Holy Scripture, the Centre of all time, all creation, all moral history; the Centre, indeed, of eternity and of the very heart of God. The mystery of it provokes inquiry impelling us with holy caution to draw still nearer; but the magnitude of it overwhelms us while the pathos of it all melts our souls in deepest feelings of silent adoration. Sin was there, and rebellion of the creature at its worst: love was there, the love of God the Creator at its brightest and best. We gaze upon it, or rather upon Him, with rapt adoring hearts, and cry out with holy amazement,

“What was it blessed God
Led Thee to give Thy Son,
To give Thy well-beloved
For us by sin undone?
’Twas love unbounded led Thee thus
To give Thy well-beloved for us.”

To continue

“Be not as the horse or the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle” (Psalm 32. 9).

It is the spiritual learning of God’s way through His guidance, and communion with Him, founded on His favour in which true guidance is known. Hence they are warned not to be like an unintelligent beast, who must be outwardly held. God can guide us in that way, does graciously sometimes by His providence to keep us from ways that are evil; but there is no spiritual understanding, no moral assimilation to His nature, no growth of the delight of our new nature in Him, no increased capacity, by this means, for knowing God.

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go” (Ps. 32).

It is attention to Him, and the following of it with understanding, that is the way; and thus the soul is inwardly taught what is agreeable to Him, and is formed after Him in knowledge. This the New Testament largely unfolds.

SOME RESULTS OF THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

T. Oliver.

No. 2. THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD.

"But ye are come unto . . . the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12. 22).

THE general trend of civilisation is to draw people together so that social services may be facilitated, hence the growth of cities is one of the most remarkable features of modern social tendencies. But the principal was in evidence very early in the history of the human race and seems to have been associated with the desire of man in self-will to be free from the presence and interference of God. The way of Cain was manifested in his going out from the presence of the Lord and dwelling in the land of Nod. Subsequently he built a city and called it after the name of his first-born son (Gen. 4). That tendency finally produced such a state of corruption and rebellion that God had to blot it out under a flood of judgment.

One would have thought that the descendants of those preserved by God in the Ark from the general judgment would have derived profit from the object lesson of the Flood! Yet ere long their descendants in self-will and desire to escape from the consequences sought to establish once more a city with a tower which would reach to heaven, so that a flood would not reach them; perhaps also with the idea of tapping the resources of heaven, independently of God. The evolution of these tendencies have gradually proceeded according to the compound interest law. So in the twentieth century the countries are being depleted to an alarming extent, in order that mankind may enjoy the comforts and

conveniences of the cities. Alongside of this there are seen the wretchedness, helplessness and depravity of man in their worst aspects. Millions are crushed together, dirty, hungry, unclothed and unemployed, while vast areas of the earth are untenanted. Human ingenuity is completely at a loss to find a solution to the problem. But the loyal descendant in the faith of Abraham is not satisfied with the consummate product of man's effort, but looks for a city with foundations, whose architect and constructor is God (Heb. 11. 10). Here such have no continuing city, but seek one to come (Heb. 13. 14).

Nimrod, a mighty hunter, was the first empire builder, founding a city which developed into Babylon. So great cities of similar character persisted for many centuries in the plains of Shinar, as centres of successive empires, which had their day and disappeared under the sands of the wind-swept plains and the alluvial deposits of the great rivers. But Jerusalem became the centre of the empire of God's interests in the days of David and Solomon, reaching to the banks of the great river in the north and to the borders of Egypt in the south. The opulence of Jerusalem and the majesty of its king were subjects of conversation all over the world, so that the Queen of Sheba was attracted from the utmost bounds of civilisation then extant to get firsthand knowledge. She was greatly impressed, but what really captured her heart completely

was the ascent by which the great king went up to the House of God. So that it was the presence of God that was the distinctive feature about that city. It would have continued to be the centre of attraction for the whole earth if God's people had continued to be loyal to Him.

Although its kings and people sadly traduced the name of their God, their identity and that of their city were not lost, so the greatest enigma of history has arisen. The Jews are the only Semitic people who have held together. All other nations vanished into the complex of humanity, when their gods were smashed and temples destroyed; their cities became the abode of jackals. Even infidel historians have attributed the solution to the Jewish possession of a book with stimulating confirming ideas about an invisible God, the Lord of Righteousness, high above kingship and priesthood, who would in the future restore a glorious kingdom to His people. But these writers fail to see that the Book is living because it is the word of the living God who is behind everything, moulding all human affairs to His will. So that it is no mere stimulating theory which makes the Jew the inexplicable enigma of history. That mystery is on the verge of solution by the instantaneous coming of Christ to snatch up His own people from the tomb and the earth to be with Him for evermore!

Meanwhile the cities of this world occupy the attention of many more people than the city of the living God, the centre on earth of God's thoughts. The city is found in what was formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. It is constituted by charter or covenant. Jerusalem was governed and marked by the first Covenant. The heavenly

city on earth is constituted and marked by the New Covenant, ratified in the blood of Christ. In the city of the living God, He is known, i.e. the essential feature of eternal life. Moreover, He is known in a very different character than the people of old knew Him. He is no longer dwelling at a distance in thick, impenetrable darkness with relation to His people. He is known as the God of Love and that love is reciprocated. "We love Him because He first loved us." The result is that there is liberty of approach. "Christ has set us free in freedom" i.e. in a free state or city. But the main thought in the city of the living God is the display of His character to the universe.

Six hundred years ago there were important cities in Germany like Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck, which formed a league of free cities enjoying liberty and many privileges in common. In course of time these were lost. But the heavenly Jerusalem is marked by liberty which cannot be forfeited. Liberty is a necessary consequence of God being known. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (1 Cor. 3. 17).

The City of the Living God was founded in the power of the Spirit and its resources and privileges are tested in the same power. We have reached it that we may be marked by the features of the New Covenant and rejoice in the liberty peculiar to its apprehension. The knowledge of God leads to our drawing near to Him. Until Christ rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven the Holy Spirit was not here personally, hence our reception of all that is in the domain of the Spirit is consequent on Christ having been glorified at the right hand of God.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

Melchisedec.

Genesis 14.

Psalm 110.

Hebrews 7.

"I am wanting some help as to Melchisedec, was he really a man or was he an appearance of Jehovah as He appeared to Abraham and others?"—WALTHAMSTOW.

THERE is no ground in Scripture for supposing that Melchisedec was other than a man, an actual king, reigning at Jerusalem, and a priest of God. The discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets in Egypt in 1892 bears this out. Professor Nichol, D.D., said of these, "The letters of the Governor of Jerusalem to the Egyptian king are specially interesting. From them we learn that Jerusalem, long before the days of David or Joshua, and as far back as Abraham, had established itself among the hills of Canaan as a city of strength and importance, and sanctity and renown. Ebed-Tob, the Governor, says of himself to his liege lord, 'I am the prince, I am a deputy of my lord the King. *Neither my father nor my mother, but the strong hand of the King, established me over my father's territory.*' The name Ura-salem in the tablets speaks of the 'city of peace', and thus recalls Melchisedec, king of Salem and priest of the most high God, in Abraham's day."

Whatever seems to be mysterious about this remarkable figure becomes clear enough when we see why he is introduced into the Scriptures at all. A type of the holy priesthood of our Lord was necessary, and in Melchisedec we have this. He appears once only, without any reference to ancestors or successors. Of course he was born and died, but of these events the Scripture tells us nothing. He enters the scene as a royal priest and as such only we see him: our attention is

fixed upon that fact, and we have no record of the yielding up of his office. It is this silence as to his beginning and end of days that becomes so striking a type as to the order of the Lord's priesthood, which was infinitely superior to that of Aaron's. No priest of the Aaronic order was able to continue by reason of death, the office was handed on from father to son; but Jesus lives to die no more, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." It is He who "abideth a priest continually."

While the Lord has been made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec by the oath of God, He does not yet fulfil the royal character of that priesthood. Indeed in this present day in which His people are pilgrims journeying to the rest of God beset with trials without and infirmities within, the character of His priestly service for us is typified in Aaron's. Though He is not of the Aaronic order He wears for us, in their most blessed and spiritual sense, the ephod and the priestly garments. But as Melchisedec was king of righteousness and king of peace (Hebrews 7. 2), and priest of the most high God, which title means that the earth belongs to God, so the Lord will appear in His kingdom and reign for a thousand years in this threefold character. "A King shall reign in righteousness" (Isaiah 32. 1). "He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6. 12). "The Prince of peace, of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah. 9. 67).

INTERCESSION.

J. T. Mawson.

"Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11. 1).

OUR prayer to God is that He would awaken us all to our responsibility and our privilege of being intercessors on behalf of "all men, for kings and all that be in authority." Surely there never was a time in our day when there was more need for this. We know that "the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It is more powerful than mighty armies, for it moves God to act, and God is greater than men. They propose, He disposes, they speak, but He has the last word. The efforts of men to maintain peace in the world only seem to make confusion worse confounded, and they have no way out; but the Christian has a way out. He looks up, he may intercede with God, and may have power with God and men. It is a time for prayer.

We are convinced that the nations have gone far from God, even where once His Name was owned in a formal way, and judgment is overdue. It is most surely on the way, and when it comes it will sweep the world without partiality and in perfect righteousness. We should feel it, and we shall if the fear of the Lord, and His compassions are in our hearts. If He wept for a doomed Jerusalem we should have tears for godless men, and we should intercede for them. It is the intercession of the saints ascending to God that holds back the judgment, for it works in harmony with God's long-suffering, and when the intercession ceases to go up the judgment will come down, and that will be when the church has been caught up. Then woe to the world! But we should be greatly humbled, that seeing we

have this responsible and honoured place of access to God on behalf of men, we are so slow and so lukewarm in our use of it.

There were four great intercessors in Old Testament history, and they were highly honoured of God. They were Abraham, Moses, Elijah and Daniel. It would pay us well to mark what manner of men they were. Abraham was the first of the mighty race that had power with God. He grasped the fact that it pleased God to have him near Him as a suppliant on behalf of others. But it was he and not Lot who had this knowledge. He was one to whom the word of God came and **HE OBEYED**. What folly it would be to imagine that God could listen to those who are disobedient to His word. He speaks first, and if we listen and obey then may we speak to Him and He will hear us. He was **A CONTENTED MAN**, he was contented with what God gave him. He let God choose his inheritance for him, and refused to be enriched by the king of Sodom, who stood for the world. No discontented, grasping man could be an intercessor. **HE BELIEVED GOD**, indeed this was the basis of all, but he continued to believe God in every crisis in his life; it was the great feature of his life. And those who would be intercessors must come to God **BELIEVING** that "He is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." He knew that God was as good as His word, so that his expectation increased as God's revelation of Himself to him developed. When God said to him, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" he

answered at once, "What will Thou give me?" He knew how to ask for himself and to have his request answered, so that when the time came he was able to ask for others. And the time did come when the clouds of judgment hung over guilty Sodom.

God spoke of Abraham as "My friend"; and of no other man did He speak thus. May not it have been that memorable pleading on behalf of Sodom that gave him the title to that designation? The sins of the cities of the plain were great, and cried for judgment, but judgment is God's strange work, and He willeth not the death of any, and in Abraham He found a man after His own heart. So Abraham pleaded. He had a care for God's honour for he had no doubt that the Judge of all the earth would do right. His plea was that the cities might be spared for the sake of the righteous in them. How gladly would God have shewn mercy if there had been fifty righteous men in them, or forty-five, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or even ten. And as long as Abraham interceded, God answered and stayed the judgment. It was not to be. The intercession ceased and the judgment fell. And it is significant that when the intercession ceased we read, "The Lord went His way as soon as He had left *communing* with Abraham."

May we not take this example of intercession—the first in the Scriptures—as a pattern and guide for us. If the nations of Europe and this favoured Britain had even become as debauched and godless as Sodom and Gomorrah, we might still intercede for them. If we know God as Abraham knew Him we shall. Thank God, He has His faith-

ful witnesses in all these lands, many who are suffering for their faith and for Christ's sake. His church is still in the world, and for the sake of His church, His children, we may plead that His hand will bridle and restrain the passions and ambitions of men, that they, His own, may "lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty." And knowing His compassion we may also plead for men in their misery and fear. Men are the work of His hand and He views them with pity, and "is long-suffering toward us; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This is the day of grace and not of judgment, consequently it is the day for intercession.

The intercession of Moses was more successful than that of Abraham, he continued his prayer until it was answered. For forty days, night and day without food and drink, he pleaded; it is a moving story. Israel had sinned a great sin, but Moses went to the Lord on their behalf. Hear what he says, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold,"—we can almost feel the shudder of horror that passed through the soul of Moses as he confessed that sin—"Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—;" and there he stopped. Read the passage as it is given in Exodus 32. 32. It seemed an impossible thing to ask, but the faith of Moses rose above the impossibility, for he knew the God with whom he pleaded. Then he continued, "And if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written." The spirit of self-sacrifice was in him. He had surrendered the wealth of Egypt for these people and now he was prepared to sacrifice his very soul for their sakes. It was the spirit

of Christ that was in him that made him plead thus with God. He could not have given himself on behalf of them, only Christ could do that, and it is on the ground of His great and efficacious sacrifice that we can plead with God for men. Yet the true intercessor is the man in whom there is this spirit of self-sacrifice. The prayers of the selfish man will be centred in himself and bound by his own interests, he will not have the heart to think of and pray for others.

We have been saved to be God's representatives on the earth. He has chosen us "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people: that we should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9). And how shall we answer to this grace and be that for which God has chosen us? Chiefly

by prayer and intercession. Being in contact with the tremendous needs of men, the darkness and tyranny of the world, its fears and its sorrows, and knowing the compassion and love and mercy of our God, we shall plead and plead, and God will hear and answer.

Prayer and the need of it may be a great mystery to us, but it is the way that God takes to bless. In His ways with men and in His moral rule in the universe the blessing comes down as the prayers of the saints ascend. Hence it is His "will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2. 8). Mark the conditions — personal rectitude, holy hands; no unchristian feelings towards others, without wrath; and faith in God to whom we pray, no doubting. "Ask and ye shall receive."

It is not what we *say* in the home circle that tells so much, but the way we control ourselves, the way we *act*. We express our opinions to strangers; at home, among our own people we testify in our own persons to the moral effect of our opinions.

The doctrine is the programme, the manner of life is the confirmation of it. I arrest or provoke a person by the doctrine, but I silence him by patient continuance in well doing.

There must be a full, clear, unequivocal expression of the doctrine which is to govern my life; but this being stated, I must now devote my attention to the way the doctrine I have received as to the truth of God influences and governs me.

Above all things seek personal devotion to Christ, this may not be approved by others, yet it will command their notice and respect, and in proportion as I attain to it, the house will be filled with the odour of it.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

A. J. Pollock.

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11. 36).

THE line of sovereignty runs through that great section of the Epistle to the Romans—chapters 9-11. Like a golden thread it is woven in and out of the teaching of that section. It closes with the magnificent verse quoted at the head of this paper.

God's sovereignty needs no proving. "Of Him . . . are all things." There is but one God, supreme and alone. Nothing exists, or could exist, but what came into existence "through Him." If He were alone, the only will in the universe, then He could only act in sovereignty. For sovereignty means power to exercise will without reference to any.

That being so our intuitive knowledge of God forbids our believing that His sovereignty was ever exercised save in goodness and beneficence, and, since sin entered the universe, in grace and mercy. The hyper-Calvinist, who believes intensely in election drops into the serious error that God elects men and women to be damned, surely a grave insult to the character of God.

There have been autocrats on earth, who were able to do what they liked, as it is said of Nebuchadnezzar, "Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down" (Daniel 5. 19). It depended on the character of the despot whether he was just, humane and good, or a vile monster like Nero, who fiddled while Rome burned.

The writer had a very great friend,

who was all kindness, and also very autocratic, and liked nothing better than to order those around him in all details. One day he said to him, "Mr X—, you are an autocrat, and you would be absolutely unbearable if you were not a *benevolent* autocrat."

We can say with all reverence that God is a Benevolent Autocrat, intensely just, a God of infinite love.

That God never exercises His sovereignty save on the side of "grace and truth" is true. In Romans 9. 22 we read that God endures "with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." Here is goodness enduring to longsuffering. But the vessels fit themselves to destruction. God does not do this. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself" (Hosea 13. 9).

But the next verse tells us God makes known "the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." Note God prepares "the vessels of mercy" unto glory. "The vessels of wrath" prepare themselves unto destruction. God in His divine nature of light and love cannot do otherwise than exercise His sovereign will in blessing man. To do otherwise might suit a Nero or a Nebuchadnezzar, but not the God of the Bible.

Many Christians find it difficult to believe in God's sovereignty in the New Birth. Perhaps a little consideration how we are closely beset by sovereignty will help.

Take our first birth. We were passive in that matter. The process by

which we come into the world is ordained of God. That is sovereignty. Yet we do not kick against the sovereignty of our first birth into this world. Why kick against God's sovereignty in the second birth? The new birth is like the gardener preparing the soil, and then dropping the seed in; so God prepares the soil of our hearts and the good seed of the word germinates. "Of His own will", not ours, "begat He us with the word of truth" (James 1. 18).

"Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 23). "Which [*believers*] were born"—antecedently—"not of blood"—not because you are the child of Christian parents—"nor of the will of the flesh"—not because man can encompass it by training or ritual—"nor of the will of man"—man cannot bring it about—"but of God"—by God's gracious sovereign act.

We may surely thank God this is so. If it were otherwise none would be blessed. If there were no sovereignty as to the first birth, there would be no human race. If there were no sovereignty as to the second birth, there would be no spiritual race.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay?" (Romans 9. 21). "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid" (Romans 9. 14). "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do

right?" (Genesis 18. 25) were the brave words of Abraham, which have found a grateful echo in tens of thousands of troubled, bewildered hearts. In that we can rest, though we may not understand.

Responsibility is ours in the sphere in which sovereignty has put us. We believe sovereignty is very far reaching and around us and touching us at every point, and that our responsibility lies within that sphere. For instance God has decreed that we maintain our lives by eating and drinking and taking due rest, and by work. That is sovereignty. My responsibility is to take proper food and rest and work, and thus work out God's sovereignty.

For instance we read, "Elect [*sovereignty*] according to the foreknowledge of God (the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1. 2). "Elect" equates sovereignty—"unto obedience," to obey as Christ obeyed—the responsibility in that sphere. So we are told to make "your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1. 10), showing that responsibility lies within sovereignty.

The sum of it all lies in the triumphant and profound verse at the head of this article:—"*For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*"

If there had not been in the heart of God a desire to bless, the Father and the Son could have gone on together in the excellent glory without us. But there *was that desire* in God's heart and the Son came forth to carry it out: "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

“MY CHURCH,” “MY SHEEP,” “MY BRETHREN.”

W. Bramwell Dick.

Matthew 16. 18.

John 10. 14, 26-30.

John 20. 17.

(2) MY SHEEP.

THERE is something peculiarly entrancing about the thoughts of our Lord Jesus as Shepherd. It suggests tenderness, consideration and care. How beautifully it is expressed in Isaiah 40. 11, where we read:

“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

He is the One of Whom we can through grace individually say:

“The Lord is MY Shepherd”
(Psalm 23. 1).

He looks upon us and says, “MY SHEEP.” We look up to Him and say, “MY SHEPHERD.” In the ever-delightful parable of Luke 15. 3-7, we see that the secret of the Shepherd’s joy in finding the lost sheep was because it was his sheep. “Rejoice with me; for I have found MY sheep which was lost” (verse 6). So it was because we were His sheep that our Shepherd sought us until He found us. Now to come to our chapter. Might we ask our readers to read Ezekiel 34, and, after that, to read John 10. In the former we see the gracious solicitude of Jehovah for His sheep. Note the frequency with which He speaks of “MY sheep” and “MY flock.” How sternly He rebuked those who, while professing to be shepherds, were only hirelings. Then He says:—“I will seek out MY sheep . . . I will bring them out from the people . . . I will feed MY flock, and I will cause

them to lie down, saith the Lord God” (verses 12, 13, 15). Now we turn to John 10, and we listen to the same speaker. The great “*I AM*” now come into Manhood in order that He might as “the Good Shepherd” lay down His life for the sheep.” He came into the fold of Judaism that He might call His own sheep by name, and lead them out, and we need not say that when He led them out of the fold, He did not lead them back again. They are spoken of as “*HIS OWN* sheep” (vv. 3, 4); and He lovingly speaks of them as “*MY* sheep” (vv. 14, 26, 27). His sheep know His voice; they follow Him (verse 4); they enjoy salvation, liberty and pasture (verse 9); they are His because He gave His life for them (verse 11); they enjoy an intimacy similar to that which exists between Himself as Man and the Father (verses 14, 15). No longer cribbed, cabined and confined in a fold, they are introduced into the largeness of “One flock” having “One Shepherd” (verse 16); and they are led into the enjoyment of eternal life which is their present possession, and which, thank God, they can never, never, no never lose (verses 27-30). How happy indeed are we to be numbered amongst those whom He calls “*MY* sheep”, and to be able to address Him as “*MY* Shepherd.” This is developed, as we shall see, in the epistles. It is on the ground of His death that we are His, and that all these wonderful things that we have just enumerated are ours. “The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep” (verse 11). But it is as knowing Him in resur-

rection that we are brought into the knowledge and enjoyment of them. Hence the beautiful benediction of Hebrews 13. 20, 21.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead **OUR** Lord Jesus, that **GREAT** Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

As the "*good* Shepherd" He laid down His life for the sheep; as the "*great* Shepherd" He works to secure from us a fitting response to that which He as the "*good* Shepherd" has obtained for us. Thus it is that the life more abundantly, of which John 10. 10, and all that is connected with it speaks, is life that is beyond the power and therefore beyond the fear of death. How great indeed is "OUR Lord Jesus, that *great* Shepherd of the sheep." The enemy may attack, the wolf may attempt to ravage, but gathered with His arm of omnipotent power, and carried in His bosom of infinite love, we, whether sheep or lambs, are assured of His protection. It is He Who is so great Who says to us, "*MY* sheep", and to Whom we gladly respond, "*MY* Shepherd." Happy, thrice happy, indeed are we! Then just as we saw last month that the Lord Jesus in the work of building that of which He spoke as "*MY* assembly", gave gifts for the carrying out, and the maintenance of that work, so we observe that He has appointed under-shepherds to feed and care for those whom He calls "*MY* sheep." He Himself now glorified at God's right hand, and soon to be

manifested in glory is "the *Chief* Shepherd." In what a shepherdly character Paul appeared when, addressing the elders at Ephesus, he said:—

"Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the *flock* wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers, to *shepherd* the assembly of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His own. For I know this, that there will come in amongst you after my departure grievous wolves not sparing the *flock*" (Acts 20. 28, 29. New Trans.).

How these words breathe the spirit of *the* Shepherd. It would seem however that Peter was specially called to this work. From the risen Lord he received the threefold commission:

"Feed *MY* lambs," "Shepherd *MY* sheep," "Feed *MY* sheep." (John 21. 15, 16, 17. New Tr.).

In his first Epistle we have no difficulty in discerning his interest in and his care for the lambs and sheep of *the* Shepherd. In the closing chapter he exhorts those whom he calls his fellow-elders (at any rate he speaks of himself as a fellow-elder), to "*shepherd* the flock of God; to do it for love and not for gain"; and to be "*models* for the flock." Then he who had known the tender care and restoring grace of His Lord in a special way, writes of Him as "*the chief* Shepherd"; points on to the day when He shall be manifested, and when those who have been true to their charge shall receive from His hands "*the unfading crown of glory*." All this shows how precious to the Lord Jesus are those whom He calls "*MY* sheep." May we say it? He exults in His possession, and He has made complete provision for their protection; for their feeding; for

their prosperity in every sense of the word, till He receives them in glory. The "grievous wolves" may be active and "the devil as a roaring lion" may "walk about seeking whom he may devour"; but when assailed by either we look up to Him and say "MY Shepherd." He sets us at rest and stills our fears as He says, "MY sheep." Thus we are assured of His

shepherd care till the journey is ended, and then:

"What will it be when dangers all are past,
And led by Thee,
We reach our home—the Father's house at
last,
To dwell with Thee?
How loud the chorus which we then shall
raise,
And sing for ever to Thee, in Thy praise."

To be concluded

A Way of Wisdom in an Evil Day.

AND the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded; and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, "Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; *the LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.* Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity. Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded."

And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that was be-

fore the porch of the LORD. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.

And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; that whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting and with cornets. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: FOR THEY HAD SWORN WITH ALL THEIR HEART, AND SOUGHT HIM WITH THEIR WHOLE DESIRE: and He was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about (2 Chronicles 15).

JESUS SHOWING HIMSELF TO HIS DISCIPLES.

J. T. Mawson.

John's Gospel, chapter 21 (continued).

IT MUST have been a great joy to John to find himself moved and led by the Holy Spirit to record the story of the Lord's dealings with his old friend and companion, Simon Peter. It is a story so full of interest and instruction that his Gospel would have been incomplete without it. In it the Lord shewed Himself as greater in His grace than the great failure of His servant, and how He could turn the failure to his lasting blessing, to the strengthening of his fellow-servants and to the good of the whole flock of God.

The Lord had called Simon and his brethren to a great service; they were to go forth into the world and catch men, to deliver them from the power of Satan and bring them to God, and Satan knew this and "desired to have them." He said, "I will shew you what sort of men these chosen apostles are and especially the chief of them, and all your purpose for them shall fail." The Lord's answer to the devil's challenge was, "I will shew you, and all the world beside, that out of the fiery trial through which you will make them to pass I will bring forth golden vessels for My use."

Of what use would Simon Peter have been on the day of Pentecost if he had stood up to speak in the same spirit as was his on the night of his denial, when he considered himself a better man than any one of his brethren and all of them put together? He would have preached Peter instead of Christ. The Lord knew this and so allowed Satan to have him that he might "sift him as

wheat," but, oh, wonderful Master! His prayer went before him to the threshing floor and followed him when beaten and broken he went out into the night and wept bitterly, and his faith did not fail.

We have often wondered at the grace of the Lord in His way with Simon Peter on the resurrection day. The angel's message to him (Mark 16), and the Lord's own appearance to him (Luke 24) shewed out the love that loves to the end and will never give up a loved one. Simon had been personally fully assured of the Lord's forgiveness, but it was necessary that he should be convinced as to the root of his failure, and the question of his commission and service remained; had he forfeited these by his thrice-repeated denial of the Lord? That question had to be raised and settled as publicly as his failure had been.

All the ways of the Lord are wonderful, but nothing can surpass His gracious yet faithful way with His servants. He will heal the wounds that their failures inflict upon them, but not slightly; He desires truth in the inward parts, and to those same inward parts He will impart wisdom (Psalm 51), and it was "on this wise that He shewed Himself" to Simon. A fire of coals was there, lit by the Lord's own hands. How it would awaken conscience and memory in Simon. He had drawn near to the fire of the Lord's foes, and it had been the scene of his degradation and denial; now he is drawn and welcomed to the Lord's fire and it becomes the scene of his res-

toration and re-commission, according to the grace that much more abounds where sin abounded.

It was when they had dined, all their needs thoroughly met by the Lord's provision, that He turned to Peter and addressed him by his natural name. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me, *more than these?*" It had been Simon's confidence in himself—his natural courage and love for his Master, that was the cause of his fall, and he was brought face to face with this by the way the Lord addressed him. He had to learn that it was this self-confidence that had given the devil his opening and opportunity. Three times over the Lord put His question, probing deeply with Simon's heart until the very root of his being was reached; three times Simon answers, at first apparently with some warmth, but at last in true brokenness of spirit and contrition of heart. "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." His threefold denial might cause everyone else to question his love for his Master, or deny it altogether, and he could only cast himself upon His knowledge, who is the "heart-knowing God": there he found his rest.

The Lord did know, and in view of Peter's deliverance from self-confidence and his reliance on the knowledge and grace of the Lord, He honoured him with a great trust. His lambs, His sheep, these were to be Peter's special charge and care, these who were of such value to the Lord that He had laid down His life for them, were committed to Peter, and upon these he was to expend that love which the Lord knew was in his heart for Himself.

But there was more. Peter had three times denied the Lord with oaths and curses and though the Lord had freely and fully forgiven him, I question whether he had forgiven himself, and the very grace of the Lord would increase his sorrow at having missed such an opportunity of confessing Him. Was this in the Lord's mind in what followed? I believe it was. Consider the words. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by *what death he should glorify God.*" His sin had been blotted out by His Saviour's blood, but he was to be permitted to blot it out too by his own act. He was to have the opportunity of going to prison and death for his Lord, not in self-confidence and boasting, but in such humility of heart and joy in his Lord that God would be glorified by his death. Peter must have been overwhelmed by the lovingkindness of the Lord whenever he thought of this.

"But when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow ME." It was a needed word. Peter needed it and so do we. Feeding the Lord's sheep, caring for His lambs, witnessing for Him, and even dying for Him, all are secondary to this. He must be first; whatever we may do for Him must be second. Indeed nothing can be done truly and well if He is not supreme in heart and life. When we follow Him for His own sake because we can do no other, then our service has full value and is acceptable to Him. He values our service, but our company is

more to Him than our service, and it is only as we keep His company that we learn how to serve. Not many weeks after this the leaders of the nation took knowledge of these men, that they had been with Jesus. What a wonderful commendation that was from the mouths of their enemies.

But Peter "turning about", that was the opposite to following, "seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on Jesus' breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?" Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Once more Peter earned and received a rebuke from the Lord. "What is that to thee? follow thou Me." It is not the business of the servant of the Lord to interfere with another; it is the Lord's prerogative to command and commission them. But Peter's blunder gave the Lord the opportunity of bringing John to our notice in a special way. *He was following without a command.*

On his first appearance in the Gospel he was following without being told to (John 1. 37), and now on his last appearance he is still following without being told to. In this he is the pattern disciple. It was the treasure that He had found in the love of his Lord that made him follow; and he is described for us, as "the disciple whom Jesus loved, who also leaned on His breast at supper." He was attracted, not commanded, and of him the Lord said, "If I will that he tarry till I come." And the saying went abroad among the brethren that he should not die, but it was not that that the Lord said of him. Then what did He mean? This at least we may draw from His words, that that is the sort of disciple that He would have here when He comes again—disciples who treasure His love, who lean upon His breast in confidence in Him and in self-distrust, and who FOLLOW HIM WITHOUT BEING TOLD TO. May you and I be disciples of that sort.

"Be not afraid to pray: to pray is right;
 Pray if thou canst with hope, but ever pray,
 Though hope be weak and sick with long delay;
 Pray in the darkness if there be no light;
 And if for any wish thou dare not pray,
 Then pray to God to take that wish away."

"We must remember that the goal of prayer is the ear of God. Unless that is gained the prayer has utterly failed. The uttering of the prayer may have kindled devotional feeling in our minds, and hearing of it may have comforted the hearts of those with whom we prayed, but if the prayer has not reached the ear and heart of God, it has failed in its essential purpose"—S.

God in His own nature loved the world, but His Son only could set forth that love. We must begin with the heart of God. He delights to bless, and His Son only can do it effectually.

“HE PLEASSED GOD.”

F. B. Hole.

ALL that we know of Enoch is compressed into eight verses of Scripture: four in Genesis 5, two in Hebrews 11, and two in Jude. These few verses, however, suffice to give us an accurate insight to the character and life of this remarkable man.

He was the seventh from Adam, as Jude informs us, and this we can easily verify from Genesis 5. He was number seven, counting from Adam through the line of Seth, which was the line in which faith was preserved in the days before the flood. When Eve bore Seth she said, “God . . . hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.” These words were doubtless prophetic. Cain the carnal man had slain Abel the man of faith, and God had now appointed another godly seed by which faith should not perish from the earth. The seventh man on that line of faith was the outstanding man of the line. In him faith shone out with peculiar brightness.

The four verses in Genesis 5 are occupied with one great feature that characterized him. We are told that at the end of 365 years, “he was not; for God took him;” but the exact significance of that is hardly clear until we come to the explicit statement of Hebrews 11, that he was “translated.” The one feature that is made abundantly plain is that “Enoch walked with God”, and that this walk with God continued over the immense space of three centuries, and endured in spite of Enoch having all the usual family responsibilities in the midst of a generation that was wholly departing from God. We may get some idea of that departure if we notice that the infamous Lamech of which Genesis 4

speaks, was number seven from Adam on the line of Cain. He was therefore perhaps about a century ahead of Enoch, and an outstanding instigator of violence and corruption in the earth.

What led to Enoch’s walk with God is revealed to us in Hebrews 11. 6. He could never have walked with God had he not been one of those “that cometh to God,” and he would never have come to God had he not believed “that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” And of course he never would have believed *that*, apart from faith.

So this is where faith begins, whether for Enoch or for ourselves. It leads us to the knowledge that **GOD IS**; and this is something very different from the belief that there is a God. Even in these days of scepticism there are to be found multitudes who cannot satisfy their minds, in trying to account for the existence of all things, without postulating the existence of a God, of some sort and somewhere; but this is reason and not faith. Faith it is, and faith only, which puts us into the presence of the **LIVING GOD**, who knows, and sees, and acts, and makes Himself known, and even rewards those who diligently seek Him. In days when all thought of the living God was fading from the minds of men, Enoch by faith had the living God before him. He diligently sought Him, and consequently he found Him, and there began that remarkable walk with Him which continued for three hundred years.

In the New Testament epistles we very frequently find the “walk” of

the believer referred to. The word is used in a figurative sense, and appears to cover all the activities of the believer's life. We are to "walk in the Spirit," for instance; that is, all our activities are to be in the energy of the Spirit of God. Now Enoch is the first believer whose walk is referred to, and it is said to have been, "with God." In Genesis 3, the Lord God is said to have been "walking in the Garden," but Adam was then a fallen creature, so there is no word of his walking with God.

Walking with God, the activities of Enoch came under the Divine control. It was Enoch's happy privilege and responsibility to keep in touch with God, so that he might know His thoughts and understand His ways: then God ordered his life and path, for it was His to indicate the direction and to set the pace. God led the way and Enoch was by His side, as intelligently led by Him. His walk was not like that of a dog who so devotedly follows the steps of his master, since he was endowed with a wonderful understanding of God's mind and purpose, as is made plain in the Epistle of Jude.

If this characterized the seventh from Adam, who lived more than three millenniums before Christ appeared, what should mark such as ourselves? Faith puts us in touch with God as He has been revealed in Christ—revealed in the fulness of His love, and in the breadth and length and depth and height of His purposes which centre in Christ—and the Holy Spirit has been given with a full capacity to take in the revelation. It is possible therefore for us to have a much fuller understanding of God's mind and purpose. We only need the faith that makes God a living reality to us, which leads us to diligently seek Him, and

finding Him to walk with Him; all our activities governed by communion with Him. Alas! so often with us the flame of faith is burning low. There are times when there should come with great force to us the Master's question to His disciples, when "He said unto them, Where is your faith?"

Nor can we excuse ourselves by pleading the complexities of modern life with the multiplicity of its distracting interests, for most of those distractions are self-made. And as to the fundamental claims of life, which are by no means to be avoided but rather taken up in such a way that God may be served in them, these were known by Enoch as by ourselves. Indeed, in those days of greatly extended human life and large families the difficulty involved in the begetting and rearing of sons and daughters was probably greater than it is with us. Yet Enoch walked with God, and that walk continued for three hundred years.

From Enoch's *walk* we pass to his *witness*, as from *cause* to *effect*; and we have to travel to the last epistle of the New Testament to know that he bore any witness at all. We discover that he was a prophet, that he foresaw the day of the Lord, when He would come with ten thousands of His saints, and that he bore the most uncompromising witness against the ungodly of his day, foretelling their ultimate doom. The tremendous way in which he emphasized the ungodliness of the ungodly is very striking.

That which Scripture speaks of as "the world" came into being as the fruit of man having turned away from God, hence there never has been any harmony between God and it. The breach came most clearly to

light and was irrevocably fixed when the world cast out and crucified the Son of God; yet it was there from the beginning, and Enoch knew it right well. Walking with God, he was on God's side of the breach, so of course the breach itself could not be hid from him. Walking with God, he knew God's holiness, and this made the ungodliness of men the more apparent to him. Let us take note of this; for it means that if we have but a feeble sense of the evil of the world, we have but a feeble walk with God. The more we know God the more we are alive to what the world is and dissociate ourselves from it.

Enoch not only spoke with the utmost plainness of the ungodliness characterizing the people of the antediluvian world, but he prophesied of their terrible end. He did not speak—so far as is recorded in Jude—of the more immediate judgment of the flood, but looked on to the ultimate judgment when the Lord would come with ten thousands of His saints. Clearly then, it must have been revealed to him that this ungodly evil would persist until the end, however far distant it might prove to be, and that no one could finally deal with it but the Lord Himself. In the Lord's own time it would be effectually dealt with, and the story of evil men closed up, in His holy and unsparing judgment. He spoke of ungodly men, of their ungodly deeds which had been done in a most ungodly way, and of their hard and ungodly words. The men, their deeds, their motives and their words, all are to come into judgment.

It strikes us as extraordinary and sad that, if Enoch knew and proclaimed all this, Christian people to-day should cherish the illusion that

the gospel is sent forth into the earth to produce a converted world; an earth fit for Christ to return to, and take up His kingdom, without the necessity for judgment falling upon living men. Here is Jude telling Christians towards the end of the first century that evil men, of the sort Enoch alluded to, had crept into the bosom of the church, and that they were to meet their doom at the coming of the Lord. How then shall this church, burdened with these men, make the world fit for Christ's presence? No: the coming of the Lord in His glory is necessary for the final removal of the evil, that even in the days of Enoch had prominently raised its head; and that means judgment for the world. Nothing short of that can put everything right. Enoch knew this; and so should we.

At the end of the 365 years Enoch was translated without seeing death, but before that, "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Before Abel died at the hands of Cain he obtained the testimony, "that he was righteous." Enoch doubtless had this, but he also had the assurance that he was pleasurable to God, which was a decided step in advance. He still speaks to us, and it is to the effect that the faith that lays hold of the living God, that diligently seeks Him, that consistently walks with Him, and that witnesses for Him against the evil of the world, is very pleasing to Him. These are fundamental things, which remain valid for us to-day. The brighter revelation of God in Christ, into which we have been brought, has in no way diminished their value, but rather increased it.

We may be quite certain that if Enoch pleased God, he displeased the men of the world. This is not

stated in so many words, but we think it is inferred in two statements made in Hebrews 11. First, it is stated that he was translated, "that he should not see death." Had we not been given such full details in Genesis 5, as to the ages of the patriarchs at their death, we might have been disposed to picture Enoch at 365 years of age as a decrepit old man peeping for his grave. We can hardly do so however. Human life then was about ten times the length it is now, so Methuselah's life is comparable to that of the old man of to-day who misses being a centenarian by a few years, and Enoch's becomes equivalent to 36½ years, when a man is in the prime of his strength. Death evidently threatened him while he was young, and he was snatched away that it should not take him for a prey.

But there is the second statement, he "was not found;" and this infers that he was sought. This, of course, might only mean that people were curious as to what had become of him, as they were curious about Elijah and sought him when he was translated. Reading it however in connection with the first statement, we venture to think that it means that men were seeking him that they might slay him. Days of unbridled violence upon the earth had set in.

From Genesis 4 we know that Lamech had set an example of evil by ruthlessly slaying a poor young man that had done him some injury; and then making his boast about it, as though it were a fine thing to have done. Genesis 6 tells us not only that the earth "was corrupt before God," but also that, "the earth was filled with violence." No government had been instituted by God, and men gave full rein to their lawless lusts and were wreaking ven-

geance on one another without restraint. Were they likely to hear a man denouncing their terrible ungodliness and predicting the coming of the Lord to judge them, without their anger rising to murderous heights?

So, in reading that fifth verse of Hebrews 11, we cannot help feeling that we are to understand that Enoch's three hundred years of walk with God and his bold witness for God was just about to be ended by his violent death at the hand of the antediluvian sinners, when God intervened and translated him. They were after him, but just before the blow could be struck, "he was not; for God took him." God did not intervene in Abel's case: that man had testimony that he was righteous, and then died a martyr's death. He did intervene in Enoch's; this man profoundly displeased the men of his age, but he pleased God so much that He took him into His presence beyond the reach of his foes. We may sum up his story by saying that, *he walked with God, he witnessed for God, and he went to God.*

Lastly, it strikes us as remarkable that though Enoch was without a doubt the one outstanding figure amongst the men of faith who lived before the flood, he yet lived by far the shortest life. If we had had the arrangement of affairs, should we not have ordered otherwise? Not infrequently we see saints of godliness and gift removed comparatively early in life. This one who was so very useful and helpful to his fellow-believers is cut down when one might have anticipated for him another twenty years of useful service for the Lord! Conversely, another, who has never been conspicuous for piety or service, but who is rather a drag on his brethren, is left to an

over-ripe old age! We are all disposed to consider this kind of thing as extraordinary, and feel like questioning the wisdom of God's ways.

But it is our wisdom to be silent before Him. The two men of faith, who were outstanding in the antediluvian days, both were removed in comparative youth. One went by death: one went by translation. But they both went. It is more striking in the case of Enoch because, though we know nothing of any word that Abel spoke, we do know that he was a prophet and bore wonderful testimony to man's evil, and to God's rights and ultimate appearance for judgment.

Evidently his witness was finished so his walk terminated in the glorious presence of God.

The church has been called out from a world that is far from God, that it may walk in communion with

Him, and bear witness to its absent Lord. It has sadly failed to do this in any corporate or collective sense; yet it is still open to individuals—any number of them—who are included in the church, to do this according to their measure. Let us earnestly seek grace from our God that we may be enabled to do so.

Enoch was translated as one who pleased God in days long before "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17). Grace having fully arrived, the church is going to be translated on the ground of the grace of God. After our translation we shall have to pass before the judgment seat of Christ, and there learn the measure in which we have pleased Him.

In the light of these two things—God's grace, and our responsibility—let us be keenly desirous of having before the judgment seat the verdict, that we have pleased our Lord.

The Ten Virgins.

There were ten virgins, five wise and five foolish. In what did the difference lie? In this, the foolish had not just the one thing that fitted them to receive the Bridegroom. They were without the light wherewith to usher in the Lord; they wanted the very thing which could alone make them suitable companions for the Master; namely, the participation in the divine nature, the impartation of light, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

They wanted the fixedness of the affections wrought in the soul by the oil of gladness, the unction of the Spirit, which filled the soul of the wise virgins, and which waited but for the appearance of the Bridegroom to emanate in a flame of glory.

This was what they wanted; this is what the believer has; and this it is that makes the mighty difference between him and the world.

At midnight the cry came: the heavenly virgins arose though conscious of much weakness in themselves, they rose at the cry of their beloved; for there is that in them which answers to the cry. The foolish virgins trimmed their lamps, but their lamps failed to burn! And is there no remedy? None. According to the Saviour's awful declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."

THE GALATIAN EPISTLE: Chapter 5.

Summarised Notes of Bible Reading at Forest Hill, March 31st.

FOR these Galatian Christians to be circumcised was to become Judaised and under the law as a means of standing in God's favour, and if successful they would have been found standing in their *own* righteousness, but we know that is impossible. No one ever got blessing from God on that ground.

To be circumcised would make the one circumcised a debtor to the whole law. James tells us, "Who-soever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of *all*" (chap. 2. 10).

The evil teaching of these Judaising teachers was fatal. To become circumcised, to be put under law, to go back to Judaism, meant *apostasy*—not backsliding, for which there is, thank God recovery; but apostasy, which is fatal and for which there is no recovery.

Grace is the only way of blessing for man, "grace reigning through righteousness," grace bestowed righteously, because the atoning death of the Lord Jesus has afforded God a righteous basis on which to act. To *fall from grace* does not mean a person doing disgraceful things such as drunkenness, violence, immorality and the like. To fall from grace is to put oneself under law, seeking by fleshly effort to so conduct oneself so as to secure God's favour.

An illustration may help. A man of wealth chooses to adopt a child out of an orphanage. He takes him to his beautiful home. The servants wait upon him. He is treated with all the respect due to the son of the house. One day the gentleman misses his son. He asks a servant, "Where is Master George?"

The servant replies, "Sir, he is in the kitchen."

"What is he doing there?"

"He is blacking boots."

The father descends to the kitchen. "Why are you blacking boots, George?"

He replies, "Father, I'm so grateful to you for adopting me as your son, and allowing me to be in your beautiful home, that I thought I would like to *earn* the place you have given me, so I thought I had better blacken the boots."

"George," says the father, "if you blacked boots twenty-four hours in the day, and twelve months in the year, and all the days of your life, you would not earn a son's place. You might earn a *servant's* place by that means, but never a son's. That favour I have bestowed on you. George, you have fallen from grace. Go back to the drawing room, I want you there to enjoy the place that I have freely given you."

"*The hope of righteousness by faith*" (verse 5), does not refer particularly to the Lord's second coming, though undoubtedly it includes that blessed hope. It refers to *all* that the Christian waits for, as the result of the grace of God founded on the righteous foundation of the work of Christ. It refers to all the believer expects to enter upon when left this world. We have not this hope because we have kept the law but by the Spirit through faith.

It says in verse 6 that "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision." How does that tally with Philippians 3. 3, where it says, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the

Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”?

Gal. 5. 6 refers to the rite of circumcision, whereas Phil. 3. 6 refers to what the rite typified, to its moral and spiritual meaning. As a rite by itself it means nothing and whether circumcised or uncircumcised mattered nothing, if it is only the calling of the physical flesh, which Philipians 3. 5 in contempt calls “circision.”

But let a Christian appropriate the inner spiritual meaning of circumcision and he gets the blessing of what it signifies. It is “the putting off of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 3. 11). If that is grasped the believer has no confidence in the flesh, he refuses in his practical life that which was condemned at the cross of Christ.

Room is then made to “rejoice in Christ Jesus,” all our blessing and standing by grace come through Him, and thus fill our hearts to overflowing, so that we “worship God in the Spirit.”

There are three things in this chapter. (1) “Live in the Spirit.” (2) “Walk in the Spirit.” (3) Trust in the Spirit.” All this stands in contrast to the flesh, which if allowed by Christians only leads to biting and devouring one another, which ends in consuming one another.

“Live in the Spirit.” It is through the Spirit’s operations that divine life reaches the believing sinner. It’s righteous foundation is the death of Christ. “God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might LIVE through Him” (1 John 4. 9). The Spirit by the Word is the Medium of the impartation of divine life. “Born of water [the Word of God] and the Spirit” (John 3. 5). “Of

His own will begat He us with the word of truth” (James 1. 18). “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of uncorruptible by the Word of God” (1 Peter 1. 23).

“Walk in the Spirit.” Life means the activities of life. What mother would be content with a living child if it did not walk and exhibit all the activities so natural to life? So in divine things. If we live in the Spirit we should walk in the Spirit.

“Fruit of the Spirit,” notice not fruits but fruit. The first three items are “love, joy, peace.” These are to be active in the believer. In home life if there is love, there is consequently joy and peace. In divine life if there is love, a characteristic of the divine nature emanating from One, who is described in the three words, “God is love”, there must flow therefrom joy and peace. Long-suffering, gentleness, meekness are features of the divine life when met by contrariety, roughness, pride and the like. How unlike the flesh! And what an example we have in Him, who in the perfection of His lowly Manhood could say, “I am meek and lowly in heart.”

Temperance, a word meaning self-restraint. How much this is needed in a world of self-assertion, aggression, ambition and the like, all of which elements our flesh is prone to. The Spirit of God working in our hearts would give godly self-restraint.

How different is the fruit of the Spirit from the works of the flesh. May we be saved from tampering with the law as a means of favour and standing before God, and take gladly and happily His grace manifested to us through the atoning sacrifice of Christ with power to answer to this in our lives by the Spirit of God.

SOME RESULTS OF THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

T. Oliver.

No. 3. MYRIADS OF ANGELS.

"Ye are come unto . . . an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly . . ." (Heb. 12. 22-23).

FROM time to time there has been much discussion as to whether the term "general assembly" applies to the foregoing entity or to that which follows, i.e. whether it refers to the angels or to the Church of the First-born. However, the great volume of reliable exposition is agreed that it refers exclusively to the former. The innumerable company is literally "tens of thousands" or myriads, while the general assembly is analogous to the festal assembly at the Olympic games. The angels are here regarded as assembled in fulness of joy, not as sent forth in service. So that the usage of the term with relation to an annual congress of an ecclesiastical organisation is not justifiable from Scripture.

Throughout the Old Testament we have instances of angelic manifestation. A scene analogous to our text was set in the day when Elisha the prophet and his servant were in Dothan and the king of Syria sent a great host with horses and chariots and compassed the city (2 Kings 6. 14). The servant was greatly perturbed. But his master prayed the Lord to give vision to the young man and he saw what had been apparent to the prophet all the time. The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about them! It might seem an exact replica of the host outside the city. But there was an important distinction. The chariots outside were combustible while the chariots surrounding them were of fire! The host surrounding the

prophet and his servant were undoubtedly angelic. They were there not for display of heaven's delight, but for service. While our scripture treats of angelic display consequent upon God's complete victory, when evil and its author have been crushed irrevocably. We have come *in the Spirit* to that moment.

Until Christ came there never had been anyone on whom myriads of angels could wait in raptures of delight. At His birth the multitude of the heavenly host praised God. They were manifest to a few shepherds, men of little account in the affairs of the world. They said, "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (i.e. God's good pleasure in a man). For the first time in history the good pleasure of God had been brought to a focus. It was concentrated on "a Babe in a manger in Bethlehem." Is there any wonder that there should have been such a festal display of innumerable angels? Judged by human reason it looked very unlikely that deliverance from bondage should be located in a stable. Probably the people thought only of deliverance from the thralldom of Rome, but a much more intense bondage than that was in view. In the temptation which preceded the institution of His public ministry angels attended Him and so throughout His life angels were continually in waiting. The angels waited for the Man, the Saviour, Christ the Lord. His life was antecedent to His death. The victory achieved for

God in the death of Christ involves a celebration in the coming day of glory, an important feature of which is set forth in myriads of angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, heaven being opened (John 1. 51).

This is consequent upon all being put under His feet (Psalm 8). That terse description is a summary of the greater things than those which had entered into the conception of Nathaniel, in relation to the man of Psalm 2, viz. Israel's coming king.

Angels now take charge of the city of the living God. They are ministers or servants with a specific commission to take care of the people of God who are heirs of salvation (Heb. 1. 14). That fact is dimly seen and often referred to in a sentimental way by people in general, so

much so that in times of great trial, people are convinced that they witness vast forces of angels acting on their behalf. E.g. at the battle of Mons in 1914 there were many credible witnesses of the presence of angels. We have no intention of discussing that matter, because from the premises of human reason the vision could quite well be attributed to hallucination of men's minds under strain; but we have scriptural testimony that angels are constant attendants on those who belong to Christ as aforesaid. So that their presence is not confined to times of tremendous trial. But in every moment of life's journey we are assured of their presence. However, it is perceived by spiritual means. We need not be looking for angels in white by natural perception. Probably we have very little realisation how much we are guarded by the angels!

The Word of God, when received, must be searching, for it is light; and we are all naturally in the dark as to what suits God. If you walk in your darkness after you have seen the light you will have a bad conscience, and become very unhappy.

If you accept the Word of God you must walk by it, and as you walk by it, you have the virtue of the light itself, it is an armour for you.

You must yield yourself to the claims of God's Word, and as you do you will be like a tree, which first bears leaves, then blossoms and then fruit. It is enriched by its own products. The Word of God feeds the life, and if there is not yielding to its claims, there will not be energy of life, and there will be no leaves, no blossom, no fruit.

Be subject to the Word of God. Seek to be a practical exponent of it as you receive it, and you will find that it not only searches you, but that when it has its place in your heart it greatly enriches you with its own divine virtues.

EVANGELIST OR PREACHER?

J.B.S.

THE evangelist's duty is to communicate the good tidings, and in order to communicate them, he must know them; and he must have the heart and purpose to announce them. This is his object and his simple duty. Preaching is rather a branch of his work than the object of his office or service. He gives himself to this work, cost him what it may. He is a servant pre-eminently. Like our blessed Lord, he will, though wearied and needing rest, devote his time and attention to the desolate ones, and think more of the grace that has reached such than of his own need; so engrossed in heart with it that in measure he can say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

The evangelist is called and gifted of the Lord to seek out and bear the word of life to souls. The shepherds minding their flocks by night were the first evangelists. They were the first to whom the gospel was revealed. The angels evangelized the shepherds, and when they had heard they made known abroad or about the saying that was told them concerning the Child, "and all they that heard wondered at those things which were told or spoken to them by the shepherd." It does not say that they preached, but they made known around the word spoken to them concerning the child. They were informed, and as they were informed, they communicated it.

These first evangelists give us the true characteristics of an evangelist at the beginning. He is peculiarly a messenger, a messenger of good tidings which he enjoys himself, and his delight is to do as he has been called.

He thinks not of his sacrifice, he has news, news that has made his own heart glad, and news that he longs to impart to others, and he is ready to submit to anything in order to do so. He starts on his errand or message, thinking only of communicating it as his Lord will order. He divests himself of everything which would impede him in his work. He is prepared to endure any amount of trial or suffering: he has one great business. It is of him it is said, that they who announce (the same word as is used for "shew forth" the Lord's death) the gospel should live of the gospel. Like the shepherds, he is to make known the tidings, leaving his own concerns, and entirely controlled by this one great duty.

The business of the evangelist is to communicate his tidings fully and simply. To be qualified for his mission two things are evident: one, that he has renounced all position and self-consideration. He is Christ's messenger to the least, and his calling necessarily requires that he should be less than the least. The least shall be greatest. "I am among you as he that serveth." How could he sit weary on a well, and attend on a desolate woman of Samaria, if he had any position to maintain? A preacher is not required to surrender his position in society, he may continue in any circle of taste or fashion, and yet from a platform or pulpit address the multitude; but the evangelist, like our blessed Lord on the cross, comes down to the place of suffering one, forgets his own sufferings to attend to the dying thief; or, like Paul at Philippi, submits to be a bleeding prisoner, to be *within reach* of the convicted jailer.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

The Secret of a Fruitful Life

"I am anxious to live a fruitful life and ask you to give me some advice"—N. NIGERIA.

THE secret of a fruitful life is revealed to us in the Lord's own words in John 15. Look first at verse 16 where we have the beginning of the matter. "I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." If you are one of the Lord's "own," one of those who call Him Saviour and Lord, this is true of you, He has chosen you, with a fruit-bearing life in view. This was His purpose in saving you. Is He able to realise His purpose? Of course He is, even though to you it seems impossible.

Look now at verse 3. "Now are ye clean through the word that I have spoken unto you." In this way He has made you into a fruit-bearing branch. It is not cleansing by His precious blood that He speaks of here; that is what we should call judicial cleansing which puts you right with God. Here it is moral cleansing, an inward change has been wrought in you by His word, *you have been born again*. This means that you have now a new nature—it is the divine nature, which alone is capable of bringing forth fruit for God; it is as natural for it to do this as it is for an orange tree to bear oranges.

These two things then you now have from the Lord's side. He has chosen you to bear fruit and He has given you a nature that is capable of fulfilling His purpose. But there are conditions, and these lie on your side—the side of your responsibility. Look first at what the Lord says as to the negative side. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it

abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me," verse 4, and "Without Me ye can do nothing," verse 5. If you learn that lesson well at once you will be saved from much disappointment. But the other side is just as certain. "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

The Lord is our only source of strength and grace, we are dependent on Him, as dependent on Him as the vine branch is upon the vine.

We must cast from us all self-confidence and all self-sufficiency and cleave to Him alone. A sense of our utter helplessness will compel us to do this. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." But *affection* must be active as well as faith. Faith may be of such a feeble sort that it will cling to Christ entirely from a sense of need, and be satisfied to have the need met and relieved; but love will cling to Him for His own sake. "He that abideth in Me" means that we have no other source of supply. "I in him" means that He lives in our hearts, the supreme object of our affection. And *obedience* runs with faith and affection. "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love," verse 10. If we are indifferent to His commandments, it is plain that we have lost touch with Him, and are doing our own will instead of His, and consequently are bringing forth no fruit to perfection. But if we keep His commandments because we delight in Him, communications will flow from Him to us and these are of the utmost importance in the matter of fruit-bearing. Abiding in Him consists of

these three things; dependence upon Him, affection for Him, and obedience to Him.

One other thing is essential. "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (verse 7), and, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He may give it you" (verse 16). We cannot dispense with prayer, it is the expression of our dependence. Here it is

prayer to the Father. He is glorified as we bear much fruit; and as we bear fruit He prunes and purges us. He takes an infinitely tender interest in us and we may confidently turn to Him continually and ask that He will graciously preserve us from what would hinder fruit bearing and promote within us all that would be pleasing to Him.

Fruit-bearing is not great and spectacular service, it is the life of Jesus manifested in our bodies.

Co-operative Societies.

"Do you think it wrong for a christian to be a member of a Co-operative Society, even if one has nothing to do with its political and social activities?"—ANXIOUS ENQUIRER.

WE suggest that this is one of those questions about which each one must be fully persuaded in his own mind. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth" (Rom. 14. 22). If one has a doubt as to the right or wrong of it, we should say, Keep clear of it.

We suppose that Co-operative Societies are part of the world of business, and we may "use this

world, but not abuse it" (1 Cor. 7. 31). But there would always be the danger, being a member of such a society, of becoming *interested* in its "political and social activities" and consequently of being drawn into them, so that, in our judgment, it would be safer and better not to have membership, though being quite free to purchase at its stores if they sell the goods desired. But each one must judge for himself.

The Evangelist.

It should be evident that an evangelist must be free from any occupation which would interfere with his being sent to any part of the earth. A preacher can be faithful in his own locality, and remain in it as Noah did, who was a preacher, not an evangelist. The evangelist seeks the *soul*, and from God to it is the messenger of the light of the glory of Christ who has finished everything according to the mind of God. He communicates the wonderful tidings entrusted to him. When it is received, his heart rejoices; and when

it is refused, he retires to find his rest in Him whose servant he is.

I should add that because the Church has become like a "great house," congregations of professing Christians are now found everywhere, who really do not know the gospel, though bearing the name of Christians, and to such the pastor Timothy has to make full proof of his ministry, and therefore to "do the work of an evangelist;" and in this light a resident pastor is a preacher and an active evangelist, as every true saint is in some degree.

O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING?"

The following verses were written by one who was present at the Home-call of a beloved father, on the 13th April, 1939.

We watched our loved one, as his earthly day
 Drew to its close—we could not bid him stay.
 Full well we knew the One who loved him best,
 Was calling him to his eternal rest.

Through days of suffering, he had known the power
 Which bore him up, in nature's direst hour,
 That underneath, "the everlasting Arms,"
 Were shielding him from all death's dread alarms.

Borne up by those strong Arms he had no fear;
 Death's mighty Conqueror Himself stood near;
 The One whose wondrous love he long had known,
 Who died for him, to claim him for His own.

"His way is perfect"—oft he murmured low.
 Though in death's throes his heart was all aglow
 With heavenly light, with joy and peace divine,
 As he beheld his Lord in glory shine.

His dying lips exclaimed "What wondrous grace!"
 "Oh, what a glorious sight to see His face,"
 Himself, the faithful and unchanging Friend,
 Whose mighty love, no measure knows, nor end.

Again his voice we heard—"Into Thy Hands
 My spirit I commit," loosed were earth's bonds,
 No sting was there, but wondrous glory bright
 Lit up that bed of death with heavenly light.

Now, treasured up is what we loved—no trait
 Of Christ is lost, but in that glorious day
 All will shine forth, when all His own will be
 With Him and like Him through eternity.

B.

No one ever knew or could measure the distance between God and fallen, sinful man, but one Man—the Son of God; and no man ever knew all the love that was in the heart of God for man, but one Man—the Son of God. He came from the Father to do all His will, and effect the blessing He desired.

The only thing that endures for ever is "the Word of God." The wisdom of the world is against it; human reason is against it; but it is the only thing worth waiting on diligently. Do not reason about the things of God but appeal to the word, otherwise your faith will grow feeble.

“HIS OWN WHICH WERE IN THE WORLD.”

J. T. Mawson.

John 13.

THE Lord had spoken His last word to the world—and what a word it was! It brings out the eternal oneness of purpose between the Father and the Son and at the same time the complete subjection of the Son to the Father, who had become man that the will of the Father might be fulfilled. Said He, “I have not spoken of Myself: but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore even as the Father said unto Me so I speak” (John 12. 49, 50).

The Father’s commandment was life everlasting for men, the greatest and the best gift that He could give to them, for it is the knowledge of Himself, the true God and Jesus Christ His sent One, in the power of the Holy Ghost. And though the people would have stoned Him to death as He spoke the Father’s words of love and blessing to them, and it seemed as though His mission was a complete failure, yet it was not. There were those who had heard and believed those words of eternal life, and as He withdrew from the multitudes He gathered those about Him in the seclusion of the upper room.

He knew that the hour had come for Him to depart *out of the world* unto the Father. It was a solemn hour, an hour of crisis. His mission was fulfilled, and joy must have filled His heart at the thought of returning to the Father whose will He had done so fully, so blessedly, but—and here arose the crisis. There were these men who had believed

on Him and clung to Him, they were “His own”, and if He went to the Father, *out of the world*, He must leave them behind *in the world*. They were “HIS OWN.” Let us grasp this word. No qualifying noun enters into it, they were not said to be His sheep, His friends, or His brethren, but just “His own.” We learn from His prayer in chapter 17 that the Father had given them to Him, and He assured them that He loved them as His Father had loved Him. They might well be called “His own.” They were His unqualified and unchallenged possession; as a mother might press her child to her heart and say, “My own,” or as a man might say to his wife, “Mine.” There is the satisfaction and joy of possession in the word; there is that in it which is beyond human explanation, which will fully recompense the Lord for all that He has suffered so that no power of evil could rob Him of “His own.” In the joy of this possession He will say, “The prize is worth the price.” And as we come into this blessed and honoured circle, even we may know the joy of being possessed, for we also are “His own.”

And mark what is said of them. “Having loved His own He loved them to the end.” What is the end? It is the completion of all His love purposed for them. He loved them to the uttermost, to the end; but His love has no end. And now the hour had come for His departure *out of the world* and they were to be left *in the world*, but would that change His feelings for them? “Out of sight out of mind” is a well-known proverb, and another says, “Absence

makes the heart grow fonder", but divine love is not subject to the moods and tenses of human love. It is unwavering and everlasting, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

Yet I suggest with the greatest reverence that it was an hour of crisis for the Lord. If He departed out of the world to the Father, He must leave His own in the world. We think of Paul, the Apostle. He reached a crisis in his career, which to him was a dilemma. He said, "I am in a straight between two, having a desire to depart to be with Christ which is far better, nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." The Lord stood between two, "the Father out of the world" and "His own in the world," but divine wisdom was in no dilemma; we could not apply such a word to our sovereign Lord, who always acted with foreknowledge and without hesitation. His love would find a way by which His going to the Father would only mean greater blessing for His own in the world. May we not say, again with greatest reverence, that He would not have left them in the world if He could not have secured for them that greater blessing?

The scene is one of the most moving in the Gospel records. We read, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and went to God." Consider the magnitude of that, the whole range of God's glory in the limitless universe was committed to Him—things in heaven, and things on earth and things under the earth; there was the revelation of God's own nature, the harmonising of all His attributes, the establishment of the majesty and justice of His throne, with all the

moral questions involved; there was the control of angels, the blessing of men and the judgment of devils—all was put into the hands of the Man of sorrows who was despised of the people; shewing the absolute confidence that the Father reposed in Him. Now mark well what follows. Knowing that, "*He riseth from supper; and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.*" The first thing of the all things that the Father had put into His hands, were the feet of His own!

Was there any inconsistency between His supreme greatness and this lowly service? Peter thought so, but there was none. Sinful pride is an ineradicable mixture in all the greatness of men and it cannot stoop, but divine greatness is of another kind. It has descended from Godhead's fullest glory even to the death of the cross, and Jesus, our Lord, was just as great as He washed His disciples' feet, girded with a towel, as He will be when crowned with many crowns He governs the universe.

But that actual feet washing had a spiritual meaning, which Peter and his brethren did not know at that time, but which they were to know hereafter. We know its meaning now. It reveals to us the fact that our Lord, though with the Father out of the world, is girded to serve His own which are in the world, and that He is most careful of their feet. Yes, how and where "His own" walk is a matter of infinite importance to Him.

The Lord's words to Peter shed much light upon this action of the

Lord. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." The object was part with Him, not in an earthly kingdom in the world as they had hoped, but in His Father's house out of the world. For this clean feet were necessary, the soil of earth must be washed from them, if they were to have communion with Him there. He is Host to His own in that out of the world heavenly sphere, and we gather from Luke 7. 44-46 that it was the host's service to his most distinguished guests to wash their feet from the soil of the street and so welcome them to his house and feast. The Lord is the Host indeed, and His love cannot be satisfied if His own walk at a distance from Him. His purpose is that even now they should have part with Him where He has gone, that they should be there in spirit already; hence the feet washing.

He said to Peter, "*He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who would betray Him.*" He said later, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" ch. 15. 3. It was not cleansing by blood that He spoke of in either case, that is judicially cleansing, the cleansing of our sins as before God. This is cleansing by water, the water of the word, it is a moral cleansing; it puts the heart and life of His own in right relations with Himself. It is the power of the word within the soul, producing the new birth, and making God and Christ the object instead of self. It is illustrated in Peter's word as spokesman for the rest of them. "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" ch. 6. 69, 70.

That was done once and for all, for when once a man is born of God he does not need to have that repeated, so he "needeth not save to wash his feet." We come into contact with the defiling influences of the world in which we are left, and the Lord's constant service of love is to remove the effects of this from us. He does it by the application of His word to us, and we learn the meaning of "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Eph. 5. 26.

How often when we have sought the presence of the Lord we have found our spirits lethargic and dull, with very little desire for His company and things; this is the result of the defiling influences of the evil world and such a condition on our part is intolerable to the Lord. Then He brings His word in power to our souls, driving away the dullness and reawakening within us responsive love to Him and a desire to have part with Him in His things. This is the washing of our feet, and it is the Lord's way of preparing us for intimacy with Himself. It has in view the inescapable defilement of the world with which we have to do. This illustration has often been used of the walk from the bath to the dressing room. It does not contemplate a christian deliberately choosing a muddy road; that would be positive disgraceful sin, yet even for that there is provision, for "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous: and He is the propitiation for sins." 1 John 2. 1, 2.

While we learn the inner significance of this loving service of the Lord, do not let us lose that which lies clearly on the surface—the gracious humility of the service. If it

was the act of a host who desired to specially distinguish a guest, it was also the service of a slave, and as we view our Lord at the feet of His disciples, we are reminded of His words, "I am among you as he that serveth." And His words come home to us with special force. "Ye call

Me, Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

One with Authority.

Two children stood on the curb, they wanted to cross the road, but the stream of traffic frightened them, they dared not venture. A policeman appeared and took their hands in his, and all their fear was gone. They stepped happily along on either side of him. He had authority to control the traffic for their sakes, and their smiles of thanks as they reached the other side of the road in safety must have repaid him well. You have come to a difficult crossing; your heart is failing you, and you are dreading the future. Your Lord and Friend draws near to you, and all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. Can you not trust Him? He says, "Lo, I am with you alway," and He controls the current of events for the sake of His own—you are one of these. Put your hand in His, commit your way to Him, and be as free from anxious care as were those little girls who were led safely across the crowded street by the kindly policeman.

Sowing and Harvest.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126).

Christianity was sown in the tears of the Son of God. What a thought is this for us. Whatever joy we may have is part of the harvest of His sowing. And those who have learnt this must rejoice in the hope of that day when He shall see of the travail of His soul, and come rejoicing with the full harvest for all He has suffered. So in all service, where there is to be real blessing, there must be the sorrow of the world's opposition, and the trials and failures and shortcomings in the church. But going forth with the precious word we may reckon on bringing our sheaves back with us.

Your heart will never be warmed by its own coldness; don't dwell upon it. If it is cold you will never grow warm by thinking of the snow and frost around. You must draw near to the source of heat. The love of Christ is the source of warmth for you. Draw near to Him. Lay your head on His bosom and know yourself as the disciple whom Jesus loves. That will drive the coldness out of your heart.

“UNTO YOU IT IS GIVEN.”

A. J. Pollock.

“Unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. 1. 29).

“**GIVEN**,” yes, something that costs *us* nothing; something that enriches *us*—a gift.

We have known an infant with delight grasp the gift of a penny in his chubby hand, and walk away with the feeling of being fabulously rich. Exhibit on the palm of your hand a golden sovereign and a penny fresh from the mint, and the infant will invariably choose the glittering penny so little is its discernment. It judges by size and not by quality.

But if someone comes on behalf of His Majesty the King with a gift, we know the gift will be valuable, will be in keeping with the royal giver.

How much more so when the gift “is given *in the behalf of Christ*”? What a wealth of blessing is wrapped up in the word, that it is given to the Christian to believe. In believing the believer receives gifts that make him a spiritual multi-millionaire. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things” (Rom. 8. 32).—forgiveness of sins, pardon, salvation, justification, eternal life? We are indeed “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8. 17).

It reminds us of the Lord God saying to Abram, “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (Gen. 23. 14, 15).

So the believer can lift up his eyes, and behold a vast spiritual inherit-

ance, stretching out to the eternal ages, far beyond the horizon of time.

“*Given . . . not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake.*” Here we touch a different line of things altogether. “*Given . . . to believe,*” yes, gain, pure unadulterated increment. “The unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3. 8) are ours. A vein of wealth that can never be worked out. But “*given . . . to suffer,*” that seems a matter of a doubtful nature, We shrink from suffering. We look on that as loss, as negative.

But our verse tells us “It is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake.” It puts the believing, the gain, the spiritual riches on the same plane as the suffering. Ah! there are three words we must emphasize—“suffer **FOR HIS SAKE.**” “**FOR HIS SAKE**” makes all the difference. They light up the suffering with a glory, an effulgence not of this earth, but with a light “above the brightness of the sun.”

We are seeing this worked out just now in German prisons and concentration camps. German pastors have been flung into strict confinement, not because of any crime against the state, but because of their loyalty to their Lord. They have refused to substitute Hitler for Christ as Head of the church. They have dared to stand for the truth, and now “it is given them to suffer for *His sake.*” It is no new experience, as they have freshly found out.

There has been issued in the press a modest volume composed of letters written by these imprisoned pastors to their wives and loved ones. It

bears a significant title, "*I was in prison.*" Christ in prison in the person of these pastors! Yes! Our Lord speaks of a time of suffering yet to come, "I was in prison, and ye came unto Me" (Matt. 25. 37). The enquiry is made, "Lord, when saw we Thee . . . in prison?" Then comes the glorious answer, "INASMUCH as ye did it unto one of the least of My brethren, ye have done it UN-TO ME" (verse 40).

What a glorious title this precious collection of letters is given—"I was in prison"—Christ in prison in the persons of His servants, the pastors. How that thought will light up with an unearthly glory the narrow cells in which they may be incarcerated.

What an arresting thought for Saul of Tarsus—God about to turn Christ's bitterest opponent into His most loyal and self-denying servant. With all the force of a masterful personality this brilliant young man was bent upon stamping the name of Christ off the earth. Armed with letters of administration from the high priests, he was found searching out the humble believers on the Lord Jesus, that he might bring them, bound to Jerusalem, consenting in some cases to their death, as in the case of Stephen. He believed Christ who died on the cross was an imposter, and that he was doing God's service in sweeping the importune off the face of the earth.

What must have been his thoughts, when he heard the voice of the Lord from heaven, unmistakable in its power and majesty, saying "Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" (Acts 9. 4). He learned that in persecuting these humble believers, he was persecuting the Lord Himself—persecuting the Lord in the persons of His disciples. What an honour for them!

And then Saul of Tarsus became a most eminent servant of Christ, known as Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ. He soon tasted what it was to suffer for Christ's sake. In prisons often, in deaths oft, five times scourged by the Jews, receiving on each occasion forty stripes save one, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned and left for dead, in perils of all kinds, suffering hunger and thirst and cold and nakedness, his was indeed a record of its being given to him to suffer for Christ's sake.

Did he complain? Was he distressed? He sang praises at midnight in the prison at Philippi. Listen to his triumphant words, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake" (2 Cor. 12. 10). Yes, "FOR CHRIST'S SAKE," that made all he passed through not loss but gain, not something to be avoided, but to be gloried in, not a matter of pain, though there was plenty of that, but a pleasure.

Read the letters of the German pastors. They witness to the fact that they are at peace, in tranquility of mind, their hearts rejoicing in the Lord, the Scriptures encouraging them, the succour of their Lord, their great High Priest in heaven, supporting them, they are happier by far in their bare cells than Hitler in his gilded palace, with his over-reaching ambition riding for a terrible fall.

Ten thousand times over would we rather be in the shoes of these pastors, than have the highest honour that their oppressors could bestow.

Listen to some of the echoes from the prison:—

"The ways of God are wonderful. When He leads us through dark ways His glory may be ex-

perienced at the fullest! And it is always the same: 'You thought of doing me evil, but God thought of doing me good.' I am joyfully certain that everything we are suffering now serves 'rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.'"

"We are not, after all, swallowed up into nothingness! There is a power that sustains us, we are borne up by God the Father's everlasting arms; we are supported through the storms, over the abysses."

"I am not alone, but am certain of the nearness and presence of the living God, even and perhaps because of the narrowness of my cell."

"One is allowed to thank God, and to praise him for being in the position to suffer for His cause; and one can pray to God on behalf of those who bring me into such a position."

Many such quotations could be given. There is one remarkable quotation, which raises a range of thought. This prisoner of the Lord writes from his German prison:—

"It is most wonderful to read the Bible at such a time! How alive it suddenly becomes and how real! It really gives the impression of having been written specially for prisoners and for prison. And so it is really—in many aspects and senses. Alas! if only the others in — were as well off as I am here."

We think of many of God's people in prison as told us in the Scriptures—Joseph, "whose feet they hurt with fetters" (Psalm 15. 18), languishing

in prison for something like a dozen years because he would not do "this great wickedness and sin against God" (Gen. 39. 9). Jeremiah, the brave prophet, who did not shun to give his message, with whom "the princes were wroth . . . and smote him, and put him in prison" (Jer. 37. 15). Hanani, the seer, who, by his faithful message aroused the wrath of King Asa, who "put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him" (2 Chron. 16. 10).

When we come to the New Testament we read how John the Baptist was flung into prison and put to death; likewise James put into prison and put to death. The apostle Paul could write of "in prisons more oft" (2 Cor. 11. 23). The apostle Peter was flung into prison, but miraculously delivered for "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts 12. 5). The apostle John imprisoned in the Isle of Patmos, where the unrolling of the future in symbolic form was passed before his enraptured soul when he "was in the Spirit of the Lord's day" (Rev. 1. 10).

Indeed as far as we can gather not one of the apostles but sealed his testimony by martyrdom, given to them "to suffer for HIS sake." What an honour!

Since that day, as the centuries have rolled by, we have one long list of christian men and women who have accepted prison gladly rather than be disloyal to their Lord, and in many cases have laid down their lives for His name's sake.

May we be like Moses of old, who "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." May we too have "respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11. 26).

THE CROSS OF CALVARY.

Inglis Fleming.

THE Epistle of Paul to the Galatians has been called "The Cross of the Christ." Reversing the terms we may call it, "The Christ of the Cross."

For Our Lord is presented again and again in connection with His crucifixion. Indeed every chapter has reference to His death.

It may be of benefit if we consider briefly some of the occasions in which He is seen at Calvary from varied points of view.

The first chapter speaks of Him thus:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The serious question of our sins is taken up. There was no other way in which that question could be met, but by our Lord Jesus Christ's death. In grace He came. In grace He gave Himself as a sacrifice. He "suffered for sins," the Just One for us the unjust ones "that He might bring us to God" and that He might deliver us from this present age. The evil of the age has been fully manifested. It refused and cast out the Son of God. From it and from its prince, the power of darkness, He would deliver us. And this was in fullest accordance with "the will of God and our Father," Who has brought us into relationship with Himself.

The *whole matter* of our sins was taken up between a holy sin-hating God, and His holy, but sin-bearing Son, at Golgotha where He died. There it was settled in fullest righteousness to the entire and eter-

nal satisfaction of the holy throne of God.

We who believe rejoice to know that *all* our sins, not *some* of them—not *most* of them—but "*our sins*"—*all* of them, were borne by our Saviour "in His own body on the tree." He who lived His spotless life in the favour of God, He of whom the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased," He "who knew no sin," He "was manifested to take away our sins" and became the sin-offering for us. Then He was dealt with in righteous judgment, in order that we might be dealt with in righteous grace. He "was delivered for our offences" that we might be delivered from our offences for ever.

In chapter two we see the infinite work of Christ from another angle. There we read

"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Evil teachers had come among the young Christians in the Galatian assemblies. They had taught them that unless they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses they could not be saved. They wished to make these converts proselytes to a Christianised Judaism. The apostle would not have this teaching for a moment. With unsparing severity he sets it aside. It was "another gospel" which was not the true gospel at all. It was a perversion of it altogether.

The law was like a looking glass let down from heaven to show sinners what they were. It did not, it could not, cleanse or relieve them. A mirror can show me a smut upon my face. It cannot remove it. The right effect of the seeing the soil will be that I go to the wash basin to put away the defilement. The right effect of the law will be to drive the sinner to his knees to seek cleansing from God. The law could not give righteousness, it could but condemn. It could not give power, it could only show weakness. It could not bless, it could only curse. Thus the gospel was needed.

"I through the law," cries the apostle, "have died to the law that I might live unto God." Under the law self is the object in attempting to gain righteousness. The law said "Thou shalt," "thou shalt not." It prohibited that which was natural to sinful man. "Thou shalt not covet" (or lust), disclosed the very nature of man. It stirred up the corruption that was in man's nature. The law itself is "holy and just and good."

So the law slays the sinner in his conscience showing how helpless and hopeless he is. But the believer lives in Christ risen, that now, freed from the law, he may walk with God and for His pleasure.

"I have been crucified with Christ" exclaims Paul. He had been brought to his end in judgment when Christ died. In His death he had died. All that he had been "in Adam" as a sinner had been ended, not mended. Sinful flesh was removed and not improved by the cross.

"Nevertheless I live," adds the apostle, "yet not I but (a new life altogether) Christ liveth in me."

Christ is risen. Christ is our life. The old life is judged and set aside in the death of the Son of God. It is ours as believers now, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to judge *any* manifestation of the flesh and live to God in the Spirit.

In chapter three we find the apostle addressing those who had been under the law.

"Christ hath 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;" Then he adds "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

From the glory where Christ is enthroned He has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell all who believe.

The cross sets aside the flesh judicially. The Holy Spirit sets aside the flesh practically. He enables us to walk for the glory of God.

The promise to Abraham is fulfilled, "In thee all nations of the earth shall be blessed. The Holy Spirit is not given to Jewish believers only, but to the Gentile believers as well. Atonement having been accomplished by Christ, God has been glorified and the way has been opened for the Holy Spirit to come. And He has come to be our power for witness and work and worship.

In Ephesians 2. 18 we read of the whole Trinity of the Godhead in connection with the Christians' privilege. "For through Him (through Christ, now risen) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access by one Spirit (the Holy Spirit now indwelling us) unto the Father.

In chapter 4 we have another view of the work of our Lord.

“When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

In this passage we learn the thought of God toward us was that we might be sons before Him.

Let us look at the verses in some detail, “The fulness of the time was come.” The period had been reached which had been looked forward to so long. “The Seed of the woman,” promised aforetime, the lamb for a burnt offering which God would provide for Himself, the sacrifice pointed to by the offering upon the Jewish altars, the One whose day Abraham saw and which made him glad, the glorious Son of God had come. Sent forth of God. He had come of the Virgin in true holy Manhood. He was a true Israelite come under the law. He had come that according to the good pleasure of His God and Father we might receive sonship.

Every question as to our sinner-ship was settled in His work of redemption. Thus the way was opened for the will of God the Father to be carried out and for us to be brought into nearness to Him as His sons.

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father.”

This was the cry of our Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, in Gethsemane’s dark hour. There He had said,

“Abba Father, all things are

possible unto Thee: take away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.”

That cup of judgment from which, in His perfection, our Lord shrank, could not pass from Him, He drank it to all its depths. Now the cup of eternal blessing passes to us. It is filled to the brim with everlasting privilege. We are become sons and heirs of God. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God’s Son, cries the cry of nearness and dearness and relationship “Abba, Father.” The cry is *for the Father’s ear*, as it comes *from our hearts*.

Soon we shall be in the Father’s house. There “conformed to the image of God’s Son” and there for His pleasure and delight, “that He may be first born among many brethren,” we shall sing the Father’s praises eternally.

The Father desired to have sons before His face. To have those who knowing Him should love Him and loving Him should worship Him, both now and in His own house and home for ever.

Yet another view of the cross of Christ is seen in chapter five.

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

Upon that cross we see

CHRIST bearing OUR SINS, ending OUR SELF-LIFE and condemning THE FLESH OF SIN.

Thus the believer is viewed as saying “Amen” to what has happened at that cross.

The Holy Spirit is our power for walk. Living in the Spirit we are called to “walk in the Spirit.” As we

do so "the fruit of the Spirit" will be manifested in us. That "fruit" is just that which came out in Christ in His lowly life on earth. It is like a bunch of nine grapes: Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance (Self Control).

These are all in contrast with the flesh-works, of which verses 19-21 tell us. The end of these works shows the nature of the flesh. It is unchanged and unchangeable. God has condemned it and we learn to condemn it too, and are seen as having crucified it *with all connected with it*. It remains in the Christian until the end. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." They are in constant warfare. They are irreconcilable. "They that are in the flesh (that is in their natural condition as come of Adam) *cannot please God.*" "The mind of the flesh is *enmity* against God, it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be.*"

As we have said, the Christian's power is to walk in the Spirit and doing so he will not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

The engine in the airplane enables the airman to overcome the law of gravitation which would hold him down to the earth. In the power of the engine he can rise above the clouds. If he gets engine trouble he will come down to difficulty and disaster.

So the Holy Spirit of God enables the believer to live to God, to live above the power of the flesh and to rejoice, in service and worship. If the Holy Spirit is grieved by allowed sin, the believer is shorn of his strength and comes down to spiritual disaster and it may be to the open dishonour of the Lord.

"If we live in the Spirit" (and every true believer does this) "let us walk in the Spirit" is therefore the apostolic exhortation.

In chapter 6 the apostle cries,

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified, unto me and I unto the world" (verse 14).

Here the world is seen in its entirety as crucified, that is *ended* in shame and judgment upon the cross. This is the evil world of which chapter 1 spoke to us. It is seen as *utterly condemned*. It lies under the judgment of God now and soon that judgment is to be outpoured.

With all its boasted, vaunted inventions and advancements and achievements it has shown what it is in the action of its "princes." They crucified the Lord of Glory.

We who have come to Christ are on His side. We have enlisted under His standard. For us the world is crucified. We are *in* the world still. But we are no longer part and parcel of it.

Then as we openly confess our Lord the world will reject us as it rejected Christ. It will not want us as it did not want Christ Himself. Thus we read, "The world is crucified to Me and I am (crucified) to the world."

To-day the world comes with a white kid glove upon its hand, and says to the Christian "Let us shake hands and be friends." But that gloved hand is stained with the blood of Christ. If we are true and loyal to Christ we shall testify to the world that its works are evil and hold ourselves aloof from it whether in its foulest or its fairest character.

“HE CONDEMNED THE WORLD.”

F. B. Hole

IN the book of Genesis the history of Noah extends over four chapters, and in this there is quite a contrast with Enoch, whose history is compressed into four short verses. Several additional facts concerning Noah come to light in the New Testament; yet in Hebrews 11 one verse suffices to give the inspired commentary on the remarkable faith that he manifested. Let us remind ourselves that what faith gives us is, “the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (New Trans.).

When Noah was born, over a thousand years, at the lowest computation, had passed since sin entered the world, and six hundred years later the flood was to sweep away the world of the ungodly. If those six hundred years be divided into five equal parts, then four out of the five passed without anything being put on record save the all-important fact that he was “a just man and perfect in his generation,” and that he “walked with God.” We are not told when this walk began, nor for how long precisely it continued, but we can see here a very definite moral link with his great-grandfather Enoch, who was translated about seventy years before his birth.

But if four-fifths of the period were comparatively uneventful, there was laid during their course, by this steady walk with God, the foundation on which was reared the activity and the witness that occupied the final fifth—the one hundred and twenty years that immediately preceded the flood. Then was the period of “the longsuffering of God . . . while the ark was a preparing,” (1 Peter 3: 20), and also of the witness

which Noah rendered as “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2: 5). When he thus preached righteousness, it was the Spirit of Christ who addressed those disobedient men through his lips. They continued in their disobedience, and as the result of that their spirits are now in prison. This is, we believe, the meaning of those difficult verses, 1 Peter 3: 18—20; and it agrees with what is said, in 1 Peter 1: 31, as to the Spirit of Christ testifying through the other Old Testament prophets.

Noah’s witness as a preacher is passed over in silence, just as Enoch’s witness as a preacher is not mentioned in verse 5. Our attention is directed to what he did—the great work in which his faith found its expression—rather than what he said.

As ever, God made the first move, He spoke to Noah, warning him of “things not seen as yet.” They were seen with awful vividness and destructive effect when the one hundred and twenty years had expired, but at the beginning of the period there was not the smallest sign of them. Indeed it is quite probable that what is stated in Genesis 2: 5, as to the absence of rain, applied to the whole antediluvian period, and if so the announcement to Noah of the great flood of waters must have sounded to him strange, unprecedented and unbelievable from any human standpoint. However, the warning came *from God*, and that settled the matter as far as Noah was concerned. Here, then, is an excellent illustration of the dictum that “Faith is believing what God says, *because God says it.*”

It is well that we should realize

that we are in just this position to-day as regards the second coming of our Lord. On two occasions did Jesus speak of "the days of Noe," comparing them to "the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24. 37-41), and again to "the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17. 22-28). That which He has predicted as to His coming intervention in power, which will mean a far greater overthrow for evil men than that accomplished by the flood, is something entirely unprecedented. We believe it and expect it because He has said it. *We too have been warned of God.*

Having been warned of God as to these coming, unseen things, and having received the warning in faith, Noah was "moved with fear." His faith *substantiated* the warning, and *conviction* of the coming flood moved him. The Apostle James has told us in his epistle that there is a "faith" which is dead, inasmuch as it does not move a man to any works; whereas living faith moves people to actions appropriate to that which they believe. James cites both Abraham and Rahab in proof of this. We may cite Noah with equal propriety. It moved him sufficiently to start him on a colossal task which lasted one hundred and twenty years.

It is plainly stated that what moved Noah was *fear*. The goodness of God, expressed in His forbearance and longsuffering with guilty man, does indeed lead to repentance, as is stated in Romans 2. 4, yet very often fear of coming judgment has acted powerfully, and Noah's case is an example of this. It was fear of the right kind; not the abject alarm and fright which the rest of the antediluvians doubtless knew when the flood came and swept them all away, but the fear which sprang

from faith in God's warning word. The gospel we preach to-day carries with it a very definite word of warning as to the judgment which will fall at the end of this age, when Christ appears in glory: we find the Apostle Paul giving that warning in Acts 17: 31, and it is recorded that a few believed and consequently attached themselves to Paul. They too were moved in the right direction.

Noah's faith in God's warning produced the fear that moved him to action according to the Divine instructions. Had there been no action there would have been no salvation for him and his house; and in that case the question asked by James would have been very much to the point—"What doth it profit . . . though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Noah acted in obedience, and so we can apply to him those other words of James, "by works was faith made perfect." In that way he yielded the obedience of faith.

Thus Noah started on his great work of preparing an ark for the saving of his house. God was the Architect, so he had no need to be concerned as to the matter of its design. His only concern must have been to carry out rightly what God had designed. A single man receives a commission to build a gigantic ship, and that, apparently, in the midst of dry land! It was an extraordinary command, and must have called forth faith of no ordinary character in Noah. If we assume the cubit to have equalled eighteen inches, which is the lowest figure suggested, the ark must have been four hundred and fifty feet long, seventy-five feet broad, forty-five feet high.

In the whole history of the world up to about a century ago, every other ship constructed was a mere cockle-shell in comparison with this. Only in quite recent years have these dimensions been surpassed. But, what God said, Noah did; and he proved that God's command was his enabling.

It is not difficult to see how very naturally his building and his preaching must have been linked together. His preaching must have explained his building operations: his building must have shown very impressively that he did really believe what he preached. Yet in spite of this he made no converts outside his own immediate household: such was the hardness of heart that marked men at the close of the antediluvian age.

When the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6. 3), the reference is, we believe, to Noah's preaching. The Spirit of Jehovah, in Genesis, and the Spirit of Christ, in 1 Peter 1. 11, and 3. 18, are identical. Being a Divine Person, the Holy Spirit can be characterized in these different ways, and in many other ways besides. Through Noah's words the Spirit was striving with men; and there was not only the warning of the coming flood but also the preaching of positive "righteousness." The earth in those days was filled with flagrant unrighteousness, which expressed itself in both violence and corruption of a most fearful sort. Noah might very well have been tempted to spend all his time declaiming against the evil, which would have involved him in a negative kind of testimony. Instead of this he preached what was positive.

In that he is a great example to us upon whom the ends of the ages are come. The times of the Gentiles are going to end with conditions similar to the days of Noah, only with an accentuated ungodliness. Many good Christian folk seem to have been tempted to spend their choicest energies in *protesting against various evils*. We know quite well that we should "reprove" the "unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5. 11), but all the same our choicest energies should be expended in *preaching the gospel*, wherein the righteousness of God is made known. In this age the evangelist is a preacher of righteousness in a sense altogether unknown in the days of Noah.

Had Noah merely denounced the unrighteousness of his age, he would have condemned the existing state of things without indicating what was right. As it was, he condemned it by the simple preaching of righteousness. In the light of what was right, the wrongness of existing things was plainly seen. Yet our verse in Hebrews 11 does not tell of how he "condemned the world" by what he *said*, but rather by what he *did*. Men are more impressed by our actions than by our words.

We read, "God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me" (Gen. 6. 13). These words clearly intimated that *God had condemned the world*, and it was only a matter of time for the judgment to fall. Noah realized that the sentence of doom had gone forth from God's lips: he accepted it, and in his turn *he condemned the world* by building the ark as a refuge from the coming disaster. Every nail, as he drove it home, was a token of salvation for himself and his house, but a token

of condemnation for the world: it made the cleavage between himself and the world more pronounced. Has not this a great voice for our hearts to-day?

The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation," but only "to every one that believeth." In it "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," but this cannot be rightly declared without making it plain that, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1. 16-18). We fear that all too often the gospel is not declared as it should be, inasmuch as this revealed wrath is left unmentioned. It is really the dark background to the picture, and if it is not allowed to appear, the brightness of the gospel is not thrown properly into relief. The salvation of Noah's house is only appreciated as we view it against the condemnation of the antediluvian world. We have been saved with a far greater salvation, but ours too is from a condemned world.

Noah did not shrink from condemning the world. Do we? Alas! it looks as if very often we do. It brings a considerable amount of obloquy on our heads, and we shrink from it. As an illustration we may cite the popularity of the idea that the gospel is to be preached in order that bit by bit the world may be converted, and conditions thus made so favourable that the return of Christ may be made possible. There is not the slightest sign of the gospel winning the world: on the contrary it is losing ground in nearly all the nations where longest it has been known. But in spite of that the idea persists. And why? Because, we believe, it enables people to elimin-

ate from their minds the ugly thought of total world catastrophe and judgment, and to think that after all appearances must be deceptive, and that somehow, even if long delayed, the gospel must triumph and painlessly introduce the golden age.

Those who think thus have, of course, no need to condemn the world at all: they merely have to tell it that at present it is not up to the standard—not sufficiently Christianized—but that as the gospel is given right of way things will improve and the goal of an approved and accepted world be reached. Moreover those who carry the gospel with this thought in their minds cannot of necessity cut their links with the world. They must strengthen their links, in order that the more effectually they may improve it.

On the other hand, when we know with Peter how that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for His name*" (Acts 15. 14); and when we remember that God is not capricious and changeable, but that what He does at the first in any dispensation He does consistently throughout that dispensation; then we realize that the gospel has been, and is, separating a people from the nations. When that separated people is completed they will be removed by the coming of the Lord for them, and the nations will pass on to judgment. Each one of that separated people by their faith in Christ condemns the world. The world condemned Christ. God has vindicated Christ and condemned the world. If we repose our faith in Christ, we must in the very nature of things condemn the world too.

The last clause of our verse is re-

markable, and specially so if it be read in connection with its opening words. "By faith . . . became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Verse 4 has told us that, "By faith Abel . . . obtained witness that he was righteous"; that is to say, he was then and there accounted righteous by God. He *was* righteous, and not merely *an heir* of righteousness. Noah too *was* righteous; we are told so in Genesis 7. 1; yet this does not clash with what we are told here. There could be no revelation of "the righteousness which is by faith" until Christ had died and risen again, as we see in Romans 3. 21, 22, and Philippians 3. 9. Hence

this righteousness is here viewed as a future thing, and Noah by his faith became heir to it; and in the rich inheritance that it entails for all who participate in it, Noah will be found standing in the age to come.

In this closing point a considerable measure of contrast exists between Noah and ourselves. We are indeed heirs of the coming inheritance, but the righteousness which is by faith is ours the moment we believe the gospel. Standing in this righteousness, how clearly ought we to condemn the world, and how manifestly show that we are heirs of a heavenly kingdom which cannot be moved.

The secret of Strength.

WHAT is the true meaning of the oft-quoted words, "My grace is sufficient for thee"? The Lord meant, Depend upon Me, you are not sufficient for yourself, but I am sufficient for you. Paul discovered the reality of this and came out with that extraordinary paradox, "When I am weak then am I strong." When I have no self-dependence—which is weakness in the presence of Satan and the flesh, and have only reliance on the Lord, then I triumph.

made you sink when you walked on the water?" He answers, It was myself made me sink. And how were you enabled to walk? It was Christ and He only that made me walk, for I did walk on the water. And he did walk on the water, the Scripture is careful to tell us that. It was not in the majestic way in which the Lord did it. He had to be held up and the Lord's power was equal to this. It illustrates for us the fact that the saint who depends upon the Lord alone is superior to the most testing circumstances.

I ask Peter, "What was it that

Think of Stephen; he could look up into the glory and see Jesus there, and was made superior by the Lord's power through the Holy Spirit within him to all the power of evil that was against him; his soul was so free that he could pray for his murderers—a wonderful prodigy of divine power in an earthen vessel. It was the power of Christ perfected in him.

Self-confidence is the ruin of the believer, it betrays him. Simon Peter would never have gone into the high priest's house and denied the Lord if he had not had confidence in himself. It was the undoing of Samson. He said, "I will go out, as at other times and shake myself." Ah, but he could not. "He wist not that the Lord had departed from him." His self-confidence separated him from the Lord.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

James McBroom.

Chapter 27 (continued).

THERE is nothing like the Cross. Up to this point in these closing scenes the righteous One has been in the hands of His murderers; in such circumstances He turns to His God. Others had cried in their need and been heard and delivered, but for Him there is no help. "Why art Thou so far from helping Me and from the words of My roaring?" The will of God must be established. The nature, character and being of God was in question; the majesty of His throne and the honour of His name; His holiness, righteousness and the integrity of His word: all this is at stake, and at a time when rebellion in its wildest character had broken out as if it would dethrone the eternal God Himself. But whatever was at stake all was perfectly under control with the issue never for a moment in doubt. The Holy One had come to settle every question for the glory of God eternally.

As it is that aspect of the cross which is typified by the sin and trespass offerings it is essential that we should see the unsullied holiness of the Person of the Lord, the perfection of His obedience and the infinite value of His sacrifice as being able to exhaust the judgment of God against sin. His obedience and submission, combined with the intrinsic holiness of His sacrifice was such as to meet every claim of the divine majesty. Had it ended there we might have had cause for thankfulness and also enjoyed forgiveness as the result of sins put away. Whatever was the extent of the obligation all was met *and more*. Whatever was the condition of things in the reign of sin, the outrage on the majesty of God and the consequent

state of moral chaos, there was not only complete restoration of all but a fifth part more (cmp. Leviticus 5. 15, 16).

Here we have that aspect of the death of our Lord which connects with the Burnt Offering presentation in which we learn that the excellency and fulness of His sacrifice filled the heart of God with delight and the universe with glory. It was in the place of sin and for sin that He died, but in that same act He offered Himself as a sweet smelling savour to God. He has borne sin's judgment and glorified God about it all, but in that same act He offered Himself to God and was accepted in all the intrinsic excellence of His personal worth. There was thus a revenue of glory in the atoning work of our Lord which far surpassed the rightful claims of offended Majesty and by which the creation is put upon a footing, that of redemption which is infinitely beyond the original footing of creature responsibility.

The feelings of the heart of the blessed Sufferer are before us here. The cry of abandonment makes known as far as can be known in the creation what was going on behind the scenes when the Son was made sin. His relation of Son gave all its poignancy to that terrible cry and all its efficacy to the wondrous work. But having offered Himself for that work that relationship did not and could not save Him from the distance, the darkness and the agony of that awful Hour.

In the light of all this the surrounding circumstances seem of little account, yet the deed of the moment

lends great importance to all. Certain signs were there affecting both the material and the moral universe and reaching out to the spirit realm by bringing back to life some that were dead. The darkness and the earthquake shew that both the heavens and the earth were affected and bespeak the sympathy of nature while the rending of the veil tells of the breakup of that system where man in the flesh had been tested and found a complete failure. Then there were witnesses of the justice and integrity of the suffering Victim, for if the Jews hired false witnesses against Him God so ordered it that there should be ample witness to His grace and glory and righteousness from both Jew and Gentile. Pilate and his wife with the Roman Centurion, as also Judas Iscariot. The dying robber who confessed His Lordship in the darkest hour, then the Women from among the Jews and Joseph of Arimathea, all in turn bore witness to Him.

The grave was sealed and the watch was set in response to the inextinguishable hatred of the Jews, but little did those men know that there was another Guard there. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and this would indicate that the Shekinah glory cloud with its wheels and wings and blaze of divine fire in judicial majesty was not far from the precious body of Him Who had glorified God in death.

And now the Son of God is in death, Christ dead and buried. The darkness of death spreads itself over the whole scene and it may be said in deep reality, "The end of all flesh has come before Me." Having joined issue with God over His Son, man put the righteous One to death.

Moral death covers all and the guilt lies at the door of man. There is no sin like this sin. Such is its magnitude that it may be said there is no sin but that. "If I had not done among them the works which no other one has done, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father." The broken law, despising the prophets, refusing the promise, everything put together is nothing compared to the hatred and murder of the Son of God. "Of sin because they believe not on Me. Of sin, not because they slew the prophets or failed to keep the law, or because they despised the promises. No. Of sin because they believed not on Me." Later, it is said, "He is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son," but here are the solemn words, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father."

Matthew 28.

This chapter gives the inspired account of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. Christ the firstfruits. "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead." The record here is remarkable for its brevity. We have the fact itself given by an angel of the Lord, with his instruction to the women; then their actual meeting with the risen Lord. The angel said, "Fear not," so did the Master. It was a time of holy joy in the victory over death and Satan's power. The Lord had said to them, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful: but your sorrow shall be turned into joy . . . *I will see you again, and your joy no man taketh from you*" (John 16. 19, 22). Here was the reversal of what had been. "For fear of him (that is the angel) the keepers did

shake, and became as dead men." Clearly they were not asleep but terror-stricken. How solemn for men when the terrors of a holy God take hold of them. The unclean hands of Roman soldiers had been laid upon that blessed One and the look of His heavenly messenger which was like lightning, chilled them through and through that they were like dead men. But there was affinity between the angel and the seeking women; he had words of comfort and a glorious message of heavenly delight for them. The coming of the blessed One by birth had been heralded by an angel. Here His coming by death and resurrection is again announced by an angel. "Fear not: for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy."

That joy faded out in the gloom of Calvary, but the unfading joy of the new creation no man would take from them. There is no part of truth which God has taken such pains to make clear as the resurrection of our Lord, yet no eye saw Him rise. Resurrection is seen typically (Gen. 2. 21, 22), nationally (Ezek. 37), morally (Col. 2. 12), doctrinally (1 Cor. 15), and historically here, but the transaction itself no creature could behold. The glory of the Father, the quickening power of the Spirit and the Son Himself are here. But all within the inner intimacies of Godhead, and every spiritual mind would have it so. We are to know the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, but the operation itself is the mysterious prerogative of Deity.

Verses 16-20 close the Gospel. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee." Twelve is the number of administrative order as connected with the creature; the de-

fection of Judas had broken that up and their ministry to Israel as such had come to a close. New, heavenly and eternal things were coming into view; the coming of the Spirit the formation of the Assembly a heavenly company; things which are passed over here in view of the time when He would be with His servants in relation to a national ingathering at the end of the age.

This meeting may be the same mentioned in 1 Cor. 15. 6, where there were five hundred brethren, for while they worshipped Him some doubted. It was a Galilean meeting and the mission was from there. In the immediate fulfilment it never was carried out and hence all nations have not yet been evangelised. Paul comes upon the scene later and is sent to the Gentiles taking up his commission from the words of Luke 24. 47. To him these men seem to have handed over their commission, while they themselves chose to labour among the circumcision (see Gal. 2. 9).

As having accomplished redemption the Lord is seen here as the Object of His people's praise. To them He brings out His glory in the whole creation as Centre of full delegated power and authority. "All power in heaven and earth is committed unto Me." The mystery of the Father's will is to gather together in one all things both in heaven and earth in Him, and we know from Psalm 8 that all things are put under Him. Here it is all power in heaven and earth (Ephesians 1). Such a presentation of His glory is a fitting thing at the close of this precious Gospel, but it does not end there. No, it goes beyond that to what He is in Deity as God over all, blessed for evermore. In the same context

where the Man of glory is seen as the Centre of power and glory He is seen in the central place of the glorious eternal Trinity, the Son, the One Who stands in relation to the Father and the Spirit in eternal Co-Equality, in every attribute of Godhead. Nor is this it all, for the closing words shew Him in one of the blessed features of that Godhead, words which only God can rightfully use. "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (or age).

Blessed Lord, our souls may well adore Thee. Thou art worthy to be praised. It will be our joy for evermore. But what infinite favour Thou has put upon us now that we can learn something of Thyself as the Centre of all the ways of God and of His eternal counsels. Centre of all Scripture, all time and of all eternity.

"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all nations here below;
Praise Him on high ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

The Father and the Prodigal.

When the prodigal arose to return to his father, he was met when a great way off, and kissed, and robed, and feasted. It was the Lord Jesus Himself, who only knows the deep feelings of His Father's heart, who thus described the way that sinners are welcomed home. The kiss was the first thing, it was proof of the father's love, and it is thus that God greets the returning sinner. Then came the robe, which fitted him for the Father's house. It is the Father who makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light, a spotless robe, a perfect righteousness is given to all who are kissed with the Father's kiss. Last of all there was the feast; nothing will satisfy the heart of God but having His sons, redeemed by the blood of His Son, near to Himself in holy, happy communion with Him. And this is the gospel.

Partiality is a defect in human love. There is none in divine love. It has one measure for all and all for each. "As the Father hath loved Me so have I loved you," said the Lord. There is no room for degrees here, for the love for each is infinite and cannot be exceeded.

It is impossible that your faith should go beyond the grace of God. It may reach down into it, like a bucket being dipped into the ocean, it can never reach the bottom.

The love of Christ was above all the ignorance and weakness of His disciples. If they had a right feeling, He felt *with* them; if they shewed infirmity or ignorance, He felt *for* them. And He says to us, "Love one another as I have loved you." By clinging close to Him we can love in the same kind of way in which He loved, and thus learn to recognise anything good and of Him in our brethren.

SOME RESULTS OF THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH.

T. Oliver.

No. 4. THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

"But ye are come to . . . the church of the first-born which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12. 23).

THE term "first-born" bears the idea of pre-eminence rather than precedence in birth.

In the Old Testament Solomon was addressed as first-born although he was amongst the younger sons of his family. It is probably suggested by the important place of the first-born in Israel. God claimed the first-born, hence the Church of the first-born is for God. But that could not be established until Christ came. He is undoubtedly the real First-born for God! He is the beginning of the creation of God. In all things He must have the pre-eminence (Col. 1. 18). But in Colossians chapter 1, He is spoken of as "the First-born from the dead." As such He has precedence as well as pre-eminence. The Church of the first-born is perfectly congruent with Christ. They share in His dignity and their names are written in heaven (Luke 10. 20). Although that is undoubtedly the significance of the passage in Hebrews 12, the particular construction of the sentence is not unimportant. There is additional stability given to the position that not only are the names written in heaven but those who answer to the names are themselves written there. They are inscribed on a roll beyond the reach of the eroding influences of time and indeed outside the realm of responsibility altogether. They were not natives of heaven as the angels are, yet in infinite grace they have come to be associated with the First-born

as the heirs of the glory according to eternal counsel. Hence all their real interests are in heaven, thus it is fitting that their burgess roll should be there too.

They are the same people that the Scriptures have brought before us as the heavenly city, but viewed in a different aspect. The heavenly city is coming out from God as the medium of administration, of rule and the dissemination of light to the earth and where liberty is enjoyed, i.e. representing God manward. But as the church of the first-born they represent man Godward as a worshipping company. Before the eye of God we are risen together with Christ, the First-born. So the Apostle Paul pressed on the Colossian christians the importance of setting their minds on things above.

As we are constituted in harmony with heaven, we are dissociated from the course of this world. When Christ was here He was occupied with His Father's business, which had relation to heaven. Everything on earth was subsidiary and transitory. So since we have a heavenly calling and as co-sharers of His inheritance and joy we partake of the same character. We await the moment when we shall receive the call from heaven to go there in body where our spiritual interests have been for a long while.

All christians look forward to going to heaven not because of their

merit nor even on account of their faith, but because the love of God will delight to have them there. When we apprehend that, we have liberty to draw near to God now. It was God's pleasure to have Israel in the land. He would not allow them to continue either in Egypt or in the wilderness, so it is God's good pleasure to have us dwelling with Him. As rich in mercy, on account

of the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins He quickened us together with Christ and raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 4-6). So our spiritual position beyond the realm of time and sense is altogether due to the love of God and the grace flowing therefrom.

Hindrances to Prayer.

THERE are practical hindrances to prayer. If you do not act to others according to the grace of God, you will not have His grace acting towards you. God has love in His heart. You cannot go to Him if you have not acted in love towards your poor brother (1 John 3). Your heart condemns you. But suppose you can go to God and say, I have acted out all that I have of your love, and now I come to You. Very well, says God, then come. So "whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His com-

mandments, and do those things that are pleasing to His sight." Again in 1 John 5, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us." It is very distinct that *He hears us*. This asking according to His will means more than having an uncondemning heart, it means you are in communion with Him. You are receiving communications from Him through His word. Thus the Word of God and prayer go together.

The effect of Prayer.

WHAT a wonderful thing prayer is as it is presented in Philipians 4. "Let your request be made known unto God." It is not that He knows what I want, knows all about me in fact, but I have been allowed to tell Him everything, and He has listened to me. I have had an audience with God, with Himself, personally and intimately, with neither saint nor angel intervening. He has heard me and He has taken up my case, and I can wait for the answer, meanwhile His peace, the peace of God, garrisons my heart and mind against the attacks of the

enemy and against the entrance of questions or doubts.

I enter His presence with trust and thanksgiving for not one good word of all His promises has failed and I leave it in peace; or it may be I come into His presence greatly burdened, and I come away possessed of His peace and conscious of His interest in me and that His power will carry me through. I have confided all to God, and I come out from His presence in the very state of God Himself. He is the God of peace, and His peace becomes mine.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

A Preacher yet a Castaway.

“Would you kindly answer in **Scripture Truth**, What did the apostle Paul mean when he said, ‘Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway?’ What did he mean by castaway?”—JARROW.

BY A castaway Paul meant, one rejected, lost; it is the same word translated, reprobate in 2 Cor. 13. From the passage we learn, what we know to be a fact, that a man may be a preacher and not a christian in the vital sense of the word. Paul is shewing the Corinthians the necessity of the life being consistent with the profession, and he applies this to himself. He lived and acted with such care and self control as though His salvation depended upon it. He was a Christian first and then a preacher.

Of course no true christian can be lost, and Paul had no doubt about himself as we know from many statements of his, and even in this one he says, “I therefore thus run, *not*

as uncertainly” (verse 26). Judas was a preacher yet a castaway. Grace saves us, and in the true grace of God we stand, and that same grace has called some of us to preach the gospel, but there is the side of our responsibility, and this was set forth in Paul’s life; it was always consistent with his doctrine. He did not trifle. “This one thing I do,” he said in another place. He allowed nothing to hinder him in the fight that he was waging and the race that he was running. So he made his calling and election sure, and shewed by the power prevailing in his life that he was no sham. There never was a better and more successful preacher, but he was a christian first and foremost.

Where Faith rests.

“I have been trying to help a lady, once a bright christian, but now in the depths of despair, who believes herself to be lost beyond hope. She uses Hebrews 6 and 10. 26-31 against herself. I have pointed out to her that those contemplated in these scriptures had quarrelled with Christ, they had turned deliberately away from Him, while her quarrel is not with her Saviour, but with herself. Perhaps you will say something that would be a help”—B.

THE mental condition of such cases as this makes them very difficult to help. Every scripture quoted is either not for them or twisted against themselves. They are truly harassed by the devil. It might help if the lady’s thoughts were turned from herself and her salvation to God and His glory. We have met people whose faith was in their own faith in God, instead of in God Himself. They rested in their faith instead of in God. It was simply self-occupation, and they were happy as

long as they thought their faith was strong and right, and miserable when they had doubts about it.

We should press not what the Bible says about her but what it says about God and Christ. The gospel of God is *concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord*. In it God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. By His death He has glorified God (John 13. 31, 32, chap. 17. 12). God has raised Him from the

dead, the proof of His entire satisfaction in His work, and He can now be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (Romans 3. 26). He is rich towards all that call upon Him and whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10. 12, 13). His grace magnifies Him.

The salvation of the lady's soul depends not upon her but upon God, upon His acceptance of the work of Christ on behalf of sinners; upon His faithfulness to His own word. God is so attractive as He is revealed in Jesus that we are drawn to Him, we feel that He is so trustworthy, so reliable, that we believe His word and trust ourselves to Him. If the

lady has done this what a terrible thing it would be for God if He, having first received her, cast her off again. She would not be the greater loser, God would be that, for He would have broken His word, and His word would be a lie. That is impossible, for it is impossible for God to lie. His word is immutable and so, because of the strength of His unchangeable word, and not because of our often vacillating faith, we have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil: whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus (Hebrews 6. 18, 19).

Divine Forgiveness.

ONE of the subtle snares of the devil into which many christians fall is long occupation with their failures in the way of deploring them. This tends to great depression of spirit, to the loss of all true joy and the paralysis of all spiritual energy; there can hardly be anything worse. It also casts a slight upon the grace of God and the unfailing advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Does not that advocacy prevail? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Is that forgiveness only partial, and like human forgiveness, inclined to keep us conscious that we are guilty after all? or is it divine forgiveness that remembers the sin no more and restores to the soul the joy of God's salvation? Surely it is divine and complete. How blessed are the words, "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared."

The devil has always maligned God's character; he blinds the world by making men believe that God is tyrannical and to be avoided as long as possible; he triumphs if he can make the children of God lose the sense of the Father's love and forgiving grace by burdening their consciences and souls with their failures, and he knows that as long as they are occupied with their failures they will never rise above them.

It would be wrong to make light of the sins of the christian, this would be a devil's snare in the opposite direction. Sin in the christian is more reprehensible than in the unsaved man, for he sins in the light. Sin should be deeply felt and fully confessed, and it will surely be forgiven. "I acknowledged," said David, "and Thou forgavest." Then was he able to pour out his song as to the blessedness of the forgiven man. God is greater than our sin, and the mighty sacrifice of Calvary is all-availing and eternally efficacious."

THE FATHER OF LIGHTS IS OUR GOD.

J. T. Mawson.

James 1.

JAMES, the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, is reckoned the most austere of all the New Testament writers, and certainly he is most sternly unsparing in his denunciation of sin and folly; but how attractively he presents God to us in the first chapter of his Epistle. "Do not err, my beloved brethren," he says. Let nothing deceive you as to this; don't look around or within for good, for the world and the devil and temptation are around, and lust is within, but LOOK UP. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."

In looking up we shall not be disappointed, for the gifts are good and the giving is perfect; the gift and the giving are one. We have known men who have given gifts, but have done so grudgingly and with such ill grace that the gift has turned to gall; but not thus are these heavenly gifts. With them the giving exceeds in blessedness the gifts themselves, if that is possible. "*God . . . giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not*" (ver. 5). His manner of giving enhances the blessedness of the gift, and reveals His own perfect graciousness.

And these gifts are not only from above like the sunshine and the rain, so that we look up for them, but they are from *the Father of lights*; they are personal gifts from a personal God to intelligent persons. And He is the Father of lights. We cannot do without lights, and all lights proceed from God.

Most certainly those in the physical universe proceeded from Him,

for "God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years . . . He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth" (Gen. 1. 14-17). We see the wisdom and kindness of our faithful Creator in these lights above us and we enjoy them and give thanks for them. Life would be impossible without them; they bring order and method and variety and guidance into our lives, and he who would live well and long must not ignore "the signs and seasons and days and years" for which these lights were made. The shipmaster steers his vessel with safety if he can take his bearings by the lights in the heaven; many a gallant ship has been lost because steered by dead reckoning. Those lights proceeded from God to guide the mariner over tempestuous seas.

Those physical lights are a parable to us. They speak clearly, for "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Psalm 19. 4). They not only proclaim God's power and wisdom, but they remind us that we need more than physical light, we need the knowledge of Him who made the lights and set them in the heavens. This light also proceeds from God. He is the Father of it. All else is darkness. The lie proceeded from the devil in Eden and has blinded the minds of men—"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. 4. 4), says the sure Word of God; and if we enquire as to what

that same Word says about the emanations from men's minds—their philosophies and schemes—we learn that there is no light in them, as they vainly suppose, but that their understanding is darkened, that they are “alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4. 18).

“Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun,” but the sweetest and most blessed light of all is the light of the knowledge of God. And He, “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4. 6). God has sent forth His light and His truth. It was for this that David prayed (Psalm 43), though he did not know how blessedly God would answer his prayer. The light and the truth have come into the world in the Person of His beloved Son. He said, ‘I am the light of the world,’ and ‘I am the . . . truth.’ Thanks be unto God for this good and perfect, and unspeakable gift.

But more, with God who is the Father of lights there is “*no variability, neither shadow of turning.*” These, I understand, are astronomical allusions. With the heavenly bodies that give us light, there are “parallaxes”; they appear to change their position when viewed from different points; they act and react upon one another, and as they turn they cast shadows one on another; hence the eclipses. But with God there is nothing of this kind, with Him there is no “parallax.” From whatever point we observe Him He is the same, and nothing that He has created can move Him from His purpose or cast an obscuring shadow

upon Him. The works of His hands shall wax old as doth a garment, but He changes not. We turn from all created light to Him as we hasten to the city that has “no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21. 23).

And we have been begotten of Him of His own supreme, unchangeable will by the word of truth, the living and ever-abiding word, which is as unchanging as Himself, that we might be like Him and it—a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. He would have us to be a sample, a pattern of what He would have all His intelligent creatures to be. Not fickle, wavering, unstable, changeable, traitorous, like sinful man, the children of disobedience, as we once all were, but steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, taking our character from Him who has begotten us, and bearing His features, “being imitators of God as dear children.”

We surely desire it, but how can it be? If we are begotten of God by the word of truth we have the nature that not only desires this Godlikeness, but is capable of producing it—but how? Does not verse 5 of our chapter answer the question, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him.*” And God being what He is, and His Word being the word of truth, there is no room for doubt as to this, “it shall be given him”; so we continue, “*Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*” Why should he waver since God is the unwavering God, and His Word the word of truth? “*For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.*” And it

is plain that such a man does not please God, for "*Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*"

Was there ever a day in our time when we needed this wisdom more than now? We see how the wisdom of this world works. It produces envying and strife and confusion and every evil work, it is earthly, sensual, devilish (chapter 4. 15, 16). *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* It is the very nature of our God in practical life, and we may have this wisdom if we ask for it. Brethren, let us ask and ask without wavering. "Who is a wise man among you and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his

works with meekness of wisdom." But as this is not natural to any of us, we must ask for it; we shall not get it if we do not ask; we must have dealings with God. "If thou knewest the giving God, thou wouldest have asked of Him."

It is the knowledge of the invariable God, who has created great gifts for our good and gives them with unstinted grace, but who is greater than all He gives, and who proposes to be our Guide through the intricacies of life and to give wisdom and power for the right way, that will enable us to endure temptation and preserve us from the variable ways of men, and to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that in the end we may receive "the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (verse 12).

A New Place for us.

DO we sufficiently consider the fact that Adam lost his God-given place in the earth when he disobeyed God? And that from that time every child of his race has come into the world under notice to quit? No man has an assured tenure on the earth, and no man knows when the writ against him will be executed. What wonderful grace it is on God's part that He should have opened up another place for us, a place where sin and death can never come. The Lord said to the dying malefactor, "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." If the earthly paradise is closed against the sinner, the heavenly paradise is opened to him, through the rich merits of the Saviour's blood.

"I go to prepare a place for you," said the Lord to His disciples. That place was His Father's house on high. It cheers the heart to sing,

"We have a hope above,
From sin and sorrow free
A mansion which eternal love
Prepared our rest to be."

But if that is so, it is only just and reasonable that we should set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth (Col. 3. 2). We cannot hold whatever earthly things we possess, indeed, can we be said to possess them, when in reality we are only stewards of them for a little while? The heavenly things are ours, given to us by infinite and unchanging love, and assured to us by the immutable word of the living God.

“BY THESE THINGS MEN LIVE.”

Inglis Fleming

Isaiah 38. 16.

“**O** LORD, by *these* things men live, and in all *these* things is the life of my spirit.”

Hezekiah's words after his serious illness are such as should be well weighed by every child of God.

He had been brought down to death's door but in answer to his prayer had been raised to health again. Now he tells his story. “The writing of Hezekiah when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness.”

It is good to have the record and to know his thoughts and experiences during his time of testing. He was brought low and helped. He learned the love and power of the Lord as never before. With death and the grave in view he had been brought face to face with being made “an end of” as to his life and service here. So it was that the brevity and vanity of all under the sun came before him. And out of the depths of his distress he cried: “O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.”

What a shelter God is in the hour of trial! “His children have a place of refuge,” for he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Well it is for us to be like Ruth and come to trust under His wings (Ruth 2. 12). There we are covered with His feathers of strength and protection and in restful confidence enjoy the warmth and comfort beneath His wings.

Hezekiah's anguished utterance found immediate answer. “What

shall I say?” he now exclaimed, “He hath both spoken to me and Himself hath done it.” The Lord's word to him and the Lord's work for him satisfied the sorrowing king.

Then it is that he saw how all that through which he had been passing was for his true and lasting advantage. “O Lord by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.” True life, spiritual life, is more, far more than physical well-being. For the child of God “afflictions do not spring out of the dust.” It is well for us to enquire “Why has this come upon me? Why is it thus with me?” Whenever trouble of any kind is our portion.

The answer is found in Hebrews 12, probably, in every instance of the child-training we undergo at the hands of our God and Father. He chastens “for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.” “For our profit,” to result in our spiritual good on the one hand. “Be partakers of His holiness,” that we may answer more fully to His mind for us, on the other hand. These two are wedded together. Our best blessing and God's glory in and through us are united.

“By these things men live.” The things which show us the vanity of all under the sun. The things which tend to weaken our hold on all that is passing away. “These things” lead to the appreciation and enjoyment of that which is abiding and eternal. *The life of the spirit* is that which is furthered when physical life is seen to be but ephemeral.

The outcome of Hezekiah's sick-

ness was a fuller knowledge of God and His power and grace. So he cries with joy "Therefore we will sing my songs . . . all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." Praise and worship flowed from his heart and lips as he remembered the dealings of the Lord. The exercises passed through yielded "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

We may take heart of courage if hours of trial are our lot, "For He hath said "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." In the midst of all the testing we undergo we may be assured that "by these things men

live" and that "the life of the spirit" is that which our God and Father has in view.

"When through the deep waters I cause thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow:
For I will be with thee thy trouble to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

Confident that our God is "the Father of mercies" and that in His love and power He can and does make all things (yes *all* things) work together for our good, we may cry with Job, "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him", and again, "He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job. 13. 15: 23. 10.).

The God we have to do with is the God who has given His Son for sinners; if we do not know that, we do not know Him at all.

The only real humbleness and strength and blessing is to forget self in the presence of the love and blessedness of God.

The father kissed the prodigal in his rags. Remember the Lord Jesus is shewing us what God is, in the parable. There is not another in the whole world who would not have thought of my rags, but God thought of *me*, and received me and kissed me in my rags. Such is the love of God! But He did not leave me in my rags, not thus would He bring me into His house. The best robe was a necessity, He clothed me with Christ. The sinner in his rags is welcomed by infinite love, but now as a son he must be clothed in a robe that no fingers of man could produce, *that robe is Christ*. From filthy rags to radiant robe. Love, God's love, would not be satisfied with less than that.

The nearer we are to God, the more precious is all the truth of God, and everything which is near His heart.

You will not attend to your family or your business one whit worse if you make the interests of Christ paramount in your life.

If you give the interests of Christ the first place in your heart, you will find that your affairs have a corresponding place in His heart.

“EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS.”

S. S. Munro.

THE glorious truth of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, which occupied such a large place in the hearts of the Apostles and their converts, was speedily lost sight of when once the subtle activities of Satan had undermined the spiritual life of the Church.

The passion and zeal with which the message of redeeming love was carried far and wide, was due in no little measure to the burning hope that soon Christ would come again. But when the Lord tarried, Satan was quick to seize his opportunity, and sow the seeds of doubt in the minds of simple believers.

His methods are still the same as those which he employed in the Garden of Eden. The whispered “Hath God said?”, is a deadly arrow with a poisoned tip; a fiery dart which only stops short when met by the shield of strong faith in God. Alas for the soul who has left himself exposed! Such an one invariably collapses, and the way is thus prepared for a further and more intensive onslaught of Satanic power, until eventually he finds himself the victim of the very doubts and fears to which he thought himself invulnerable. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10. 12).

It was so in the early Church, and it is so to-day. The passion and fervour died down when the Lord did not return, and soon there was little left of the hope which burned so brightly, and which gave such impetus to the preaching of the Word. Consequently, zeal waned, and carnality and worldliness enveloped the redeemed saints in a thick mantle of apathetic darkness; a moral condi-

tion which sealed the vision of faith and produced spiritual ineffectiveness in testimony and witness.

But more than a century ago, a new era of things seemed to be ushered in, the “midnight cry” suddenly went forth afresh. There was a great stirring in the ranks of the Lord’s people.

All over the world hearts were touched again and affection for Christ blazed up from the spent ashes of formalism. Truth, long forgotten, graciously affected the heart and mind by the Spirit of God, with the result that once more a holy zeal for Christ and His interests impassioned the lives of the believers, and the hope of the Lord’s return became paramount in the souls of thousands.

That which had for so long assumed the character (outwardly) of “dry bones” rather than the Body of Christ, livingly united to the risen Head, and expressive of His grace and power, suddenly became a potent instrument in the hands of God.

For a time hearts throbbed with the abounding love-life of Christ, and eyes were turned expectantly heavenwards; grace flowed like a mighty tide, carrying blessing to the saint and salvation to the sinner.

But once again that pall of gloom, in character, not unlike that which envelopes professing Christendom, descended upon the hearts of many, and drowsiness stole afresh over those who waited and watched. “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick” (Prov. 13. 12), and it is to be feared that the watching gave place to weariness, and before long hosts

of the redeemed who should have been crying, Come, Lord Jesus, were slumbering—if not actually sleeping.

Not that the bright hope of Christ's coming was ever really forgotten; it merely lost its primitive force and effectiveness, and became more a matter of doctrine than that which God originally intended it to be, a quickening and purifying principle in the soul (1 John 3. 3).

And yet it would seem that once more the unwearied grace of God is calling our attention to that blessed hope. He has many ways of speaking, and those who know Him are not slow to hear His still, small voice amidst the clamour and clash of the world's affairs, and to see in the circumstances which are shaping themselves around the nations, the Invisible Finger which points them to the skies and signals their "redemption is now nearer than when they believed" (Rom. 13: 11).

As to the actual order of the events connected with the glorious prospect of His Coming, all the saints of God are not of one mind, but at the present time, when the whole world seems to be trembling on the brink of another gigantic upheaval, it cannot be denied that the fact of His Coming is being emphasised on every hand.

The true Church is calling out for Christ and longing for His return, and the world is calling out for a superman to grasp the helm of international affairs and pilot the nations through the present tempestuous sea of political confusion.

It would seem as though the desires of both the Christian and the

worlding might be gratified in the near future; but how vastly different in character will be the subjects of their realisation! The Christ of the Christian is the Christ of God, whose coming will mean the translation of His own to that heavenly sphere where His kingdom is characterised by obedience and peace.

Never again will they know the pain of living in a world, the kingdoms of which are marred by conflict, strife and rebelliousness.

But the man for whom the world is waiting, is not the Christ of God, but the Antichrist: that satanically imbued personage who will deceive the nations by his marvellous signs and supernatural powers, and seek to bring civilization under the sway of Satan himself.

Undoubtedly the stage is being prepared for tremendous events in the future. It is impossible to look out upon the nations of the world to-day, which resemble nothing so much as one vast armed camp, without realising something of what has just been stated. It is not our desire to exploit the times in which we live as occasions for rash and extreme statements. At the same time it would surely be the height of folly to close our eyes deliberately to the daily events which are taking place in the world, and which have such a close bearing upon its future in the light of prophetic fulfilment.

At no time in the history of the world's affairs has a situation arisen which has presented less hope of a peaceful solution than that which confronts the nations to-day. Men may talk of the danger of such pessimism, and the psychological repercussions accruing from such an out-

look, but the time has surely come when those who are spiritually awake to the reality and urgency of the true meaning of these things, must tear away the scales from blind eyes, and seek to proclaim in deaf ears, that "THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH!"

It has been the policy of the Devil down through the centuries to stifle that cry, and through the Lord's delay in coming, to discourage the saints and discredit inspired revelation. That policy has met with much success. To-day we live in an age when anything pertaining to revelation is received with blank incredulity and open agnosticism. To quote from another: "We live in an age that has substituted 'relativity' for 'reality'; 'psychology' for 'prayer'; 'an inferiority complex' for 'sin'; 'reflex action' for 'revelation'; 'astromical intimidation' for 'the fear of the Lord'; and 'the spirit of

power' for 'the Power of God.'"

Satan knows his time is short, and just as a besieged garrison will prepare to fortify itself for one last strong stand, so the Devil is mustering all his forces of evil in a last desperate attempt to lengthen his reign before the complete fulfilment of Gen. 3. 15: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent."

Only let the Lord's people *BE-LIEVE* in the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ, as a reality, and not something to be merely held in the mind and merely assented to, and it would produce the greatest revival of affection for Christ and zeal for His work that the Church has ever known.

Our hearts would be stirred and our lips would frame but one word,—"Come."

God's perfect plan.

"Some day all doubt and mystery will clear,
The threatening cloud around will disappear.
Some day, what seems a punishment, or pain,
Will prove to be God's blessings sent for gain.
Some day our weary feet will rest content,
And we shall know how blest in what was sent,
And looking back retrace o'er life's short span,
With wondering, glad surprise, God's perfect plan;
And knowing that the path was God's own way,
Will understand His wise intent, some day."

When we look at the brute creation we may learn lessons that shame us. How often a dog will follow its master in spite of everything. You may beat him or give him meat, nothing will divert him, he will persist in following no matter what the obstacles. True following does not calculate. Love does not calculate what it will lose. Thank God there have been and there are, and there will be such devoted disciples. "They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

THE CHURCH—THE BODY AND BRIDE OF CHRIST.

A. J. Pollock

(An Answer to a Letter)

YOUR correspondent writes, "I really cannot find anything in the Word to convince me that the Church is both 'the Body' and 'the Bride of Christ. One's soul opens to the wonder of the oneness of the redeemed with Him. "The Church which is His Body" gives the Church the *closest possible* relation to her Lord. How should I try to express it? His Body—the Church—is *Himself* in a unity which fairly passes comprehension. But the Bride is *His other Self*, to be conceived of as apart from Him in identity and manifestation. It is a close bond of union: *but not so close* as the vital union of "the Body" to "the Head". I am writing with great reverence, and remembering the place that is given to Israel in the "Divine purpose."

To begin with we are all agreed that the Church is the Body of Christ. God "gave Him [Christ] 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. 22, 23). This one Scripture puts this beyond dispute.

Your correspondent evidently cannot think it possible that the Church can alike be the Body and Bride of Christ. He argues that the Head and the members are one, whilst a bridegroom and bride are two entities. By this argument we must deny that the Lord is our Shepherd and believers His sheep, for Shepherd and sheep are two entities. Confusion comes in through not grasping that the Church is looked at in several ways in Scripture, and each way the Church is viewed from a different

angle, and conveys a different thought.

We have the symbolism of the Shepherd and the sheep, setting forth the loving care in the way of sustainment and protection that the Lord gives to His own. We have the symbolism of a building, Christ, the living Stone, the chief Corner Stone, and believers built in as living stones, setting forth the relationship between believers and their Lord in connection with holy priesthood and offering up spiritual sacrifices. There is the symbolism of a Temple, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner Stone, a habitation of God through the Spirit, His dwelling place on earth. Wonderful thought!

Then we have the symbolism of Christ the Head and believers the members of His body here on earth, setting forth that Christ would display His life here on earth through His members, the Head affording direction, intelligence, spiritual power and support to this end, and this not merely as individual saints but as being linked to one another and by the Spirit to Christ, the Head in glory.

We come now to examine Scriptures that set forth the Church as the Bride of Christ. These surely set forth close relationship, and denote love, affection, nourishing, cherishing.

We must keep separate in our thought Israel and the Church. The former is earthly, an earthly Bride

for Jehovah, a Bride for *time*, the millenium brings that to a close; the latter is heavenly, a heavenly Bride, and that for *eternity*. And let us not literalize to the extent of saying that the Head and the Body is one entity, and the Bridegroom and the Bride are two entities. Let us be content to grasp the *moral* meaning behind the symbolism.

Look at 2 Cor. 11. 2: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Paul is writing to the Corinthian saints. Who could be the "one Husband" but Christ, and what idea is given when he speaks of presenting them "as a chaste virgin" to Christ? Marriage is used as a symbolism and we must clear our minds of materialism. It is a symbolism setting forth the deep affection of Christ to His own on the one hand, and the necessity of holiness, moral suitability to the Lord on the other.

Turn now to Ephesians 5. 23-33, a very well known Scripture. There, interwoven with instructions to Christian husbands and wives is the symbolism of Bridegroom and Bride as referring to Christ and His Church. The Apostle ends this set of exhortations with the words, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (verse 32). So that whilst the Apostle gives these instructions he tells us His great thought is far deeper than that, and he rises to the highest theme, the deep affection of the Lord to His own, and how that thought should affect powerfully the relations between Christian men and women in the marriage estate.

Whenever a Bride is spoken of there must be a Bridegroom. There cannot be a Bride without a complementary spouse. The word Bride,

is found in the Scriptures, and not once the actual word Bridegroom, as applying to the Lord, with the exception of Matthew 25. 6, when it is used in a different setting. Yet if the Church is the Bride, He is the Bridegroom.

We read, "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church" (verse 23). Here the word Head, does not answer to the symbolism of Christ the Head of the Body, where the symbolism is taken from the figure of a head and a body, one entity. But in this verse the head is a symbolism setting forth the leadership and authority and loving support of the husband in relation to his wife. This is the symbolism given here in relation to Christ and the Church, the relationship of husband and wife.

Verse 24 tells us that the wives are to be subject to their own husbands, even as the Church is to Christ, again the symbolism of husband and wife. No man hates his own flesh, and so close is the union of man and woman in the marriage estate, that he nourishes and cherishes his wife as if she were his own flesh. The example of our Lord towards His Bride in His deep love is the illustration given to govern human relations between a Christian man and his wife.

Then we are told that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (verse 30). We must not materialize here, but could language more clearly and forcibly set forth the mystic union of Christ and His Church? This language is the quotation from Adam's exclamation of wonderment when he awoke from his deep sleep, typical of the death of Christ for His re-

deemed that *He* might have a Bride for His affections. Adam said when he looked on his fair bride, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2. 23). It is significant that this is quoted substantially in Ephesians 5. 30. It was literally true of Adam and Eve, symbolically used of Christ and His Church. Adam and Eve were two entities, even though the language speaks of their being one flesh.

Then we read of a man leaving his father and mother and cleaving to his wife, and this magnificent passage ends up with, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

We turn now to the last book in the Bible. We read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready" (Rev. 19. 7). It is interesting to see how one Scripture supports and harmonises with kindred passages bearing on the same subject. Here we get "the chaste virgin" of 2 Cor. 11. 2. "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of saints." We may call this the private preparation as in contrast to the public presentation of Rev. 21. 2, which we shall presently allude to.

Thank God, in the end position and condition will answer one to the other; *position* won by the atoning death of Christ and conferred by the sovereign favour of God, all of grace—*condition*, the result of the sanctifying and washing of water by the word, ceaselessly going on till that moment arrives when the Church will be presented to the Lord, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27).

We have no doubt who the Lamb is? Can we have any doubt who the Bride is? If not the Church, but Israel, as some think, how out of proportion such a thought is. The future of Israel, the earthly Bride, is delineated for us in the Old Testament in the way of glowing prophecies, and spoken of in Romans 11, where the sovereignty of God in relation to His earthly Bride is spoken of. But where shall the Church be spoken of, if not at the end of Revelation? To think otherwise is to stultify the word of God. The Church is God's great masterpiece, and we see the triumph of His thoughts and purposes for His Church finding their grand and glorious consummation in Rev. 21.

Let us turn to that great chapter. Chronologically the first part—verses 1—8—leads us to the eternal state, after the heavens and the earth have been destroyed, and the great white throne set up on the threshold of eternity. But verses 9—27, 22. 1—5, carry us back to time, to the setting up of the millennial kingdom of Christ on the earth, and the part His Church will play in that.

Notice "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," is presented as "a Bride adorned for her Husband" (verse 2) whereas "the Lamb's wife" in verse 9 is seen as "that great city, the holy Jerusalem", just the reverse way. Your correspondent to be logical would have to deny that this is not so, for how can the Church be a city and a wife, two entities? There again we must ask, what do the symbolisms set forth? The city sets forth rule, administration, order. We speak of the city hall, the city corporation, the city councillors, etc. The Wife sets forth union, affection, delight. The former is the relation of the Church to the earthly king-

dom, the millennium, when it is set up for one thousand years. The latter sets forth affection, the LAMB'S wife sets forth the cost that was paid by the Lord to possess Himself of His Bride, the object of His affection for eternity.

It has been attempted to prove that Rev. 21. 9—27, 22. 1—5 refers to Israel. Three considerations will show this to be untenable. First, the Holy City is seen "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God" (verses 10, 11). Galatians 4. 26 tells us what the *heavenly* Jerusalem is. Now Israel does not come out of heaven. Israel is on earth and nowhere else when the Lord intervenes, and delivers them from their enemies, and sets up His earthly kingdom. Secondly, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (verse 14). That settles the point that this Scripture refers to the Church, for Ephesians 2. 20 tells that the Church is built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone. If the holy city has the names of the twelve apostles in the foundation, we know the passage refers to the Church of God. Thirdly, if the Church is not alluded to here, but Israel, where is the consummation of the calling, of the Church, the realisation of the hope

of her calling to be found? No-where! If such an exegesis were allowed to stand the Church would be like a glorious river, starting in all its promise on the day of Pentecost, and making its conquests all down the ages and then losing itself on the desert's sands. This cannot be.

Finally we have "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down once again from heaven, having the glory of God, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband. What a beautiful contemplation of the Church at the end of time, and the start of that eternal state of incomparable bliss. No longer will the symbolism of Christ as Head in heaven and the Body on earth be needed. The Church will be no longer on earth to witness in life and ways to an absent Lord; but in His presence be forever the Bride of Christ, the object of His affections and delight. Nothing to grieve or spoil the joy of that relationship for ever! What a fitting close!

I cannot think your correspondent is far from the truth, for one sentence of his letter which I have quoted at the beginning says, "The Church which is His Body' giving the Church *the closest possible* relation to HER Lord." What does He mean by "HER"? Is it not a touch of bridal affection he has for His Lord. I think so.

When the prodigal was welcomed by the father's kiss, he could not say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." His judgment of his father must be according to the reception he had received. This is the way we receive the gospel of the grace of God. It is not then my worthiness or unworthiness, or my feelings as to how I ought to be treated. If the Father has received me I am most certainly forgiven, if He has kissed me I am certainly loved; if He is my Father, I am certainly a son. How infinitely better are God's thoughts than ours.

“HE LOOKED FOR A CITY.”

F. B. Hole

IN the Book of Genesis the history of Abraham occupies just a little more space than the whole history of things from the creation up to the time of his birth. In the New Testament also there are many references to him, and in Hebrews 11, after brief notices of Abel, Enoch and Noah, quite a number of verses are occupied with him. All this testifies to the great importance of certain features marking his story. We specify three of them: there was given to him the first of the special revelations of God's Name; he was the first to receive a Divine call; and in him first was faith declared to be the way of righteousness.

No one had ever been accounted righteous before God except on the principle of faith; hence in Hebrews 11, the Spirit of God directs our thoughts to righteousness by faith in connection with Abel. Still in the actual history, as unfolded in Genesis, this foundation truth did not come clearly to light until Abraham “believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15. 6). In Hebrews 11 however, since this truth is stated as to Abel we do not find it repeated as to Abraham; we start rather with *the call of God*.

That call was to get out of all his old associations, whether national, social or domestic, and go to the place of God's choice, and we read that, in response to that call

“HE WENT OUT.”

though he did not know “whither he went.” All his old associations were of an idolatrous nature, and hence the separation was to be complete, and all links of whatever nature were to be cut.

We must not imagine that because Ur of the Chaldees was a city of idolatries it was therefore uncivilised and barbarous; nor must we suppose that he was called to a life of greater elegance and superior amenities. The exact reverse would be the case. Ur was a city of elaborate civilisation, as recent excavations have proved, and in the land of Canaan Abraham had to adopt the nomadic life with a tent and an altar. From the viewpoint of his earthly circumstances he was a great loser by obeying the call of God. He exchanged a place of comfort and luxury for a life of wandering with its attendant discomforts.

Moreover the land of Canaan was at that time inhabited by tribes which were sunken in idolatry as much as the people of Ur, if not more so; therefore it was that God did not break Abraham's links with Ur to allow him to settle down and form fresh links in Canaan. Afterward he was to receive that land as an inheritance, but that would be under different conditions. All through his long life *Abraham was a stranger*.

Abraham's response to the call of God and his going forth from Ur was *an act of faith*, and this act was the introduction to *a life of faith*. We read that, “By faith

HE SOJOURNED IN THE LAND OF PROMISE

as in a strange country.” Not once did he settle down as an inhabitant of the land that had been given to him, although his sojourn there lasted for exactly a century. For all that time he maintained his strangership in faith.

In all this Abraham's history sets forth typically the position of the believer to-day, and is full of instruction for us. We are not called to leave any particular city or country, nor to come out of our domestic circles. The heavenly calling that has reached us is really more sweeping than this, for it involves our being "delivered from this present evil world" (Gal. 1. 4.) The word here for "world" is really "age," a word of wide significance, covering the whole course of the world-system. Our links with the present evil age are to be cut, though we still dwell in the same place and under the same circumstances as before our conversion.

Sometimes this has not been understood. In earlier times, for instance, it was thought that if men really wanted to live separate and holy lives they must retire behind high walls; and hence arose the monastic system. By this means they shut themselves in from a good many evil people, but not from this evil age for they carried within their own persons all its evil principles. The same idea still persists, though in different forms, in unexpected quarters. If we are really delivered from this evil age we shall not come under an unequal yoke with unbelievers; which yoke involves fellowship, communion, concord, part with and agreement with unbelievers, as is shown in 2 Corinthians 6. 14-16; but even so we shall need to know the power of the cross of Christ in our own hearts and lives, so that the world indeed is crucified to us and we to the world.

Of how many of us can it be said, "Having heard the call of God, *he went out* in response"? And again, of how many of those who do make some response can it be said, "He was content *to sojourn* as in a strange

country"? These are searching questions for us, especially to-day, when the attractions of the age are so multiplied. It is quite certain that no satisfactory answer to these questions is likely, unless it can be said of us, as of Abraham:

"HE LOOKED FOR A CITY

which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Here, then, is the secret of Abraham's remarkable career: his faith bestowed upon him telescopic vision. The astronomer sweeps the heavens with his telescope, and into his field of vision there swim ten thousand stars, never yet seen by the naked eye; so faith enabled Abraham to see the city that was altogether unperceived by those in whom faith was not. He discovered that God had something better and more stable for him, and the bright anticipation of this delivered him from the attractions of both Ur and Canaan.

There is no record either here or in Genesis as to how the knowledge of that heavenly city reached him. He could not have discovered it of himself: some word from God must have come to him, and that word he received in faith. What is made quite plain in Genesis is that he lived in an age when men were very busy building cities. The flood had occurred only a few centuries before, and the building of Babel and its tower was still closer to his time. The opening paragraph of Genesis 11 covers verses 1-9, and the opening paragraph of chapter 12 verses 1-8, and there seems to be a designed contrast between them.

In building the city and the tower men aimed at creating for themselves a centre of influence and strength, and thus making to themselves a

name. It was self-exaltation, only of a collective sort rather than individual, for they had conceived the idea of co-operation, whereby things quite impossible to the mere individual could be achieved. Their cry was, "Come on, . . . let us make . . . Come on, let us build . . ." (New Trans.). The antediluvian age had been one of intense individualism, and ended with violence as the hand of each was against his fellow. The post-diluvians had a bright idea: they would stop senseless competition and combine!

Now just when men were aiming at solidarity, God introduced scattering; and soon after He called Abraham. Men were saying "Come on!" when to Abraham God said, "Get thee out!" When they were urging combination, God commanded separation, and Abraham obeyed. When men had their city and their tower, Abraham had a tent and an altar. In their cities men seek that which is settled and permanent, whereas a tent is connected with a transitory state of things. A tower is built to provide security and defence, as far as it is humanly possible, but an altar speaks of God, and of maintaining contact with Him.

Abraham spent his life outside the cities of men because he had in view the city of God that is yet to be—"a city which hath foundations." There seems to be a plain inference here that the cities of men lack foundations. Their material foundations may be sound enough, but right moral foundations are sadly lacking. Unless righteousness and love lie at their base neither endurance nor permanency can mark them, and sooner or later they decay, or are swept away by convulsions from within or without. Abraham saw by faith that

God would ultimately introduce a city and a polity which would be based upon righteousness and love, and he was content to wait for that.

That abiding order will never be brought about by human endeavour: no one but God can be its "Builder and Maker." As the Fountain-head of love and righteousness He will lay its foundations and construct it, and with that in view we may well be content to be sojourners in the present order of things. It we turn aside to interfere with the arrangements of men's cities in the hope of improving things, we shall commit a double folly. We shall court failure by attempting to accomplish something that God has *not* told us to do: we shall fail to do that to which God *has* called us. Our business is to live as those who are delivered from this present evil age, while proclaiming the message of grace by which others may be called out, even as we have been ourselves. Thus it will be clearly seen that we belong to the noble band of those that "declare plainly that they seek a country."

The record in Hebrews 11 does not hide from us that the old land of Mesopotamia had attractions which might well have exerted a powerful pull upon Abraham. If he had allowed his mind to continually dwell upon the old spot from whence he had come, its fascination might have grown upon him. Then his heart would have turned in that direction, and soon his feet might have followed his heart, for easily he "might have had opportunity to have returned." The record in Genesis shows us that he steadfastly set his face against any such return, either for himself or for his son. His word as to Isaac was, "Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again" (Gen. 24. 6).

The same thing exactly is true for us. Nothing is easier than to be like Demas, who forsook Paul, "having loved the present age" (2 Tim. 4. 10 New Trans.). The word "evil" is omitted here, you notice. As a Christian, Demas would not love *evil* but he loved the *age* and desired to get more fully into touch with it. But, whether for Demas or ourselves, this means that we go back to that out of which we have been called by the gospel, and if we have any inclination in that direction, we may be sure that the devil will see to it that we get plenty of opportunities to return. There was no lack of occasions when Abraham might conveniently have slipped back, and so it is with us. These occasions often come with special force in middle life. Worldly associations, that one turned from in the early days after conversion, may be returned to under pressure from one's children. It is noteworthy that the warning against the world, in 1 John 2, is given to the "young men," and not to the "little children" or the "fathers"—given, that is, to those who represent the middle stage of Christian growth and experience. Let us all take home the warning.

Abraham and others were preserved in the way of faith and pilgrimage, because they had set their hearts on something better than all that they had left: they desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly." This is indeed a remarkable statement for, as far as Genesis is concerned, the record is that God called him to a place on earth: it was "unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. 12. 1). And again when in the land He said, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it" (Gen. 15. 7). As far as God's public deal-

ings were concerned the call that reached Abraham was earthly, yet he became aware that God had heavenly things in reserve, and on those things he set his heart.

If these things were so with Abraham how much more should they be with us, seeing that the heavenly things have now been revealed, and we are amongst those "holy brethren" who are "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3. 1). That which was once only a private revelation has become public, and the very gospel that we have believed has set a heavenly country before us, and has bidden us to wait for God's Son from heaven. We know that we are called to heaven, but *do we desire it*, as did these patriarchs of old? Here, alas! is the weak spot with so many of us. The present age, in spite of its evils, is marvellously attractive, and we are seduced by it, instead of setting our affection upon things above. Setting our mind on the things on the earth, we come to desire them instead of desiring the heavenly country.

Abraham will not be disappointed when the coming age arrives, for God has prepared for him a city. He and the other Old Testament worthies, who died in faith, will enjoy a heavenly portion. Their seat and citizenship will be in the heavens, though they will not participate in certain things which are special to the church. The last verse of Hebrews 11 makes it plain that they will reach perfection in glory when the church does so, and not before. The same verse shows that there is a distinction to be observed between "they"—the Old Testament believers—and "us," who are the church; and that God has in store for the church some "better thing" than is provided for them—most wonderful as their portion is to be.

When Abraham reaches his full portion in the bright millennial age, he will be raised in a body of glory to enjoy his heavenly citizenship. He will have reached the city that he looked for and the heavenly country that he desired. We sometimes sing the verse of a hymn, which says,

"Yes! in that light unstained,
Our stainless souls shall live;"

but perhaps he, more truly than ourselves, could take up the language of the third and fourth lines, and say

"Our heart's deep longings more than gained
When God His rest shall give."

Our heart's longings for the heavenly country are often painfully shallow, if the trend of our lives is any true index to the desires of our hearts. Let us be concerned about this matter.

The prepared city lies in the *future*, but there is also a remarkable statement made as to the *present*—"Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." He is spoken of very frequently as the God of Abraham, and He was content to be designated in this way. In Hebrews 2 we read of Christ as the Captain of our salvation, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren; but that is because we are sanctified as being "all of one" with Himself, the Sanctifier. All that we are, as the fruit of *God's own workmanship*, and He cannot be ashamed of that which is His own work. In Abraham's case however, the statement is made in connection with *his responsibility*.

"Wherefore," we read; "Wherefore God is not ashamed." And when we turn to the context to discover what is referred to, we find the reference is to the faith which led Abraham and others to the pilgrim life, with their desires set on the heavenly city that was yet to come. They yielded present and earthly things in view of the coming things of heaven. God is not ashamed to be known as the God of such men as these.

In the New Testament we find Paul claiming God in somewhat similar fashion. He says to the Philippians, "My God shall supply all your need." Yes, He was the God of Paul, and we are sure He is not ashamed of that designation. But, the God of Demas? Never! Of that He would be ashamed, we are sure.

How do matters stand with us? Of how many of us would God be ashamed, if He were spoken of as our God? These are searching questions. God has indeed provided some better thing for us; that is the fruit of His sovereign choice and action. Then comes the question of our responsibility to answer to the grace conferred. How well Abraham responded in faith to the lesser grace bestowed upon him. How poorly do we respond to the greater grace bestowed upon us. Let us bestir ourselves lest in days to come we have to discover that God was ashamed of us, though He was not ashamed of Abraham.

We can never commend the truth, save as we are living exponents of it.

If a man expounds great and wonderful doctrines, we may rightly ask—What sort of a man is he at home?

“MY CHURCH,” “MY SHEEP,” “MY BRETHREN.”

W. Bramwell Dick

Matthew 16. 18.

John 10. 14, 26, 27.

John 20. 17.

(3) MY BRETHREN.

HOW delightful it is that the first recorded words that came from the lips of the Lord Jesus on the morning of His resurrection were contained in the message which He sent to those whom He called “MY brethren”; here it is:—

“Go to MY brethren and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.” John 20. 17.

How the heart of His disciples must have been moved as they heard this message from the lips of the devoted woman, (Mary of Magdala), to whom its delivery had been entrusted by the Lord Himself. They had heard Him speak of “MY Assembly,” and of “MY sheep;” now a fresh surprise must have been theirs as they learned that He had spoken of them as “MY brethren.” They had heard such words when “in the days of His flesh” He had spoken of the coming judgment of the living nations (Matthew 25. 40). Now they were to learn the meaning of them in a new way. Those who would comprise that of which He would take account as “MY Assembly,” and of whom He had spoken as “MY Sheep,” were henceforth to be acknowledged by Him as “MY brethren.” A few humble disciples were to form the nucleus of an innumerable company consisting of all who believe in Him. He would say to them “MY brethren;” they might individually say to Him “MY Lord, and MY God.” Here be it noted however that the idea of brethren is collective rather than individual. In Psalm 22 where we have the Lord’s

suffering and death, and also His resurrection triumph and joy prophetically brought before us as perhaps nowhere else, we find that His first word as having been heard from the horns of the Unicorns is:—

“I will declare Thy Name unto MY brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee” (verse 22).

When we turn to Hebrews 2, we find that the Holy Spirit applies these words to a sanctified company whom the Lord is not ashamed to call His brethren, saying:—

“I will declare Thy Name unto MY brethren, in the midst of THE ASSEMBLY will I sing praise unto Thee” (verses 11 and 12).

The Lord Jesus is ever in the midst of His Assembly, and as He takes account of that innumerable company separated from the world by His death (c.f. Hebrews 10. 10); and brought into relationship with Himself as risen out from among the dead, and in all the joy of the triumph that He has achieved He sings praise in God the Father’s ear. There is also the great occasion, when He gather’s “His own” together in assembly, they may be two or two hundred; His promise is “For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18. 20). To such He declares the Father’s Name, in the midst of such a company He sings praise to the Father and He graciously permits them to join the singing that He leads. We wonder how many of our readers know the blessedness of this. He said to His

Father in the prayer recorded in John 17, "I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (verse 26). As we have seen He declared it to Mary of Magdala then to the assembled disciples. He declares it now to those whom He loves to call "*MY* brethren," in the midst of that of which He speaks as "*MY* Assembly." And as He does so, there surely rises a volume of praise to Him, and holy worship ascends to God the Father. What delight all this must bring to His heart!

What an answer to His lonely life and His lonely death; and what a joy to the heart of the Father to see His Son thus honoured in the midst of "His own." This will enable us to understand why the thought of His calling us "*MY* brethren" is collective and not individual, though, of course, we must individually apprehend it and be in the realisation of it. His calling us "*MY* brethren" does not give us liberty, either to speak to Him, or of Him, as our brother, nor even our elder brother. We must ever remember how great and how glorious a Person is He! While rejoicing in the fact that He says of us, "*MY* brethren," our attitude to Him must be as we have already remarked, like that of Thomas, "My Lord and my God" (John 20).

And now, in closing, let us review briefly that which we have been considering. There is that in this world to-day which He is building, and yet which, as His body, comprising the aggregate of all believers

in one place or at any given time He owns as "*MY* Assembly." Thus in 1 Corinthians 12. 27, the inspired Apostle could write to all the saints in Corinth, "Now ye are Christ's body, and members in particular" (New Trans.). To understand this will save us, on the one hand, from independency of every kind, and will on the other hand give us spiritual largeness, and will cause us to pray that there may be nothing in us that shall bring a blot on His holy Name.

We shall also rejoice that through grace we belong to His "one flock," acknowledging only "one Shepherd," and that we are numbered amongst those whom He calls "*MY* sheep." We shall value His power; we shall enjoy His protection; we shall know what it is to be cared for by Him; to be fed by Him; to be led by Him; to be under His protection; and to enjoy the bountiful provision that He has made for us. As we have observed we will hear Him say, "*MY* sheep," and with joy we will respond and say, "*MY* Shepherd." Then is it not simply wonderful that He should say of us "*MY* brethren." As such He confides in us; He makes known to us the secrets of the Father's heart, all that is wrapped up in the Father's Name; and He leads us, and seeks to maintain us, in the enjoyment of "that great love, that rests on Him in those bright courts above." May the Lord be graciously pleased to make all these things intensely real and increasingly precious to us, so that we may be contributors to His joy by a response on our part that will bring gladness to His heart.

THE GALATIAN EPISTLE: Chapter 6.

Summarised Notes of Bible Reading at Sutton, June 10th.

THE law could not restore the transgressor of it; it could only condemn him. And those who are schooled in the law, the legalists, cannot restore one overtaken in a fault, rather such are given to vain glory and to provoking to greater fault (ch. 5. 26). It is grace that restores, and the spiritual are those who have learnt their own need of grace, they are conscious that they have been the objects of it and must shew it to others. It was not the priest nor the Levite that raised up the man who had fallen among thieves on the Jericho road, it was the good Samaritan, he was full of grace. It is the Lord Himself who is pictured for us in the parable, and He said, "Go and do likewise." But how shall we act as He did, and be imitators of Him? We must learn of Him. He said, "I am meek and lowly in heart", and as we learn of Him we shall be able in the spirit of meekness to restore the brother who has fallen.

The vain glory and envy and secret exultation in another's fall are ugly features of the flesh, but "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (ch. 5. 24). That is our profession, may it be a practical reality, then there will be nothing left for us but to walk in the Spirit and act as those that are spiritual.

Verse 2. The one overtaken in a fault might have been preserved from it if a sympathetic heart had borne his burden. We have known some who failing to find sympathy in trying circumstances have broken down. But to bear one another's burdens calls for an intimate interest

in one another's concerns. It is a family interest. Those who cry "Abba, Father," should care for their brethren. "We ought to lay down our lives for our brethren", to bear their burdens is a small matter compared with that, though it is the same in principle. In caring for one another, and stretching out the helping hand to the weak we are fulfilling the law of Christ. It is as though the Apostle said, You want law, that is the law for you.

Verse 3. But the man who thinks himself something will not be able to do this, all his time and energy will have himself in view; he will not be able to get down beside his suffering brother, he can't bend. He is like the Pharisee that said, "God I thank Thee . . . I am not as this publican", and does not suppose that he could be tempted. How deceived such a one is, and what an awakening when he discovers that the other man is justified and he is not. It is to the poor and contrite spirit that God looks.

Verses 4, 5. There is no clash between this statement and verse 2. We have each and all to share in the common burdens of the family of God, yet each one has his own individual responsibility to the Lord. He has set us in the place of responsibility as His servants in the world, "He gave to every one his work", and we should be able to test what we do and the way we do it in the presence of the Lord, for to Him we shall everyone give an account.

Verse 6. Indicates the responsibility of those who are taught in the word to care in temporal things for

those who teach. In another place the Apostle said, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing that we should reap your carnal things?" Truly the spiritual things are the greater; but this is not a matter of privilege only, but of responsibility. The Apostle enlarges on this thought of sowing and widens it out to everything we may do. To make our self the selfish centre, to live for self gratification or aggrandisement can only yield a harvest of corruption now in this life, to sow to the Spirit yields the practical enjoyment of eternal life. The man who restores the fallen in the spirit of meekness, bears the burdens of others, has lowly thoughts of self and is ready to communicate of his possessions, is sowing to the Spirit. He reaps an ever increasing knowledge of God, and a sense of the Lord's favour and approval, and this is life eternal.

Verse 10. Shews that this christian kindness must not be confined to the family circle. God, whose children we are, does good unto all, and hence we are to do good unto all men as the opportunity occurs, but the household of faith has always the first claim.

Verse 11. The Apostle had written this Epistle with his own hand, his usual way was to dictate; but the condition of things at Galatia called for an urgent and immediate letter, and the challenge to the true gospel was such that he could not do other than take the whole burden of the writing upon himself, the pressure on his spirit on their behalf was so great. It has been thought that the "large characters" in which he wrote indicated that the Apostle suffered from partial blindness, it may be so, or it may be that the large letters emphasised the great importance of

the subject about which he wrote.

Verses 12, 13. Those that would have Judaised these Galatian christians had their own glory in view; they wished to swell their party, and most of all to escape the reproach of the cross; they were ready to take the blessings of the cross if they could avoid the reproach. The cross said the Jew was no better than the Gentile, and neither circumcision nor uncircumcision had any advantage in Christ Jesus. Jew and Gentile were alike brought to naught in the place of judgment on the cross. There was an end of both to make way for a new creation (verse 15).

Verse 14. Here is a great statement, but it will be noticed, that as in chapter 2. 20 the Apostle speaks of what the cross was to him personally. What he says is true for all christians, but to be taken up practically and experimentally by each one. He gloried in the cross of our *Lord Jesus Christ*; it had cut the world off from him, and him from the world. He could not glory in the world. Its religion as well as its corruption, had come under the judgment of God. "Greek, Hebrew and Latin" combined to crucify the Lord of glory. Paul viewed the whole world in the light of the cross, and rejoiced that he belonged to a new creation, and that by the cross he had done with the old and come into the new.

Verse 17. So he closes with "Brethren;" he recognises and rests in that relationship that nothing could dissolve; and that the grace of "our Lord Jesus Christ" should be with their spirit, was his desire. Nothing else could put them right and keep them right, and we are dependent on that self-same grace. Thank God, it is sufficient for us.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

Preaching to Spirits in Prison?

"Will you please give me some light on these verses: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3. 18, 19). Does this mean that Christ preached through the Spirit in Noah while he was preparing the ark?"—CALIFORNIA.

THE only interpretation of this passage that fits in with the whole body of Scripture is that it was Christ by the Spirit that preached through Noah to the multitudes that were disobedient "while once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." The spirits of these men are now in prison. That it was the Spirit that was at work with men at that time is clear from Genesis 6, where we read, "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man . . . yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." And Peter speaks elsewhere of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Christ speaking in the prophets (ch. 1. 11).

But why, it may be asked, should reference be made to this preaching in this passage? The answer is a simple one. Those to whom Peter wrote were suffering for their faith in Christ and evidently thought it a strange thing if they were right. It

also seemed strange and discouraging that so few seemed to be affected by the gospel which was being preached by the Holy Ghost from heaven through the Apostles. Peter's answer was that it was neither strange nor new, for the same Spirit preached in Noah's day when all mankind except eight souls were disobedient; these eight were saved out of the disobedient mass. The christians to whom he wrote had been saved out of a "disobedient" nation, and they were but a few (chapter 2. 8). Noah's family being saved by water was a figure of the baptism of these Jewish believers by which they had been saved from that untoward generation (Acts 2. 38, 40).

This text gives no warrant for the unscriptural teaching that Christ preached between His death and resurrection in hades, nor for that other false doctrine that another chance will be given the dead who have died in their sins.

The Light of Life.

"What is the force of the expression 'the light of life' in the text, 'I am the light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8. 12)?"—L.

THE pillar of cloud and fire that guided Israel through the perils of the wilderness to the promised land has been used to illustrate this great saying, and it does in a measure serve, but there is more here than that. There is no light for any

man except in JESUS, not now on earth but at the Father's right hand in heaven; all else is darkness. The sun shines for all, so the light in the face of Jesus is for all, but only those who follow, and so "walk in the light" are blest by it. Following

has a large place in John's Gospel. Those who followed their Lord, recognised who He was, the sent One of God, and they became attached to Him. Peter spoke the word for them all when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The light is the revelation of God in His beloved Son, and there is no true life for men apart from that light. "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17. 3). The light produces the life and the life needs the light; the Lord Jesus is both the Light and the Life. He becomes indispensable to those in whose hearts the light has shone; they love Him, and depend upon Him, without Him they can do nothing, He is their life and He is the light of their life. All this is involved in following Him.

First the light and then the life, as in the first creation; then the life guided and sustained by the light

of it. The feet are directed in the way to the heavenly inheritance by the light that shines *upon* the follower, but conscience and mind and heart are illuminated, for the light shines *in* as well as on. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6). The light sets the possessor of it in right relations with his surroundings, it enables him to see things in their true proportion, it exposes what is false, and is the revelation of what is true; it draws the soul onward to the place from whence it shines, which is the goal of all those who have life in the Son of God.

The life would be impossible without the light. We rejoice that we have the Son who is both the light and the life. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of man", and following Him we do not walk in darkness, for He is the light of the life He has given to us.

Between death and Resurrection.

"Would you kindly give in 'Answers to Correspondents' in **Scripture Truth** the Scriptures, if any, which tell us of the present occupation of the dead in Christ? Also if the dead in Christ are disembodied spirits, or can we judge from 2 Corinthians 5. 1-4 that they are given a temporary body to fit them for their present occupation, until the second coming of Christ? Any help you could give us on this subject will be greatly appreciated."—DRIFFIELD.

THE texts that speak of "the dead in Christ" are: "Absent from the body . . . present with the Lord" (2 Cor 5. 8); "To depart to be with Christ which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23); and "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14. 13). This last passage has special reference to those

who shall suffer martyrdom under the domination of the Beast (see early part of chapter) after the translation of the church to heaven, but we have no doubt that it is equally true of those who die in the Lord now. It will be seen that Scripture is silent as to their occupation, the condition seems to be one of rest. Yet it is conscious rest, for otherwise there would be no meaning in "present with the Lord," and "far

better"; nor would the Apostle have said; "For me to live is Christ and *to die is gain*" (Phil. 1. 21). It would be no gain to pass from a life of joy in the Lord into a condition of unconsciousness.

The house which is from heaven (2 Cor. 5), is the body of glory (see Phil. 3. 21 also), which dead and living shall receive at the coming of the Lord. It is not a temporary body, for it is "*eternal in the heavens.*" There is no word in Scripture that we know of that supports the idea of an intermediate body to clothe the spirit between death and resurrection. The condition is called "*being unclothed.*" Paul was not looking for this, but for that mighty power of the Lord that would bring forth the body of glory that would completely swallow up all of him that was mortal (2 Cor. 5. 4, also Phil. 3. 21 and 1 Thess. 4. 17). He would not have spoken of the unclothed condition, if there had been an intermediate body to take the place of this mortal body. But while Paul did not look for this unclothed condition, for it is not the great christian hope, if he could have had

his choice, he would have chosen it rather than to continue in the flesh, this is clear from his words, "We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." That would be a greater joy than the greatest he could know on earth, for it would mean the immediate presence of his Saviour. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" Acts 7. 59.

"We shall not be found naked" in the passage in question may raise a difficulty. There is a great difference between being unclothed and being found naked. Adam had his body in Eden but he had to confess that before God he was naked, and God clothed him with skins, a type of what He does for all who "believe in Jesus," they are clothed with a righteousness of His providing. Christ is made this unto them. So that whether now in a mortal body, or in the unclothed state, or in His glorified body they will never be naked. The unbeliever is naked now and if he dies in his sins he will be naked for ever, even when raised from the dead; but that is moral nakedness rather than physical.

The Heart of the Lord.

Take the case of the woman who came behind the Lord and touched the hem of His garment. She had a great need, and by that simple act of faith her need was met. She had not ventured to touch the Lord in vain, she had got relief and was going away satisfied with that. But the Lord was not satisfied with that; He wanted her to know more than the virtue that could heal her, He wanted her to know the love that He had for such needed ones as she was. So now, He is not the Saviour merely to relieve us of our burden of sin and corruption, He is that, blessed be His name, but He would draw those He relieves into a close relationship with Himself. They have felt the extent of their need, He wants them to know the warmth of His heart that has relieved them of it. Acquaintance with the grace that saves us is wonderful, but acquaintance with the One from whom the grace comes is the greater blessedness.

THE LORD IN THE MIDST.

J. T. Mawson.

"Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John 12. 1, 2, 3).

EVERY heart that loves the Lord delights in this happy scene. The Lord is here, supreme in the affections of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, and they, united in one, not only by their family love but more than all in their love for Him, make Him a Supper. Each of them had a part in it, but it was a united effort. Doubtless they had talked about it and made preparation for it. It was a great day for them for they were to entertain their Lord, the Son of God; the Supper was in His honour. Now the hour has come, and they fall into their proper places at the feast in self-forgetting and harmonious devotion to Him. It is a beautiful expression of what the christian assembly should be, the Lord in the midst, the supreme object of its service and adoration.

But this bit of heaven on earth was reached through chapter 11. It was the outcome of a wonderful experience. These three had learnt what the Lord could be to them in the most testing of circumstances, when death had invaded and broken up their family circle. He had come to them in their sorrow and wept with them there. They learnt the greatness of His power, but first He shewed them the love of His heart. Power never yet won a heart, it is only love that can do that, and He was after their hearts, as He is after yours and mine, nothing will satisfy

Him but the full possession of our hearts. Consider Him; He wept with those sisters as they wept for their brother. How great must have been His sympathy that made Him weep, and how wonderful His tears and most of all the love behind those tears. Even the Jews were compelled to exclaim, "Behold how He loved him."

The difference between ch. 11 and ch. 12 is clear. In ch. 11 the Lord is there for the sakes of those whom He loved, to succour and serve them, they are the objects of His sympathy and solicitude; it is their circle and their need of Him in it. But in ch. 12 He is the object of their affection and adoration; it is their response of love to His great love for them. They yield to Him that that only is His due, yet what a joy it is to Him in a world of treachery and hatred, and at a time when the leaders of the Jews were plotting to kill Him.

He had been much to Martha and Mary and Lazarus before, but now He is everything. Their Friend He had been, One in whose affectionate interest they had confided, but now He exceeds all that—He is the Christ, the Son of God, the Resurrection and the Life, the Sun and Centre of the souls.

There is no anger in Martha's heart at the part her sister takes; in

the realised presence of the Lord jealousy has no place. She is serving the Lord. This is her part in the harmony of the Supper. With what reverence, with what holy awe, and yet with singing in her heart Martha moves about her house, hands and feet and every movement in unison with the song within her heart. As an indispensable member of a devoted circle she ministers to the Lord of their substance.

And Lazarus who sat with Him at meat, had seen all earthly things fade from his vision as his eyes were closed in death, had felt the breaking of all earthly ties as he passed out of time into eternity, but had been called back from the silence of the unseen world by the voice of Him by whose side he sat. What a bond there must have been between the Lord and Lazarus, between the Life-giver and the risen man! Martha and Mary would not be less loved, but in that sacred hour, not ties of nature that must all be riven were strongest, but this tie that the hand of death cannot break. When Jesus raised up the little daughter of Jairus, He gave her back to her parents and we read of her no more; and when He raised the widow's son He gave him back to his mother, and that is the last we hear of him; but Lazarus was not raised up that his sisters might again possess him, but that he might be for the joy of his Lord, to give pleasure to His heart; he was raised for the glory of God and to be one of those that made a feast for Jesus and sat at meat with Him. No words can describe the blessed communion between the silent Lazarus and his Lord.

And Mary—none but the Spirit-taught can understand the part that Mary took. There were some there

that had indignation among themselves when she poured her precious ointment on her Lord; they did not understand; but the fragrance of that act rose up to heaven, it rose up to the angel hosts, and beyond them to the very nostrils of the Father, and He will never forget it. I have dwelt upon that scene; in thought I have watched her glide into the inner chamber and bring forth from it that alabaster box of precious nard. She had not used it on herself, she had not used it on Lazarus, though it would surely have embalmed his body and kept it for awhile from corruption; she had **KEPT** it, mark that word, "Against the day of My burying hath she *kept* this," saith the Lord. She had kept it for her Lord, the most precious of all her possessions was for Him. She poured it on His head, so Matthew and Mark have told us; it is John who speaks of the anointing of His feet. Some blind critics have supposed a contradiction here, but there is none. I have watched her in thought pour the precious ointment upon His head, for He was King, the King of Israel. It is thus that Matthew writes of Him; but He was the rejected King, unanointed, unowned by His people; but Mary said, "I will own Him. I will anoint Him." Ah, but He is more than the King of Israel; and as the truth as to who He is grows in its glory on her soul, she bows in adoration at His feet and pours the residue of the ointment upon them. He was her Lord and her God. It was this, the climax of that great act that impressed itself on John, and he was inspired by the Holy Ghost to record what he saw.

There was no place for Christ in the ritual and formality of the Temple services, but He was given the chief place in the home at Beth-

any, and as long as that supper lasted all was for Him. He was supreme there, and in that holy scene, until spoilt by the intrusion of the traitor, we have a pattern of the assembling together of the saints of God to meet the Lord (Matthew 18. 20). If the true meaning of this dawns upon the soul how great is the effect of it; nothing can compare with it in honour and privilege and solemnity. What preparation of heart there will be for that meeting, and then a Spirit-controlled ministry of praise to Him (Acts 13, 2), which was Martha's part; which will deepen into communion with Him as His companions (Hebrews 1. 9), which was the part of Lazarus, and move on to that full and blessed adoration and worship, which Mary's part illustrates. Mary anointed Him for His burying. She anticipated His death; the blood-bought assembly of God looks back to it, and knowing the Lord as "Him that liveth and was dead," but is now alive for evermore, there rings through its praise and worship a triumph and a joy that was impossible in Mary's case.

Of course the devil would spoil

it; there is nothing he hates more than that Christ should be honoured, so the traitor brought in the discord when the whole house was filled with the fragrance of Mary's ointment. To this day the same devil is active to rob the Lord of what is most for His honour, and how easily he can deceive even the most intelligent Christians; they have their theories and favourite doctrines, their prejudices and principles, and these assume such proportions in their minds that the Lord in the midst is lost sight of with the certain result—controversy and strife, and spiritual dearth and death. There is a sore need for recovery to this great truth of the Lord in the midst of two or three gathered to His Name—not gathered on this ground or that, to these principles or those, or even on "Scriptural lines" as is sometimes said, for that may be dull formality, but unto His Name—Himself; the heart and mind engaged with Him. It may be that the consideration of the way that these blessedly united three at Bethany made a supper for the Lord may help towards this recovery. The Lord grant it for His Name's sake.

'Twixt God and thee but love shall be;
 'Twixt earth and thee distrust and fear,
 'Twixt sin and thee be hate and war,
 And hope shall be 'twixt heaven and thee,
 Till night is o'er.

Thou, God, my rest, my refuge and my tower,
 My home art Thou.

Loquacity or forwardness on religious subjects is a great hindrance to real edification. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" as those who have something to say on God's behalf, or else use the modesty which becomes those who only seek for truth.—J.N.D.

“THEN COMETH THE END.”

A. J. Pollock.

“THEN COMETH THE END, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15. 24-28).

“**T**HEN COMETH THE END.”
Hallelujah! The end of sin and sorrow, of blood and tears, of pain and death, of bereavement and loneliness, of sickness and isolation, of devilish instruments of war, of bombers killing their thousands of defenceless women and children, the end of unrighteous might on the throne and righteousness persecuted and in prison. Yes, “then cometh the end.” Hallelujah!

If ever there was a time when saints are feeling the pressure of the state of the world, it is at the present time. What a spectacle! The world destroying itself. For what is war? It is the piling up of millions of rifles, cannon, tanks, aeroplanes, bombers, warships, and the drawing into the devouring maw of war the manhood of the nations, and the slaughter and maiming of millions, leaving in its train bitter tears and desolation of widows and orphans.

At the present moment, it lies in the power of one man, uneducated, uncultured and untrained for rule, a man probably possessed by an evil spirit, to say whether all this devilish work shall begin, the end of which no one can say. Probably he will perish in the conflagration his own hand will start.

There is, thank God, an end to all this, and it lies in the power of the pierced hand to bring it to pass. The Meek, not the ambitious monster overmastered by lust for power,

but the Meek shall inherit the earth. There shall come a blissful time of quietness and peace and righteous rule, and this sinful earth shall have her last chance. Christ upon the throne; Satan bound in the bottomless pit.

“THEN COMETH THE END.”

Yes, an end of that which distresses and saddens and oppresses, but an end which leads to a beginning, a beginning without an end, a beginning which is indicated by Him who will sit on the throne, saying, “Behold I make all things new” (Rev. 21. 5).

There is another side to all this. We have delineated man’s side, and it is without a single redeeming feature. There is One who is going to hand up the kingdom to God, even the Father. He does this, not as the eternal Son, but as the SON OF MAN. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Mediator between God and man. We are told, “There is one Mediator between God and man, THE MAN, Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2. 5). There will come a time when all that the Lord Jesus came into the world to do, and which He is now accomplishing by the Holy Spirit during this dispensation, and what is to follow, will have been accomplished. When that point is reached “THEN COMETH THE END.”

We read the prophecy of this in Psalm 8. It is a night psalm, for David is contemplating the moon

and the stars. When he looks at the night heavens and sees the stars innumerable, he is overwhelmed with the sense of the littleness of man. He exclaims, "What is man (Hebrew *enosh*) that Thou art mindful of him?" Man (*enosh*) a sinner, frail, passing away, a shadow and gone in a moment, in contrast with these mighty orbs of night that stud the heaven, and continue throughout the ages. But there breaks in a glorious light. The psalmist continues, "And the Son of Man (Hebrew, *Adam*) that Thou visitest Him." This Son of Man was made a little lower than the angels. Who could that apply to but the Lord Jesus Christ, He, the eternal Son in the unity of the Godhead, comes into the world as the Son of Man. This was a title our Lord constantly applied to Himself when on this earth.

Hebrews 2. 9 says, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels" (quoting Psalm 8. 5, how wonderful is the unity of Scripture!) "FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH." The New Testament affords the fuller light and tells us the Son of Man born to have universal dominion over all things must die.

Why must He die? The answer is that He is "the Mediator of a better covenant" (Heb. 8. 6), not the first covenant, a covenant of demand, given with the accompaniment of thunder and lightning, earthquake, the sound of a trumpet, in thick darkness, so terrifying that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. 12. 21). The new covenant is a covenant of grace founded on the death of Christ. In the Tabernacle it was typified by the blood-stained slab of pure gold on the top of the ark, a propitiary,

a mercy-seat, a meeting place between a Holy God and the poor sinner in his heinous guilt. This is the happy work of the Son of Man, the Mediator. So the Lord Himself said of the palsied man, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy bed, and go into thine house" (Luke 5. 24). And so he did. Paul and Timothy writing to the Corinthian Church said, "God . . . also hath made us able ministers of the new testament (covenant) (chapter 3. 6). Later on they speak of themselves as "ministers of reconciliation" (chapter 5. 18), and go on to say that they are ambassadors of Christ, God beseeching man through them to be reconciled to Himself. Thus they acted in Christ's stead.

So through our Lord Jesus Christ, either in Person when on this earth, or by the Holy Spirit through His servants, the blessed stream of blessing to man is flowing and will flow on till the end is reached. But there will come a point when all that God sets out to accomplish will be completed. If now it is a stream of blessing flowing through the administration of the Son of Man, we must remember the Father has given to the Son "authority to execute judgment . . . *BECAUSE He is the Son of Man*" (John 5. 27). So we read in 1 Cor. 15. 28 that all things shall be subdued unto God, either subdued by grace, or by the crushing power of divine judgment. As the line of the hymn puts it,

"Drawn by mercy or compelled by might."

1 Cor. 15. 23 brings us to the point of the resurrection of all that are Christ's. The judgment of the wicked is stated in the next verse. All rule, all authority, all power,

that raises its head in opposition to God will be put down. Where will little lilliputian, totalitarian dictators stand in that day? What sort of opposition will they be able to bring forward, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming"? (2 Thess 2. 8). Then when all power is put down and the wicked dead shall have been judged, and banished to the lake of fire, "THEN COMETH THE END." Hallelujah! The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. No enemy. No death. No pain. No crying. All new, eternally new, never to grow old.

The Son of Man will then hand up the kingdom to God, even the Father. He will ever be the eternal Son in the unity of the Godhead, He will ever be Man in the glory of

God, manhood assumed by Him shall be for ever. John the Seer saw in vision in the glory, "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5. 6). Stephen looked up to heaven and saw Jesus there and exclaimed as he was being battered to death, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7. 56). These Scriptures prove that the same Jesus the disciples saw go into heaven is the Jesus they saw on earth when risen from the dead, a real Man, yet the eternal Son—one blessed Person, inscrutable mystery.

How we can thank God for those words, "THEN COMETH THE END." They rest upon our spirits as a blissful benediction. What a prospect is ours! Hallelujah! "God . . . all in all." Finality reached. "God . . . all in all." Hallelujah!

Testimony.

Do you know the story of Kartar Singh, the Tibetan? He was sentenced by the lama of Tshingham to death by torture for professing his faith in Christ. Sewn up in a heavy wet yak skin, he was exposed to the heat of the sun. The slow process of contraction of this death-trap is the most awful means of torture ever devised by human cruelty. At the close of the day the dying man asked to be allowed to write a dying message. It was as follows:—

"I give to Him, who gave to me my life,
 My all, His all to be;
 My debt to Him, how can I pay, though
 I may live to endless day?
 I ask not one, but thousand lives, for
 Him and His own sacrifice.
 Oh, will I then not gladly die for Jesus?
 Sake, and ask not why?"

This testimony, uttered in the moment of the direst agony, did not go unfruitful, for one of the highest officials in the lama's palace was gripped by the martyr's cry and confessed Christ that same night.

"Dynamic Christianity in the World To-day"—ZWEMER.

SERVICE.

J.N.D.

CONNECT your service with nothing but God—not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by fellowship, and your heart refreshed; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on anyone whatever; for, if you do, you cannot be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith and one's *own communion with God*. Saul even may be a prophet when he gets amongst the prophets; but David was always the same—in the cave or anywhere. Whilst the choicest blessings given me here are in fellowship, yet a man's service must flow from himself, else there will be weakness. If I have the word of wisdom, I must use it for the saint who may seek my counsel. There is no single place grace brings us into, but is a place of temptation, and that we cannot escape though we shall be helped through. In every age the blessing has been *from individual agency*; and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined into the world; it is humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God. *The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another.*

When there are great arrangements for carrying on work, there is not the recognition of this inherent blessing, which "tarrieth not for the sons of men." I do not tarry for man, if I have faith in God—I act upon the strength of that — *Let a man act as the Lord leads him*. The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man.

All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the *individual*. Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13) were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, recommended to the grace of God by the Church at Antioch, but they *had no communication with it till they returned*, but then there was the joyful concurring of love in the service that had been performed—He that had talents went and traded. Paul says: "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Where there is a desire to act, accompanied by real energy, a man will rise up and walk, but if he cannot do this, the energy is not there, and the attempt to move is only restlessness and weakness.

Love for Jesus sets one to work —I know no other way.

Let us bless God for our hours of discipline. Not one is unneeded, not one is without its heavenly lessons. Each day's drill is fitting the recruit for God's service. Let us praise Him for each one, and wait with patience the hour when we shall know their meaning and read their results where God can trust us to read them—before His throne—where pride or vanity or self can never enter to puff us up or mar His work.

The Lord comes in in a wonderful way for His praying people. He loves to surprise us, and He surprises most the one who depends most on Him. He says to that one, "You shall see that you have not trusted Me in vain."

GRACE, GUIDANCE, GLORY.

James Scott.

Psalms 22-24.

THE object of this paper, as may be gathered from the heading, is to consider these three Psalms, not solely in their presentation of Christ, but also in their application to ourselves and our relationship to Him. The words chosen to convey respectively the central thought of each of the psalms, as thus viewed, are not to be regarded as an attempt to give anything like a summary of their contents, but that they may be taken as defining the Christian path in its origin, its progress, and its consummation. "Grace begun shall end in glory." nor will the promised guidance be lacking in between.

Many of the psalms are prophetic in character, and apply primarily to the Messiah and His people Israel. Some of them, such as Psalm 22, have been either wholly or partially fulfilled; others will only have their full accomplishment in that day foreshadowed in Psalm 110. 3, where we read: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." His people were not willing when He came in grace—"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"; but it will be very different when He comes back in power and glory.

In reading the Psalms, it is important for their proper understanding to see that they refer to Israel, and that the church does not come into view. This will help to explain much that may appear mysterious in the language of the Book. Take, for example, what are called the imprecatory Psalms, and we shall find utterances which were perfectly right for a godly Israelite, but which would be altogether wrong for us. Look, for instance, at Psalm 69, which is

prophetic of Messiah's sufferings; read verses 22-28, and compare the words found there with the first utterance of the Lord upon the cross, as recorded by St. Luke. What a contrast!

"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Ps. 69. 28).

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 34).

At the same time it is unquestionably true that the Psalms were written for our instruction and encouragement (2 Tim. 3. 16-17). They describe our experiences; the experiences, not of one age or dispensation, but those common to men of every dispensation. Above and beyond all else, the Psalms are full of Christ. He is the key to unlock the treasure store; and no part of Holy Writ, with the exception, perhaps, of the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, gives us such a marvellous presentation of the Person and glory of the Redeemer.

And now let us meditate for a little upon these three Psalms as expressing first of all the grace of the Lord in redemption, then His tender shepherd care and guidance, until at last He brings us to the city that hath foundations, where we shall see His face, and His name shall be in our foreheads.

GRACE. PSALM 22.

The title of the Psalm is very beautiful and significant. It means *The Hind of the morning*, and is said to refer to the early light preceding the dawn of the morning, whose first

rays streaking the horizon are likened to the horns of a hind. It is not difficult to trace its peculiar appropriateness, for in the Psalm the Lord is seen making atonement—it corresponds to the sin-offering,—and, as DeBurgh remarks, “the Psalm may be so entitled as predicting the triumph and joy of the Redeemer after the dark night of His sufferings, beginning with His resurrection, which was at this hour.” In support of this, several passages come readily to mind, in which the hind and roe are emblematical of one persecuted or put to death, while at the same time they are the emblems of loveliness and innocence. So the persecutors are likened in the Psalm to dogs, lions, bulls, and buffaloes.

The Psalm is in two parts which correspond respectively with “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” The first twenty-one verses speak of the sufferings, and those which follow set forth in glad and glowing terms the blessed, and abiding, and far-reaching results of the victory of the cross. We are reminded here of our Lord’s own words on the eve of His passion: “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” (John 12. 24).

ALONE HE BARE THE CROSS.

In His earthly path our Lord was ever conscious of the world’s hatred, but He was sustained by the uninterrupted enjoyment of the Father’s presence. He knew, too, what utter loneliness was, yet He was never alone, as He tells the Jews: “And yet if I judge My judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me” (John 8. 16). And again: “And He that sent Me

is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him” (verse 29). To His sorrowing disciples He says: “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” (John 16. 32).

But the hour is come, and the power of darkness. The rulers and the rabble, led on by Satan, have, for three hours, derided, reviled, and insulted the crucified Lord of glory, till their hate can go no further. But the end is not yet; and so we read in the Gospel record: “And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Here are depths of suffering that no human mind can fathom, the righteous One is forsaken of God. And why is He forsaken? We get the answer from His own lips. “Thou art holy.” He was there as the Bearer of sin; and there and then was enacted that work of God spoken of in the Scripture: “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Let us bow in wonder and worship.

The Gospel history gives us the fact of Calvary, but the Psalm gives us the feelings of the holy Sufferer in that awful hour. How short-sighted they are who see in the cross of Christ a martyr’s death and nothing more, and are blinded to the tremendous issues that were involved when the question of sin was raised, and settled once for all to the everlasting glory and satisfaction of God.

There was only One—He who knew no sin—able thus to endure the cross, exhaust the judgment, and come forth from the conflict, not only without being consumed, but bearing the spoils of victory. “He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” There was no other way. Happy they who rest by simple faith on the finished work of Christ! “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

NO LONGER ALONE. When the work is finished Christ is heard from the horns of the unicorns (buffaloes), and immediately we see Him declaring the Father’s name to His brethren, and leading the praise in the midst of the assembly. Surely this was partially fulfilled in the wondrous message entrusted to Mary on the resurrection morning, and in the appearing of the risen Lord in the midst of His disciples on the same day at evening. The Psalm closes in ever-widening circles of blessing, taking in the great congregation, all the ends of the earth, and even the generation that should be born. Marvellous grace! “But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children” (Psalm 103. 17).

Notice the last clause of the Psalm, “He hath done this.” The mighty work was all His own; to Him be the glory. The cross is checkmate to Satan; and in the cross the heart of God is revealed. There is no cry for vengeance upon the wicked as in many other Psalms. Here we have the atoning sufferings of Christ; consequently it is all GRACE.

GUIDANCE. PSALM 23.

The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep, and now in resurrection He becomes the great Shepherd, whom the God of peace brought again from the dead. He lives to die no more; death has no claim upon Him, and no more dominion over Him.

This is a short but wonderfully comprehensive psalm, which has been the joy and comfort of the people of God in all ages. It places us between the sufferings and the glory, and it has been aptly described as a rare jewel of priceless worth, set on either side with equally precious gems. Handley Moule, that fragrant soul, wrote in 1919: “I have often prayed that daily, and to the end, I may live as in a tent pitched between the cross and the grave of our Lord—the empty cross, symbol and seal of His finished work of sacrifice and redemption, the empty grave, likewise the evidence and pledge of His eternal victory over the last enemy, death, and of our life hid with Him in God.” It is interesting to see that, briefly, the Psalm gives us three things: (1) In verses 1-3 we have every need met. (2) In verse 4 we have every fear banished. (3) In verses 5-6 we have every longing satisfied. Notice the first verse: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” These are striking words coming from an O. T. saint; and shall we be content with anything less, and limit the Lord’s love and care to what is purely spiritual? Surely not. We believe that the psalmist is enunciating a general principle when he says: “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84. 11); and this the experience of God’s people has established again and again. Even if our faith carried us

no farther, this would be blessing beyond all our deserts; but it is only the beginning. We have rest and relationship; a personal, present, and eternal Saviour; it means that we shall lack neither provision nor protection; and if there are trials there will also be triumphs, for conflict shall end in victory. If we have to traverse the valley of the shadow of death, we shall have His presence, and if at length the earthly house of this tabernacle should be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Psalm 122. 2). Can we doubt for a single moment that we shall have the Lord's guidance? On this point the testimony of Scripture is overwhelming.

Let us glance once more at the Psalm before we pass on. He *leadeth* me. Goodness and mercy *shall follow me*. And one day I *shall dwell* with Him in His Father's house. But there is only one way into the green pastures, and into the home of the Lord, and that is by accepting the sacrifice of Psalm 22. "The way of the cross leads home."

GLORY. PSALM 24.

There is an earthly glory as well as a heavenly glory, and this Psalm speaks of the former. This is very clear from the opening statement which here, as is often in the Psalms, gives the theme: "The *earth* is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the *world*, and they that dwell therein." It is the manifestation of Christ's power and glory in His kingdom established upon earth, the day foretold by the O.T. prophets.

At His first coming He was refused, and a murderer was preferred before Him. They cried with one

voice, "Away with Him. Not this Man, but Barabbas." They crowned Him, but it was with a crown of thorns, a symbol of the curse; and they nailed Him to the tree. People ask, What is wrong with the world? The truth is that there is a usurper upon the throne, and the foundations are out of course; and it will never be otherwise until He comes whose right it is; who must reign, and who shall reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. **THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S.**

Now the question is raised, Who is worthy to take part and to share in this glorious display? "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?" The answer is simple and straight: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." But where is such an one to be found? God's verdict is that "there is none righteous, no, not one," for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Who then can be saved? Only those, but all those who put their trust in Christ, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. This brings us back to the cross, to the end of ourselves, that our faith and hope might be in God. The moment we reach this point and put our trust in the Lord, that very moment He saves, and cleanses, and makes us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (ver. 5). There is no other source of blessing, no righteousness apart from the God of our salvation.

The close of the Psalm is very lovely. The earth is about to enter upon the enjoyment of its long expected sabbath of which it has been robbed by sin. "For we know," says

the Scripture, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." But the hour of deliverance has struck, and the groan will be hushed, and the smiling creation, freed from the bondage of corruption, will rejoice in the liberty of the glory of the children of God. In that day shall there be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness. Israel, repentant and restored, will be **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**, and the people of the wandering feet and weary breast will be no longer the tail, but the head of the Gentiles, and Jerusalem will be the centre of blessing for the renewed earth.

It is sweet to think that, amid the surpassing grandeur and gladness of that scene, every eye will be fixed upon the King who comes to take possession of His house, His city, and His throne. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Who is this King of glory? He is none other than the

crucified and long-rejected **JESUS**, the Lord of Hosts. The earth is the *Lord's*.

One word in conclusion. It may be asked, What about the church in that day? Shall we be there to witness the Redeemer's triumph, and to share His joy? Undoubtedly we shall; for, previous to the Lord's taking possession of the inheritance, He will come for us, according to 1 Thess. 4. 15-17; and when, later, He is manifested we shall be manifested with Him; and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. The Lord's prayer for us will be answered to the full: "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" (John 17. 24). And in that wonderful nearness and fellowship our cup of joy will overflow.

"FOR OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM, ARE ALL THINGS: TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN."

"We know."

"We KNOW that ALL things work together for good to them that love God."

A DECLARATION that is especially comforting to the believer in times of perplexity and trial. There are seasons in our lives when all things seem to be against us. It is then that we need a divine assurance like this. Faith says not "we hope" but "we know." This is one of the things of which the child of God is privileged to speak with a calm and steady assurance. We know that all things *work together*. This conjunction of events is going on now. However dark and mysterious the outward aspect may be, let us not forget there is a divine

purpose that is being steadily fulfilled. God's will of love *is* being done, and every event of life is contributing to its fulfilment. Let faith grasp that fact. All things are working together for my good. Life is like an elaborate piece of tapestry that is being woven on the loom. In order to contribute to the beauty of the pattern the colours must not be all of one hue. While some must be bright and beautiful, others must be dark and sombre. As they are worked together they all contribute to the beauty of the pattern.

IMPORTUNATE PRAYER AND THE PREACHER

"Friend, lend me three loaves" (Luke 11. 5-9).

IT would be a great mistake to suppose that God can only be moved to act for us by our importunity. He does not need to be urged to hear and answer our prayers, as some have taught in interpreting the story of the three loaves. Then what is the meaning of this incident used by the Lord to shew the need of importunity in prayer? Is it not to shew that the man who prays must be without resources except in God: and he *must* have what he prays for, it is urgent, and that God alone can give it?

So often we ask with a reserve in our minds or an alternative to fall back upon if so be that God does not answer. That is not real prayer, we have another resource, and our asking wavers, we are double minded and not sincere. God is willing to give, but we are not ready to receive, we should not rightly value His gift.

The reluctance on the part of the friend to rise at midnight and give to his friend his request only served to stress the urgency of the case. The need on the one hand and the supply on the other are great points in the story. "I have nothing" said the suppliant; he had not a thing to set before his friend who was benighted in his journey; and he had no other but this one friend to appeal to in his need; and he had no doubt as to his supplies and so would not be said, No.

The delay in the answer to our prayers is often that we do not rea-

lise how wholly cast upon God we are for what we ask; there is not full and unequivocal trust in Him: we have our reserves, something to fall back upon if our prayer fails, some loophole or backdoor out of the difficulty. It is astonishing how subtle our hearts are even in our dealings with God.

Take the case of the evangelist, he has to speak to a company of people, who are benighted travellers to eternity, hungry and weary. What has he wherewith to meet their need? In himself, if he understands the situation, he must confess, "I have nothing." He must turn to God. There are three things that he most certainly needs. 1. The word to give them. 2. The power of the Holy Ghost with which to deliver it. 3. The blessing of God to rest upon it. Suppose in asking, he has in his mind some former message upon which he will rely if nothing fresh is given, and suppose, failing the power of the Spirit he relies upon his own natural ability; he is not in the condition of mind for true supplication; the hands he stretches out to God are not empty hands, he is not ready to receive from God.

The Lord's comment is "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." We need to learn at His feet what it is to ask and seek and knock; to have wrought within us an increasing urgency of desire as the true urgency of the need is forced upon us.

A supply of power is not given to us to carry us on in independence of the Lord, we must *abide* in Him. "Without Me ye can do nothing."

IN THE COVERT OF HIS PRESENCE.

A. H. Storrie (Brazil).

"And after the fire, a soft and gentle voice" (1 Kings 19. 12).

ONE fears to mar the beauty of the several utterances of the Lord that we shall cite in commenting on them; "Apples of gold in pictures of silver," they truly are. Let us catch His gracious accents as He communes with one and another of His favoured servants whom He has drawn into the seclusion of His own presence.

Moses was perhaps the most outstanding man of all time, a man of God who enjoyed privileges of the most elevated kind; but surely not the least of all these was when he bowed down in the Holiest, where stood the golden ark, representing Jehovah's throne on earth. There he proved the sweetness of the Lord's gracious promise:

"And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee . . ." (Exodus 25. 22).

Consider the spot to which these choice words applied! There were the cherubims and the mercy-seat of pure, solid gold; the acacia wood of the desert covered within and without with pure gold, forming the Ark in which the tables of the law written by the finger of God were placed. How much of the inner meaning of it all was then understood by Moses we cannot say. We to-day are more highly privileged than he was, for the light of the New Testament shows to us the meaning of these types, and we have come to the great ante-type of them. "God manifest in the flesh"; Deity in manhood! Communion with God restored because of judgment against sin unsparingly executed—the blood is on the mercy-seat! And

the righteous law of God perfectly magnified by the only One who ever kept it!

And what was the nature of the Lord's communications to His favoured servant Moses? What had they in ultimate view? Nothing less than the blessing of all mankind! Through God's chosen people the blessing was to flow to earth's utmost bound and will yet do so. We are not forgetting that it was a day of law when the Lord communed with Moses, but it was a law framed for man's highest good—even down to the smallest details of diet, clothing and hygiene. The truth is that the heart of the everlasting God beat from between the cherubims: "THERE . . . I will commune with thee . . ." How gracious the accents that fell upon the ear of Moses!

Six centuries later another scene is enacted at Horeb. The greatest of Israel's prophets stands there. Rugged, inflexible, austere is Elijah the man of God, consumed by a zeal that could wrench an apostate people from the idolatry of Baal and recover them to the worship of the only true God, as well as restore them to that law whose value he knew so well. Eight hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal had fallen by the Tishbite's righteous sword, for the man who flings himself on the ground on Carmel, "blank with the utter agony of prayer," is the one who had gained the victory in the strength of the Lord. And the victory was complete, the repentance of the people manifest, whilst abundance of rain began to fall after a drought of three

and-a-half years—all in answer to the prayers of a man subject to like passions as we are! And now, graciously cared for by His Lord in spite of temporary cowardice, divinely strengthened for forty days he betakes himself wistfully to Horeb, the mount of God where the law was given that had been so sadly outraged by the favoured but failing people. And Elijah knew that his Lord was present again on Horeb; would He speak as before midst signs of majesty and splendour? In the great and strong wind that rent the mountains and broke the rocks? In the earthquake that followed? In the fire? These might serve to show His grandeur, His might, but not so would He address His disheartened servant: "And after the fire, a soft and gentle voice." The Portuguese rendering of this, from the Latin Vulgate, is also exquisite: "A voice, mild and delicate." How soothing, how comforting must its accents have been to the persecuted, disheartened and querulous prophet!—

"What doest thou here, Elijah?"

And of what did the voice speak? Of Elisha the prophet of grace, of seven thousand of Israel preserved in the election of God, the nucleus of a restored nation. All was not lost as Elijah supposed, God cannot be defeated.

The greatest of the apostles stands on the deck of a doomed ship tossed about in a tempestuous sea. Was a prisoner's death by shipwreck to be the end of thirty years of the most strenuous and faithful service that ever a devoted man rendered to Christ?—ceaseless toil, travel of the most arduous kind, preaching with the utmost fer-

vous, teaching, admonishing, weeping!

This was not the first time that he had been in danger, for the more faithful and zealous the servant of the Lord be, so much more does the enemy seek to do him harm; but Paul was not easily turned aside from his purpose. He had heard the voice of Jesus speaking to him in accents of ineffable grace; he had seen Him radiant with the glory of heaven; he knew Him to be the all-powerful Creator and Upholder of all things! What mattered the wildest storm to Him who sat above the clouds? Those on the sea might well be at their wit's end, but could He not save them? And who amongst both crew and passengers is the calmest of all, and who shows his moral ascendancy over the rest? The courageous shipmaster who doubtless had weathered many a furious storm? The gallant Roman centurion? No, the prisoner, Paul, the servant of Christ.

On another occasion when he had carried the uplifting, purifying gospel to a city whose very name furnished a verb to denote the practice of the basest corruption, there arose a storm of persecution, and Paul's new convert, Sosthenes, was publicly flogged. There once more in the stillness of the night, the devoted "bondslave of Jesus Christ" heard the same accents that had won his heart on the Damascus road:

"Fear not, but speak and be not silent; because I am with thee, and . . . I have much people in the city."

And now, amidst the fierce Euroclydon a power and a presence and a voice spoke for the safety and the comfort of all: "For an angel

of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood by me this night saying,

Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted thee all those that sail with thee."

And was it any different when the same lonely captive stood before the most brutal despot that ever disgraced a throne? Not a man amongst the brethren who owed so much to him and to his soul-converting ministry had the courage to stand by him; all forsook him, and he even had the grace to pray that they might not be held to account for their cowardly behaviour! "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me . . ." and, doubtless, although no words are recorded, the faithful apostle was strengthened through hearing the same gracious accents of Him who spake as never man spake.

We have thought of three of the most remarkable men that this world has ever seen, and perhaps there were none greater than they. We have dwelt on the Lord's communications to them in words of tender grace. Is it any gain to us to know these things?—we who are neither outstanding or great, but just ordinary persons of no very remarkable experience? Yes, it avails much for us to know of the exceeding blessedness that was theirs for it may be ours also. It is open to us all to enjoy with worshipping hearts communion with our redeem-

ing Lord in the Holiest of all, in the very presence of God, for we have access to His presence, and to His throne of grace. We may still hear, despite the world's clamour (and wretched "ecclesiastical" discord), the "soft and gentle voice" reminding us that everything does not depend on *us* and *our* zeal; He who speaks will provide grace for the present, and the future is in His omnipotent hands. We may know His presence near in the direst stress, His peace amidst the storm.

There remains one more thought to be urged. We must ever remember that conditions are attached to experiences such as we have considered. To live in such an ambient, the practical, daily, hourly life must be in keeping with the knowledge and the holiness of our privileges. There is the closest possible connection between the sublime and the practical; the most intimate link between Paul's having the Lord standing with him and in the hour of his dire need and his practical life, and it is not without significance that both are referred to in the same epistle: "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life . . ." In that link lies the secret of supreme blessedness.

"Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the Lord?
Go and hide beneath His shadow—this shall then be your reward;
And whene'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting-place,
You will bear the shining image of the Master in your face."

God's will doth make the bitter sweet,
And all is well when it is done;
Unless His will doth hallow it,
The glory of all joy is gone.

O Lamb of God, I bless the love that laid
My sins on Thee.

“JESUS HIMSELF.”

L. A. Anderson.

IN the 24th of Luke there are two occasions when the Lord graciously made His presence known and felt.

The first instance was when those two disciples were walking to Emmaus.

The women had been to the sepulchre very early on that first day of the week with their spices, and to their great astonishment they found not the body of the Lord. Two men in shining garments reminded them of what Jesus had said as to His death and resurrection, “and they remembered His words” (v. 8). Thereupon this band of faithful women, at least five, probably more—where the men were we are not told—informed the eleven and others what had happened, but “their words seemed to them as *idle tales, and they believed them not*” (v. 11).

After all these men thought they knew better than a few women folk who were probably highly strung and imaginative, and Peter resolved to put things to the test himself, and so visited the sepulchre; returning in amazement but fully convinced now of the truth of the things of which the women had spoken.

The two travellers to Emmaus had no longer any doubts in their minds, for had not the women reported what they had seen and Peter had confirmed it all. Naturally, with seven or eight miles to walk they would talk of the things which had happened, which were so near to their hearts. Their Lord and Master had indeed risen as He had foretold: but where was He, where had He gone? And it was *whilst* they thus communed and reasoned “*Jesus Himself drew near*” (v. 15).

Are we sufficiently concerned as

to those momentous events that have happened in this world—the death and resurrection of Christ—that we talk of them, not in a casual manner, but communing and reasoning, as we go along our journey of life? If so I believe we shall realize His drawing near to us just as those two did of old.

But more than this, He “*went with them*” (v. 15). He accompanied them all along their journey. Do you want His company; then talk of Him—and the Spirit of God will take of the things of Christ and shew them to you. It may not be at once but suddenly the light of His presence will dawn upon you, just as the Lord expounded “in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” (v. 27).

The second instance is to be found in v. 36.

The same two disciples then returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and others gathered with them, talking together of the good news of a risen Lord and of His appearance to Simon. And then they related their experiences by the way, and how that in the breaking of bread He was known to them. “*And as they thus spoke Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*”

The Lord in the midst of His assembled saints! As the bee carries to the hive the honey that it has gathered and it becomes a contributor to the common store these disciples returned to their own company, the Lord their theme and object, and while they spake together of Him He was there. Not their theme only now, but their centre and Lord, to instruct them as to Himself, as all the Scriptures had spoken of Him, and to direct and commission them as to their witness and service

for Him. This second appearing was more wonderful than the first. The first was for their comfort in their circumstances, the second was

to teach them their identification with His Name and interests on earth. May we know the blessedness and power of both.

The real point in the Fall.

SATAN at the fall introduced into man's heart the lie that he could depend on himself more advantageously than on God. That was the real point in the fall. He entered the Garden, a circle of immense favour, and told the woman that by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree they should be as gods; she took and ate, and so self-dependence came in and renunciation of dependence on God—self-trust and distrust of God. That dependence which is faith in the soul was lost.

The point of departure must be the point of recovery. The prodigal, when he came to himself, did

not think of what he was or what he could do for himself, but of his father and what he could do for him. He discovered that no man cared for his soul and then he said, "I will arise and go to my father." The departure of the prodigal from his father's house illustrates the sinner's determination for self-dependence, his return illustrates the awakening of faith in the sinner's heart—God is his only hope. All dealings with God must be of faith, which involves dependence. The word that proved to Ananias that Saul of Tarsus was a changed man was, "Behold he prayeth."

Thy love, O Lord, is righteous love
 Inscribed on the sin-bearing tree;
 Love that exacts the sinner's debt,
 Yet in exacting sets him free.

Love that condemns the sinner's sin,
 Yet in condemning pardon seals;
 That saves from righteous wrath, and yet,
 In saving, righteousness reveals.

Love boundless as Jehovah's self,
 Love holy as His righteous law,
 Love unsolicited, unbought,
 The love proclaimed on Golgotha.

Thy love both liberates and saves,
 And my poor straightened soul expands,
 It lifts me to the heaven of heavens,
 The home above, not made with hands.

It purifies, and cheers, and calms,
 It knows no change and no decay;
 It loves and loves for evermore,
 'Tis heavenly sunshine, endless day.

SOME RESULTS OF THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. No. 5. GOD, THE JUDGE OF ALL. T. Oliver.

"Ye are come . . . to God, the Judge of all" (Heb. 12. 23).

THE introduction of these solemn words in the midst of a superlative description of Christian privilege and blessing seems strange. Up to this point thought had been concentrated on heaven, its angelic inhabitants and various phases of the blessings of the heirs of salvation. The words of the passage we are considering would imply that although previously contact with God could only be made indirectly that now there was no intermediate relationship. Hitherto Israel had relations with God through various media, e.g. angels, priests and prophets. But now the Hebrews could approach without fear even if He were manifested in the character of being Judge of all.

God could not take up that relationship apart from the coming of Christ. He could not be in direct communication with man and the creation that man had so grossly distorted, until Christ became man. No man had seen God at any time. Indeed no one could see Him! So that all depended on the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. In consequence God could be known as the judge of all. He takes that place with relation to creation. In fact that is the place that God assumes relative to the world to come. Primarily the passage does not refer to God as Judge seated on the throne of executive justice, but more in relation to its administration.

No. 6. THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT.

"But ye are come . . . to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12. 23).

THIS passage has reference to the Old Testament saints whose spirits are now in heaven, made per-

It will be a great day for the world when judgment will return to the earth in righteousness. At present the world is not governed through righteousness but through expediency; so compromise is an important feature in the awards of so-called justice. "Splitting the difference" is always an easy course of settling disputes in the first instance, although that procedure may lead to very serious difficulty in the long run. At present the aggressive individual or nation secures the major awards and the meek are pushed to the wall. Yet the day is coming when "the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37. 11).

For the most part judgment has been dissociated from righteousness and might has been esteemed as right. But there will be a return to the principle of righteousness not through the efforts of the League of Nations and other well-meant devices of man, but through God's intervention in the Man of His counsels, the Lord of glory, who is the rightful King. When His sway is owned, everything will be under His control. Meekness will come in for its legitimate reward and forwardness will be put in its proper place. Now in spiritual apprehension the Hebrew Christians had arrived at that moment and they are representative of the saints of the whole dispensation.

fect through the offering of Christ. "For by one offering He has perfected for ever those who are sancti-

fied" (Heb. 10. 14). Yet a little later on the writer could say "that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11. 40). The apparent contradiction between the passages simply arises through the use of the term "perfect" in different connections. The great cloud of witnesses of the first verse of chapter 12 refers to the Old Testament worthies cited in chapter 11, viz. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc., who were reckoned just men not on account of their merit but through faith. With true prophetic vision they foresaw the coming of Christ as the complete solution of all the ills of humanity and as the propitiation, i.e. that God might be just in justifying the believer either antecedent to His coming or subsequent thereto. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto Him for righteousness by God (Rom. 4. 3), so with all the others they were justified on the same principle and thus in God's reckoning they were just men.

By faith these "just men" ran their course and after they had patiently endured they obtained the promise (Heb. 6. 15). Yet later we read "these all died in faith not having received the promise" (Heb. 11. 13). Yet again there is no contradiction. The sixth chapter refers to the fact that the perfect discipline of God resulted in their obtaining the spiritual good of the promise in their souls. Albeit they did not actually get the substance which could only be brought about by the coming of Christ. Similarly the ultimate destiny of their souls was perfectly secured in Christ and their spiritual enjoyment of the things of God was perfect because of their faith in

God's solution. But Scripture forbids the thought that their state was the complete consummation of God's thought or promise. Indeed the full bearing of the passage would necessarily involve the condition that not only those spirits of the old dispensation, but the spirits of the departed saints of this era, and we who are yet in the body await the resurrection day when at the word of the Lord we shall rise triumphantly together to meet Him in the air.

We cannot say what was the precise enlightenment of those just men when they foresaw the day of Christ, but they were undoubtedly fortified and rendered superior to the conditions in which they lived. Moreover, the context would show that not the spirits but the just men were made perfect. They are made perfect on the basis of redemption. Those righteous men had been recognised by God before the Church period was initiated. They had finished their courses. They had been overcomers in the trying circumstances of life. They are in the presence of God awaiting the manifestation of Christ in the day of glorious display. They had been intimately associated with the ways of God on earth. They had proved loyal to God in a time of vastly less blessing than obtains in the Christian era, yet God owned their faithfulness and they enjoy their rest in heaven. But our passage only speaks of their spirits because they will not be perfect or complete until they receive their bodies of glory. The Hebrew Christians had arrived in spiritual apprehension to the moment when that will be true.

All our power in testimony is in proportion to the way the truth acts upon ourselves.

THE LORD AND THE HOME.

J. T. Mawson.

Words spoken at a marriage service.

IN considering this great occasion four words have been much in my mind—"Only in the Lord." They were written in reference to marriage in 1 Corinthians 7, and we should ask, What do they mean? They mean, of course, that the Christian man must choose a Christian woman as wife, and the Christian woman must choose a Christian man as husband. To do otherwise would be to transgress the word of the Lord, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

But more is involved in them than that. "In the Lord" means that you *belong* to the One whom you have believed, and you own His claims over you. You are His by right of purchase, He paid redemption's great price for you that He might possess you. You belong to each other now for as long as life shall last; you are to know the joy of possession and of being possessed, but before you knew each other you belonged to the Lord Jesus your Saviour, and you will not deny Him the joy of possession, His claim must ever stand first. As to this natural life, you stand before all others in each other's affections and thoughts; but His claim is greater, it is divine and spiritual and eternal. He has given you to each other, but He has not and cannot surrender His rights in you; they are the rights of your God and your Redeemer. In putting the Lord's claim first, you will not be sacrificing your own happiness, but you will sanctify and prolong it, and guard it against that selfishness to which we are all prone and which can only spoil it.

In setting up a new home you are really adding a bit of territory to the Lord's Kingdom, for, as you own His rights over you, the Kingdom of God will be a practical thing in your home. You have often prayed and will continue to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It would be an inconsistent thing to pray that prayer if you did not set up His Kingdom within the four walls of your own home. Your home must be "in the Lord." As those two of old constrained the Lord to enter their house and abide there, so I know you will. Let Him be Lord there, His will be done and not yours. There was no room for Him except in the manger when He entered this world, but you will say,

"O come to our home, Lord Jesus,
There is room in our home for Thee."

Having settled the matter of His Lordship over yourselves and your home, what of the internal economy of your home? What have you to carry on with? You have your God-given love for each other—a great gift, life would be intolerable together without that—but that is not enough for a truly successful marriage; you will need to mix wisdom with your love; and not worldly wisdom, which is more often than not rank folly. You will need the wisdom which is from above, of which James speaks, which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." But how can you secure that wisdom, the price of which is above rubies? Listen to this, E—, and let the words be engraved on your memory and soul, "If any

FOR man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and *it shall be given him.*" "It shall be given him"; what an encouragement there is in that for prayer in the Name of the Lord to whom you have surrendered yourself and your home! What a standby that word of the Lord will be to you when in perplexity and doubt.

And you, M—, what have you to contribute to the well-being of your home? You have received many presents from those who wish you well, and they will beautify your home, yet in time they will become commonplace and lose their lustre. Time will leave its mark upon your person and all you possess, but you may have a beauty in your home that is fadeless, you may fill your home with a fragrance that will not pass away, you may adorn yourself with a garment that will never grow old, and that will become you even better than your bridal dress. What is it? It is "a meek and quiet spirit which, *in the sight of God, is of*

great price." It may be an old-fashioned adornment, for "after this manner in old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands" (1 Peter 3. 4, 5). It may not be fashionable in the world, but how pleased God will be with it. Think of God looking down into your home and seeing there that which is of great price in His sight; the most costly gem the world possesses cannot rival that.

Well, it all flows out of the words, "In the Lord". And you know that He is not an austere Master; He exercises His authority in perfect love, and in divine wisdom. We all wish you well; those who love you unite this day in prayer for the best of blessing for you, but your Lord's interest in you is infinitely greater than ours. He loves you with a perfect and changeless love. His will is on your side and for your constant blessing. May you ever prove that the will of your Lord is good, and perfect and acceptable.

The world may pass and perish, Thou, God, wilt not remove—
 No hatred of all devils can part me from Thy love;
 No hungering or thirsting, no poverty, nor care,
 No wrath of mighty princes can reach my shelter there.
 No angel, and no heaven, no throne, nor power, nor might,
 No love, no tribulation, no danger, fear, nor fight,
 No height, no depth, no creature that has been or can be,
 Can drive me from Thy bosom, can sever me from Thee.

Salvation, strength and wisdom to Him whose works and ways,
 Are wonderful and glorious—eternal is His praise:
 The Lamb who died and liveth, alive for evermore,
 The Saviour who redeemed us, for ever we adore.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

The Idol Shepherd. Zechariah 11. 15—17.

“I would ask help on Zechariah 11. 17. Who are the idol shepherds, and what constitutes an idol shepherd?”—N.-on-T.

IF you have the New Translation (J.N.D.) you will see that “idol shepherd” is given as “worthless.” The passage is prophetic of the coming of Antichrist. He is the “worthless” shepherd, who, instead of caring for the sheep of Israel will use them for his own selfish ends. He stands in striking contrast to “the good Shepherd who giveth His life for the sheep” (John 10). He will be the thief that cometh “to steal and kill and destroy.” Yet the leaders of Israel rejected the good Shepherd and will welcome the worthless shepherd. The Lord said to them, “I am come in My Father’s name and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5. 43).

When the Lord came into the world, “His own received Him not,” they hated Him without a cause, and in just retribution God will let them have a shepherd after their

own hearts; and in “the great tribulation”—“Jacob’s trouble” they will learn the folly of their choice, but God’s judgment upon their oppressor is certain and final, as verse 17 shews. There will be shepherds in Israel who bear the same character (Ezekiel 34. 2-4), leaders who care nothing for God’s flock but only of their own ease and gain, they will share the fate of the worthless shepherd. Jeremiah also speaks of these (chapter 23).

While the flock of Israel is in view, these solemn passages should have a voice for all who have had committed to them the care of the Lord’s flock to-day. Are they acting in the spirit of the Good Shepherd or the worthless shepherd? Are they caring for the flock of God or for their own ease? Are they scattering and harrassing them, or are they searching them out and feeding and gathering them?

“If the righteous Scarcely be saved.”

“Could you please give me some light on the Scripture. ‘If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear’ (1 Peter 4. 18)?”—LAIRG.

THE word should be “If the righteous be saved *with difficulty*” (see New Trans., J.N.D.). Salvation here means being carried safely through all the perils to the soul in a world where Satan’s power is so great. There is no doubt about the righteous being saved, but it takes the power and grace of God to do it. It is not a question of being born of God, or having the assurance of eternal glory, that is all

settled in chapter 1. The grace of God of which Peter wrote had settled all that, but Peter writes of God’s government as well as His grace, and in His government He is holy, the righteous Judge, “the faithful Creator.” So verse 17 says, “The time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God.” God could not judge the ungodly if His own house were filthy and disorderly. He must be consistent in

His ways. Those who are nearest to Him must be most like Him. But this judgment of His house takes the character of discipline and chastisement now. The christians to whom Peter wrote were suffering, and unsettled by it, so he wrote to them, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you" verse 12. God was permitting and using this persecution to their practical sanctification from the world and its evil, to bring and keep them into conformity with His own character; we can see how it would have this result in them. It may have seemed better for them to be of the world, they would have had less trouble, but not so, they would then have come under God's judgment, and there is no hope for those that obey not the gospel—the ungodly and the sinner.

"All the temptations are contemplated, all the trials, all the dan-

gers through which the christian will pass in reaching the end of his career. All the power of God is requisite, directed by divine wisdom, guiding and sustaining faith, to carry the christian safely through the world, where Satan employs all his resources to make him perish. The power of God will accomplish it; but from the human point of view, the difficulties are almost insurmountable" (J.N.D.).

For us who live in lands more or less free from persecution there is still this chastisement and discipline—bereavement, sickness, stress of circumstances. All these and other things that test us are permitted of God and should be accepted from His hands as the evidences of His love, that we might be partakers of His holiness, (see Hebrews 12. 19). "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

Surely.

THERE are not many things connected with our lives on earth about which we can use the word "surely." We cannot say, "We shall *surely* wake to-morrow morning," nor even "We shall *surely* reach the end of this day."

But, thank God, there are some things with reference to which we may use the word without any reservation. We *may* say that of all the days that make up our lives, 365 every year, there is not one but what goodness and mercy shall SURELY follow us. For does not the

Word of truth itself say so (Psalm 23. 6), when it says "surely" we may with boldness do the same?

And the house of the Lord is our goal, for we are to dwell there for ever; for our Lord has said, "That where I am there ye may be also." How soon His word may be fulfilled! And again our word "surely" is used. "Surely." He says, "I come quickly" (Revelation 22). Put these two "surelys" together, they fill the future with their blessedness and should fill our hearts with confidence and hope.

"THE LORD DIRECT YOUR HEARTS INTO THE LOVE OF GOD, AND INTO THE PATIENT WAITING FOR CHRIST."

"I BELIEVE GOD"

J. T. Mawson.

Acts 27.

TWO hundred and seventy-six souls on board a doomed vessel, and every one of them hopeless and panic stricken but Paul. What was it that made him the one man in that crowd that could impart comfort to it? He could say without a tremor or doubt, "I believe God." It was this that sustained him and made him superior to the terror of the storm. He could say more than that, he spoke of God—"WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE." What dignity, what confidence that fact gave Him. Consider them "Whose I am." He was God's man, and he served his God. Does God care for those who are His? Who will question it, who can doubt it? "His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth to shew Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (1 Chronicles 16. 9).

What we need in this hour of distress is men who can stand forth calm and confident in their knowledge of God; men who are His and believe His Word. They may not be able to say as Paul said to his companions, "There shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you", but they can assure those who have believed that whether they live or die they are the Lord's; they can impart the comfort wherewith they are comforted to those in fear and distress. And they can tell to the multitude that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." They can do this with conviction for they have proved it for themselves.

We have no word to say against natural fortitude, it is an admirable quality, but more is needed, even

the knowledge of the Almighty God and confidence in Him. Those who know Him best will trust Him most, and it is written, "Thou wilt keep him in PERFECT PEACE whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusted in Thee" (Isa. 26. 3). This is true—"I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me." It has been the blessed experience of the servants of God in the storms of the past; it is being surely proved by many of them in the present distress, and it will still be proved until days of strife on earth end in universal peace under the righteous sceptre of Him whose right it is to rule.

This confidence in God will not make a man unpractical, it made Paul a benefactor in the midst of his distressed companions, it set him free from self-concern and made him compassionate for those about him, who did not know his refuge and resource. The man who can rejoice in the experimental knowledge of God will strengthen his fearful brethren by his own quiet yet exultant faith. He will be able to say to them confidently and effectively, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

May God give us men of this stamp to-day for His people's good, and for the blessing of the distressed multitude.

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth and for ever" (Ps. 125). He is nearer to them than danger and war and suffering and death.

WHY CHRIST DIED FOR US.

F. B. Hole.

Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Sunday afternoon, July 30th.

Scriptures read: 1 Peter 3. 18. Galatians 1. 3-4. 2 Corinthians 5. 15.
Titus 2. 13-14.

THERE is only one thing that I am going to take for granted, and that is that all of us here present have looked in faith to our Lord Jesus Christ as the great Saviour who has died for us. We can take up the language which we have in each of these four verses. Christ, we read in the first of the four, "hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust." We should each say, "Though I was amongst the unjust, I know that Christ, the Just One, has suffered for me and for my sins"; or in the language of the little verse of four lines, so much blessed in days past, we might say,

"In peace let me resign my breath
And Thy salvation see.
My sins deserved eternal death,
But Jesus died for me."

I do not know what you had in your mind when you trusted the Saviour. As far as I can remember I was filled with a mixture of fears and apprehension. I feared going to hell. That is old fashioned I know, but hell is terribly real. I feared it: I feared the power of my sins, and that drove me to Him. I have discovered since, that when I came to Him, He had thoughts in His heart about me. He had certain objects, and for many a long day now it has become to me a very great thought that my Saviour when He died and suffered for my sins upon the Cross, had purposes in His heart for me, since I am one of His own. Now what my heart says is this, "If the Lord Jesus Christ had certain objects in view when He died for me, and He has let me into the secret of what He desired and

purposed, then by His grace I will make those objects my objects.

Now, each of my scriptures shows us an end which was in view, when the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, and I have read them in the order in which I wish to speak of them. We begin with Christ, who gave Himself for our sins; and that I might call the base of our operations. We shall have to come back to our base. We take an excursion in that direction, or in this, but back you will find, we come to our base.

The first excursion we make in this direction, He did it *that* (we shall have the little word "that" in each of our texts) *He might bring us to God*. Now that raises at once a question I would like to ask every young believer here. In your heart, in your own inward consciousness, are you happily brought to God? Do you know and love God? Is He the One in whom you trust and confide so that, brought into nearness to Him, the distance that once was between you and God is gone for ever? There are to be found people, who do very sincerely trust the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet if they spoke very honestly what is in their hearts they would reply something like this: "Well, that is rather a question. If you had asked me if I have been brought to Jesus, yes, a thousand times, yes. Jesus is my blessed Saviour; He died for me. But God! God represents to me, awe, greatness, majesty, holiness, and I am very glad that Jesus stands between me and God." Jesus is to many the embodiment of all that is

meek and gracious and kindly and compassionate, but God of what is great, awesome, holy, infinite and, to tell you the truth, rather alarming.

Now if you have thoughts like that there is something wrong somewhere because, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Somebody may say, "Yes, but of course, He is going to do it. We are all going to heaven." And when you enter heaven do you expect to have that awesome feeling? Will you say, "Don't bring me too near. I have a feeling of fear. Bring me to Jesus, don't bring me to God." I am sure you would say at once, "I shall not feel like that." Then why feel like it now? What difference is there going to be as to what Christ has done between then and now? None whatever. No difference in the work He did when He gave Himself the Just for the unjust.

The fact of the matter is, the Lord Jesus Christ came that He might make God known to us. That is what we speak of as revelation. And then that He might work this great redeeming work on our behalf, He gave Himself for our sins. And the wonderful thing is He carried the revelation to its climax at just the point where He accomplished the redemption. The supreme manifestation of the love of God was when He died, and then it was the great redemption work was accomplished, and all that stood between us and God was removed in the power of His death and He came forth in risen life and in triumph, that He might bring us to God. Now, it does not state it here, but we know from other scriptures that He has brought us to God in a new

relationship. He has introduced us to God in a new way. We were all God's creatures but now we are brought into relationship and nearness and favour of sons. And as Christians we find this lies at the very basis of our spiritual affections and happiness. While remembering His infinite holiness, we do not fear it but glory in it. God is righteous. Yes, that does not fill me with fear but with assurance.

The gospel is not that Justice stands with a great flaming sword anxious to smite me, and Mercy intervenes in kindly grace and succeeds in mollifying the anger of Justice so that he turns the other way and ignores me, like Nelson at the battle of Copenhagen, with his blind eye. That is not the gospel. The gospel is not Mercy at the expense of Justice, you know that I feel sure. Then is the gospel this? That the great flaming sword of Justice is plunged into the heart of our Saviour, so that He can turn to Mercy and say, "My every claim is met. I want no more. Mercy, you have a free hand, do what you like. Smother those worthless sinners with kindness, cover them with kisses, if you like. I have nothing more to say." Is not that better? Yes, but it is not the full gospel. Then what is the gospel? Truly it tells us the sword of Justice has been sheathed in the death of our blessed Saviour, but also that His death and resurrection has turned, so to speak, the flaming sword of Justice into a bright and shining shield of protection for the believer. Justice is not dismissed from the whole question as though he had nothing more to say. Justice has a very big thing to say. Justice defies all comers. Justice says, "Anybody who touches this sinner has to smite through the

shield of my righteousness." Justice stands on our side just as much as Mercy. Thus in righteousness we are brought to God. We know God. We glory in God. His very glory and righteousness are our boast as much as His goodness and His mercy.

But then, God and the world are at opposite poles—absolutely apart. If we are brought to God, if our relations are established on this righteous footing, you may depend on it our links with the world are broken. The apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians emphasizes that point. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins. There we are, you see, back again at the base of our operations. Back we came to this simple fact, and He gave Himself *that*—in order that—with this object in view—“*He might deliver us from this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father—according to the will of the One to whom we have been brought. Those who study their Bibles may know the word used for “world” is the word which means “age” — “this present evil age.” The age means the whole organized course of the world and the organized course of the age at the present moment is evil. Now don’t forget that. Rejoice, and glory in the fact that you have been brought to God, but don’t forget the fact that the very Saviour who died for your sins did it with the object of breaking your links with the course of this age, just as He did it to establish your links with God.

It is just here that a great deal of spiritual weakness exists; in fact, perhaps one of the very greatest causes of spiritual weakness in the Church of God to-day lies just at

this point. I am not an electrician, but I know a thing or two about electricity. I know you have to *generate* electricity, and also that you might have the finest power station in the land and generate and generate and generate, and use up a whole mine of coal but you would not have electricity sufficient to effect anything except you had something else. You must generate and perhaps *accumulate*. They have accumulators, have they not? But those could not meet the problem. You not only generate and accumulate but *insulate*. Break down the insulation and you generate electricity for nothing. As fast as you generate it disappears, it runs away to mother earth. Generate, accumulate, but insulate. Cut off from the earth. That is not only a little parable but a parable worth remembering. Why doesn’t the thing work? There is an earth line somewhere, and so you have not got the power, and you cannot expect to have it. Thus it is in the things of God. Many a Christian says, I want to be real and sincere, and the Lord to be glorified in me. I will pray and read the Bible and go to meetings. That’s right—generate! Then what are you doing? Trying to accumulate? I have not a word to say against that. Go in for generation and accumulation but don’t forget *insulation*. That was the desire and will of our Lord when He died on the Cross. We are redeemed by His blood and brought to God, really to know Him and find our glory in Him; but at the same time we are delivered from this present evil world.

You may say, “I shall be very peculiar if I don’t go with the stream and do just as other people.” You will. Instead of being a dead fish,

you will be a live fish, that has the energy to go against the stream. And the Saviour has called you that you may be for Him and that instead of being influenced by those who are slavishly copying what others do, and taking as your motto, "Everybody is doing it" you aim to please your Lord in all things, to be set now for His holy will, and to be delivered from the course of the world through which you pass. Through Vanity Fair you have to go, as Bunyan pictured in his Allegory, but remember you don't belong to Vanity Fair through which you go. Christian and Faithful, if I remember rightly, were rather curious looking folk, not dressed exactly as the inhabitants of Vanity Fair, a year behindhand and not quite in the fashion. That is what you have to expect when you have people delivered from this present evil world. Our Saviour died that this might be achieved.

Now the third picture. I think perhaps this comes more closely home even than that of which I have been speaking. It is not now my relations as a believer either with God or the world. I read Christ died for all so that we all are dead—dead to God. He died for all, and as a result of His dying there are those that live. Who are these? Those that believe in His Name. The youngest believer has a new life, and that new life of yours is like a little stream that is going to flow in an altogether new direction. They which live should not henceforth—from the hour when they began to live—live unto themselves but *unto Him that died for them and rose again.*

Of course, you recognise that we have again come back to the base

of operations, the death of Christ. But we take another excursion now in a fresh direction; as it effects us in the secret of our individual lives. We now should not live unto ourselves. What is the significance of this little preposition "unto"? We have been brought unto God. In our unconverted days we did live unto ourselves, and in the nature of things we could not do anything else. Dominated by sin as we were, we had "self" as the great end and object of our existence. Think of it. Of course it was so! How did we judge everything in our unconverted days? Thus: Does it please me? Does it suit my taste? Do I like that? Will it a little bit advance my interests? Will it make a big man of me? But in our unconverted days did we not think of a community? Yes, *if we belonged to it.* There was our fraternity, society, or something or other, that was of interest to us. Self, self, self, was the great object of our existence. It was the little puddle into which our trickling streams ran, and unlike the Dead Sea (which we understand has all sorts of valuable things in it) there was nothing in it,—this dirty little puddle called "self."

Oh, my young friends! we have something here very glorious. Our Saviour has died for us that we may be diverted altogether from life of the old order and find a life with another Object and End altogether, living not unto ourselves but unto Him that died and rose again. There dawns upon us the vision of our living Saviour, the One who gave Himself for our sins; He lives to be the dominating factor, the new Object of the believer's life. Our lives, instead of all centring in some way upon ourselves, are to be centred on

this new Object, the One who died for us and rose again. There is no deliverance greater, I believe, for the Christian than this of which I am speaking, the deliverance of being lifted clean out of yourself, and self-seeking with its likes and dislikes, so that instead of being centred upon yourself you are centred upon another, and that Other a worthy Object, a divine Object, an eternal Object. If I might offer a prayer for you it would be that you may very early discover in the Lord Jesus Christ, not merely a Saviour, to deliver from the penalty of sin (He is all that) but an Object of infinite love, excellence, glory, worthiness, to command your life and fill your heart. Oh! how excellent to be delivered from oneself and to be centred upon Him.

You can see a parable of these things even in the ordinary affairs of life. You know what an exceedingly trying person is that man or woman occupied with themselves physically. There are numbers who have their physical troubles, and their lives seem to be spent going from one spa to another spa, drinking waters that taste like ink and those that taste like sulphur, and they are always discussing illness and symptoms and temperatures, and it is carried to such a pitch that they become almost intolerable to everybody else. It is miserable to be occupied with yourself physically. It is easy to see that. It is not perhaps so easy to see it is equally miserable to be occupied with oneself in a spiritual way, to make self the centre and sun, round which everything has to revolve. Oh the blessedness of getting away from oneself and finding one's centre in Christ.

Long ago, in the Middle Ages, the old astronomers studied the heavens and even before telescopes were introduced they discovered much, but they never could quite understand the movements of the planets. They believed that this earth was the centre of everything, that sun, moon and stars were careering round this earth of ours. But the thing did not work. There was a screw loose somewhere. One day a man of original mind rose up and dared to suggest that this earth was *not* the centre of everything. He even went so far as to say the sun was the centre and that we and other planets were revolving round the sun. And immediately that idea took root the apparent disorder disappeared and order was seen to prevail. It is like that very much with ourselves. It is wonderful how everything falls into place when we have found the Divine Centre, and discovered what we are here for.

When we get to heaven, Christ will be the Object that fills our hearts. His servants will serve Him in that day. We are being educated here for the great day that is coming when we shall serve Him perfectly and gladly and joyously. The trouble to-day, *my* trouble, is this—how that hateful thing self comes creeping in, into this address of mine as I am speaking, creeping in at all hours and everywhere except we refuse it. The old tendencies of the flesh are in us, but we are learning this lesson. The One who died purposed to captivate our hearts and divert us from the old self-centred life, that we might find our Centre in our Lord Himself. What a deliverance it is when the beginnings of this dawn upon us!

Now there is just that practical

verse in Titus, and here I have to close. Our Saviour Jesus Christ has given Himself for us. Mark, that is the basis of operations. Here we are back again at the great fact of His death on our behalf. But He gave Himself for us "that", — in order that, with this purpose in view. What purpose? *That He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to Himself.* You see, we need very much purification—our hearts, our thoughts, our motives. The flesh is flesh and still within us, and we who have flesh in us and are redeemed and indwelt by the Spirit of God, are to be purified unto Himself a peculiar people, a people for His own special possession, and the hallmark of our being such a people is that we are "zealous of good works."

I think I need hardly say that if you can find for me a few earnest Christian people really zealous of good works they will be a very peculiar people. You do not pick such up like blackberries in autumn. Zealous? Oh yes, you can find people zealous. But, zealous of *good works*; that is not so common. A peculiar people! That word, in our ordinary use of it to-day, means "odd"; but it does not here signify that. The primary meaning is, a people for His own special possession. But then in a secondary sense we shall certainly be out of the ordinary. There are a lot of people very zealous for pleasure. Nothing peculiar there! Zealous for money, we find a lot of folk like that. There are a number of things we could mention easily and find people

zealous of these things—nothing special, nothing out of the ordinary. But for us, we have been redeemed, been brought to God, delivered from this present evil age, and diverted from the old self-centred life to find our new life centred in Him, to be for His special possession marked by zeal for good works. A very searching word. "Zeal", you know, has in it the idea of heat. The complaint of our Lord to that last church in Revelation 3 is, "Thou art neither cold nor hot." Neither for nor against. No warmth. We are to have zeal of good works. May that kind of zeal be greatly promoted. Our Saviour died that it might be so.

Shall we pray somewhat after this fashion, "Lord Jesus, if these were the objects Thou hadst in view, the desires of Thy heart for those who should be redeemed by Thy blood, then Lord I would like to make them my object. Before I get to heaven I would like to fulfil what Thou didst desire for me." You may depend upon it, when heaven is reached you will find people brought to God, delivered from the world, people who have found their centre in Christ for ever, and are zealous in His holy service. But now, in this adverse world, while we are in training, while we are waiting for our Lord, I exhort you my dear young friends, to take these things to your heart and to your knees. Meditate and pray over them. Make these things your object and in your life, whether long or short, God will be glorified, and you will be a blessing to others.

The more you nourish your soul by feeding on the Word of God the more likely He is to use you.

THOU SHALT BE SAVED.

J. T. Mawson.

Gospel Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Sunday evening, July 30th.

Scripture read: Romans 10. 1-13.

IT may sound strange to some of you but the fact is there are a lot of people in this city who are religious, very religious, and yet not saved. In spite of their religion they are unforgiven sinners, they do not know God and are on the broad road that leads to destruction. If you challenge my statement I answer, This tenth chapter of Romans is my authority for it. Paul, the great apostle, was not the sort of man to waste his time praying for something that had already happened, and here he tells us that he was praying for Israel, that they might be saved. Then they were not saved, yet they were religious, they were zealous, they were doing their best. "They have a zeal for God," said the apostle, "but not according to knowledge," and it should be plain to everybody that the greater a man's zeal the worse it is for him if he is wrong. The more zealous a man is on the wrong road the further he is carried from the right destination. A false religion is the greatest curse a man can suffer from, for he is blinded to the truth, he is deceived, he thinks he is right when he is wrong, his ignorant zeal is his undoing.

These people were doing their best, they were going about to establish their own righteousness. Forms and ceremonies were important in their estimation, they would not miss the Temple services; they would shew both man and God, and the devil too if he cared to take notice, that they were all that they ought to be, and they did not know that the devil was deceiving them

all the while. And in going about to establish their own righteousness they did not submit to God and His righteousness. They did not submit! What is a boy who will not submit to his parents? He is disobedient. What is a man who will not submit to the government? He is a rebel. But how shall we label the man who refuses to submit to God? By what name shall we call him? Can you find a name sufficiently strong for him in your language? and having found the name who amongst you does it describe?

Do you see what this means? Take that self-righteous lady. In the third chapter of this Epistle God says, "There is none righteous, no, not one", and she says, perhaps not with her words, but certainly by her ways, I'll shew God that when that statement was made He overlooked me. God says, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one", and she says, If that's the rule I will shew that I am an exception to it. She is making God a liar. She does not believe the word of God and refuses to submit to it.

I remember a good story. There was a man named Joe Whitbread, he was a self-righteous man, and boasted in his goodness. He was taken ill and was visited by a wise christian. It would have been useless to tell him that he was a sinful man, it would only have provoked an argument. The visitor adopted another plan; he turned to Romans 3 and read, "It is written, there is none righteous, no, not one (*except Joe Whitbread*); there is none that

understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God (*except Joe Whitbread*). They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (*except Joe Whitbread*). That was enough, the word of God pierced the conscience of the self-righteous sinner, and he confessed that what was true of all was true of him. And there ended his self-deception.

The question arises, why was the law given, if we cannot gain righteousness by it? The answer to that question is here. "We know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God*" (chapter 3. 19). That was good advice that a christian woman, of whom our dear friend Ed. White used to tell us, who gave to her loquacious husband, who was always talking of his goodness and wondering why he could not get the peace that she had. Said she, "Do you not know that it's not manners for two to talk at once, hold your voice man and listen to God." It was good advice, for faith does not come by talking, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Then shut your guilty mouth, ye self-righteous sinners; bow your heads in repentance and submission to God, and by so doing acknowledge the truth, that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," Make the general statement particular and personal, and own like the prodigal, "*I have sinned.*" Then say no more but hear what God will say to you.

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." What a blessed and most

satisfying statement is that, it answers the deepest questions of the heart and the most poignant need of the soul. Since you are a sinner, you need forgiveness. Where will you find it? Not in the law, but in Christ. If you are to be at peace with God you need righteousness. Where will you find it? Not in the law but in Christ. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. The law pointed with a thousand fingers to Christ; its many voices proclaimed, Christ is coming. The ordinances, the sacrifices, the ritual of Tabernacle and Temple all spoke of Him; they were the shadows of the coming Saviour, and faith in those distant days perceived their meaning and rejoiced in anticipation of His day. Now He has come, and the shadows have served their purpose and disappeared, Christ has come, He is the hope of weary sinful men. O ye who are burdened with guilt and defiled by sin, to you He says, "Come unto Me." Christ is your hope, Christ and His blood!

"It is not your tears of repentance or
prayers,
But His blood that atones for the soul."

Of course if a man did the deeds of the law without any failure he would live by it; but can you find such a man in your city? "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Thus God's word declares and warns; and again, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." You are not a murderer but have you spoken evil of your neighbour, or hated another? You are not an adulterer but have you coveted your neighbour's goods? You are not a thief, and yet have you not robbed God of the reverence and worship and

love that is His righteous due? You admit it; your conscience condemns you; you are guilty, "guilty before God." What is it you need? Salvation. And where is that to be found? In Christ: only in Christ. He is the God-provided Saviour, for such sinners as we are.

Hear what faith says, "Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above)" What does that mean? It means that if we are to be saved the Saviour must come from heaven. Then must we send a delegation to heaven to beseech a Saviour to come from thence? No. Why? Because Christ has already come. He came before we sought Him, and faith lays hold of that great fact and rejoices. The Saviour has come. The Father sent Him. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Faith does not say who will bring Him down, it believes that He has come down even to the cross. That is the first of the great gospel facts.

And it does not say, "Who shall descend into the deep?" (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead). Why does it not say that? Because it knows that He has come up. "God hath raised Him from the dead." These are the two great gospel facts. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures and was buried, and was raised again from the dead, according to the Scriptures." He came down from heaven: that proves His willingness to save. He died and rose again from the dead, that proves His power to save. He is willing, He is able.

If we are to be saved our Saviour must be both willing and able. It is not enough that He is willing. If I owed £1,000 and was terribly distressed about it, and you came to me and said, Tom Jones says you **must not worry** about that debt, he will see to it, I would answer, What's the use of talking to me about Tom Jones, don't you know that I owe ten hundred pounds and Tom Jones is not worth ten shillings; he may be willing but he is not able to help me. Now Jesus, our Lord is willing to save. We cannot question that. He would not have come down from the eternal throne to the cross if He had not **been willing**, but is He able? Yes, thank God, He is able. How do we know? He has come up from among the dead; He has broken the power of death; He has triumphed over the grave, and best of all His resurrection is the proof that His work is indeed a finished work; the price He paid for our salvation is enough; the just claims of the throne of God have been met, and God has shewn His infinite satisfaction in what He has done by raising Him from the dead. The devil is silenced and all who believe are saved.

And what now? "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, **THOU SHALT BE SAVED.**" God hath decreed that every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, either now or hereafter, to do it now means salvation, to be compelled by power to do it hereafter means damnation. To believe in your heart that God hath raised Him from the dead means that you have a personal interest in this matter; the salvation of your soul from eternal hell depends upon it; for if

Christ is not raised there is no salvation, no Saviour for men, and all faith is vain. You must be sure as to this. How can you be sure? God declares it in the gospel. God says it, you believe it. What then? You cannot withhold your allegiance from Christ; you surrender to Him; you acknowledge His rights over you, you confess Him as your Lord. The love that brought Him down from heaven to suffer, the just One for you the unjust, claims you as its own, and you yield yourself to that claim.

"Just as I am, Thy love I own
Has broken every barrier down,
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come."

I can give you no better illustration than that of a young man in Bristol. On my way to the gospel meeting one week night a christian man overtook me and said, "I wish you would speak to my son, he is a silent lad at the best of times but since Sunday we have not heard a word out of His mouth and we believe he is anxious to be saved; he is

coming to the meeting to-night, and I will introduce him to you." After the preaching I was duly introduced to a young fellow of twenty-three. We sat together and I talked to him and asked him many questions, but I got no answers; for thirty-five minutes I talked, but he said nothing. He certainly seemed to be all his father said he was. I got tired and rose to go, he got up at the same time and I thought he was as tired as I was. But it was not that. He stood erect and raised his right hand, and said, "I own Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour." I was thrilled by that confession; I believe heaven was thrilled by it. It was well done, it was nobly done. The young man who had kept silent so long had reached the time when it was time to speak. If you have been silent before God, conscious of your sinfulness and guilt, look up, behold the Saviour who died for the ungodly and now raised from the dead, and open your mouth and confess Him as your Lord and THOU SHALT BE SAVED.

The Father.

God desires and claims our *immediate confidence* in Him. We honour Him when we trust in Him without the aid of any creature or circumstance. Christ is the way, for no man cometh unto the Father except by Him, but it is to the Father we come. He suffered to bring us to God, revealed as Father. What confidence of heart that name should inspire within us! Such a name is fitted to give abiding calmness and strength and liberty to the soul. It is fitted to give a dwelling place, a home to the heart.

It is not God merely, but the Father, who the Lord tells us, numbers the very hairs of our heads, and if in any of the details of human life we lose the sense of the Father's love and care it is because something has come in between our souls and Him and broken our communion with Him.

Faith takes in what God says, because it looks not at the thing to be done, but at the one who can do it, so that be the thing great or small it is the same to faith.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

J. J. Anning.

Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Monday evening, July 31st.

Scriptures read: 2 Timothy 3. 15-17. 2 Peter 1. 20-21. Psalm 19. 1-14.
Psalm 119. 1-16.

I WANT to speak to you about the Holy Scriptures, the Bible. We are living in a day when I think (I may be wrong) the political situation has been brought about to a very large extent by men in Europe denying the Holy Scriptures. My mind goes back to the days when we had the Higher Criticism becoming the rage in Germany. What has been the result? To-day Germany as a State has no use for the Bible, it has no use for the Word of God. What of Russia? We know of their anti-God campaign, and when God's word is cast off men lose all sense of right. The importation of Bibles into Russia is forbidden, and yet there are men there who have learned the Bible off by heart to a very great extent, so that they may repeat them to those who are thirsting for God's words. Those who have copies of the Bible split them up into portions and then pass them round, so that there should be as wide a circulation as possible of the living Word of God. But how is it in this country? Men look upon the Bible as one of the finest books that was ever written. They say that for choice of language it has not an equal. Its prose and poetry delight their ear. But I was at a public meeting this year when a professor in the University of London made this statement. "The Bible is not the Word of God." He repeated it three times and then I think he sensed the feeling of antipathy that ran through the big audience. People were shuffling, some got up and walked out. He then added, "but the Bible contains the Word

of God." I am speaking to young Christians to-night. The Bible from cover to cover is the living Word of God. The central theme of every book of the Bible is Christ. You cannot deny it, in fact you are proud and glad to own it.

Well then, what about the Bible in your life and mine? I read to you purposely from the Epistle to Timothy because there is given us the uses, so to speak, of the Holy Scriptures. We cannot live without the Holy Scriptures. They have made us wise unto salvation and thoroughly furnish us unto every good work. The Lord Jesus, when He was tempted by Satan, said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Word of God is vital to our Christian life and the question is how we are valuing the Holy Scriptures? I have taken the liberty of making extracts from the writings of two departed servants of the Lord. One was Mr. J. A. Trench and the other was Mr. J. N. Darby. I read these extracts because I want you to understand that men like that professor of theology whom I have quoted to you, can never have been born again; the light has never entered into their souls, that their consciences have never been reached, and therefore the Word of God is to them as the words of the Lord Jesus were to the majority of men when He was here on earth—the word of man. Mr. Trench wrote:— "The Word of God is the testimony of God from the first, with ever in-

creasing fulness in the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. By Christ when on earth, then by the Apostles as empowered for it by the Spirit and now recorded for us in the Scriptures as completed — the complete revelation of God in them.”

The extract from Mr. J. N. Darby is on different lines. He says here, “The language of Scripture is figurative. It uses physical facts and terms to express moral ideas; but the consequence is, we must have the moral ideas themselves to understand the Word. All language is figurative when any moral subject is spoken of. Man cannot speak of divine things truly because he does not know them, his language cannot in itself be formed directly on them save in falsehood. When God speaks of them — and this is revelation — He does for our sakes condescend to use human language, but He fills it with that which is divine. That God can communicate His thoughts to men, to sinful, corrupt, narrow minded men and will be understood according to the limit of human expressions is an absurdity on the face of it.” Do you agree with this? I do. The natural man cannot comprehend the things of God. I can give you an example that you know very well. The woman at the well of Sychar. It was God Who was speaking to her. Did she understand His words? Not at all. It was all material to her. She saw nothing spiritual in His words until her conscience was reached, and then the light dawned. I trust I am speaking to those who have realised that they are sinners and have found the Saviour and the light has entered into their souls so that they can take up this book and say, This is the Word of God.

The Bible is really a chart for our voyage through life. It is much more than that. I want you to consider the Bible to be a chart that a navigator can use on a voyage through unknown seas, and get safely to the haven he wants to reach. There is no doubt about that. All your difficulties can be met here, all plans can be made for you here. God has made absolute provision in this chart for our getting home to glory. Well I know that there are dangers on the way, you would not need the chart if there were not; but my mind goes back for a moment to an open-air meeting in Pudsey, in Yorkshire, perhaps thirty years ago. The Unitarians were busy in those days and had a travelling van that visited Pudsey. They had a chairman and a lecturer and a spare chair on the platform for anybody who would respond to the invitation to come up and ask a question. The lecture was given, the chairman made the invitation, and a man got up on to that platform, sat down on the chair, but remained silent. After a bit he took an orange out of his pocket and began to suck it. The chairman looked at the lecturer and the lecturer looked at the chairman and the people exchanged remarks. He went on sucking his orange. They waited a while and then said, What is your question, what have you got up here for? He went on sucking. Then after a pause he said, “Mister, is this a sweet orange?” The chairman said, “You fool, how can I tell you. I have never tasted it.” He said, “No, and thou hast never tasted what thou hast been talking about.” The people around, they are logical people in Yorkshire, knew when a man had got the best of the argument and they were affected by his testimony. That is only an aside.

I thought I would pass it on because it is most true of those people who talk glibly about things that they know nothing about. And you are just starting life, you are just going out into the world, many of you, and you are going to come across these clever people who tell you this that and the other of the legends of the Bible and its myths and fables. My friends, taste it for yourself and then you will be ready for all the arguments that can come against you. But more than that, you will be able to testify to what God has done for you. You have tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

Life for a Christian is not all smooth, as you have probably found out already. Some of us here are getting on in years, well, we often feel we have made a mess of our lives, and but for the abounding grace of God, we know not where we should have been, but there is a little verse which describes our experience of the Lord, if I can quote it rightly to you:—

“To those who fall how kind Thou art,
How good to those who seek.
But what to those who find? Ah! this
Nor tongue, nor pen can shew
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know.

I must go back to those two psalms that I read to you because in both of them we get the necessity for and the value of the Word of God. In the 19th Psalm you will notice it is divided into two parts. The first part gives us God’s voice in creation so that, as we get in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, man is without excuse. God has spoken by His handiwork. But the second part is really what I want to talk about to you. It says, The law of the Lord is perfect. In verses 7 and 8 you get a gradation, so it seems to me. First conversion, then the making wise and finally the

happiness and rejoicing of the heart with the enlightening of the eyes. That is what God’s word does for us and I take it I can address you as coming under its power.

A public meeting is scarcely the place to talk about errors and secret sins, but this is God’s word, God’s warning. I go along a road to Eastbourne every week where there is a level crossing with a sign prominently stating in big bold letters, “Warning.” And underneath that single word is the injunction, “Stop. Look. Listen.” It seems as if there is a gradation here too.

The errors, the secret sins, the secret faults and then the presumptuous sins. If you care to turn at your leisure to Numbers 15 you will find how serious was the presumptuous sin. The sin that was committed against God in absolute arrogance and defiance. There was no remedy for that sin. But I can tell you to-night, if you go down on your knees before God in the name of the Lord Jesus that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, is still efficacious to cleanse us from all sin. It is upon that sure basis that God forgives the sinner when he comes to Him, and God forgives His erring child. The last verse says, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” The Psalmist seems to long to be in the sunshine of the love of God. He wants all the clouds removed. He wants that communion which means rejoicing.

When we get to the 119th Psalm we get again the question of cleansing. The 119th is a wonderful psalm. If you take the first two verses I think you get in germ the whole of it. “Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they

that keep His testimonies and that seek Him with the whole heart." Again I will go off at a tangent and ask you this time to put your eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ. There are only a few "Blessed" psalms. But does not the one before us remind you of the first psalm? "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly." Cannot we see the pathway of our blessed Saviour in the first three verses. He was the undefiled One. He was the One that walked in the law of the Lord and that kept His testimonies. I do not want to take away anything from the message in this psalm for you and for me. It was written for us, but if we have the chart that is going to take us safely to glory we also have a captain Who has gone right through to the very end by that same chart. He has marked out the path for us and that path that He has marked out was by the will of God so hidden in His heart. His delight was to do the will of God. As we think of ourselves and look within and see our failures, our errors, our secret faults and so on, it is a great relief to look to Him, the great Captain of our salvation, the absolutely perfect One.

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way that walk in the law of the Lord." We have been left in the world to follow in the footsteps of the One Who has gone before, and to bear witness to others of His saving grace; He was the friend of publicans and sinners, He sought them out to bless them. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity that walk in His ways. What purity of life, what security there is in His ways! I ask you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to walk in His ways. I do not ask you to look on the speaker,

I ask you to look on Christ. He asks us to walk in His ways, to keep His word, to love His name.

Now, the second part of the psalm seems to answer to the errors and secret faults dwelt on in the 19th psalm. The question is asked and the answer is given: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way. By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." There is no need for me to amplify or add to words like that. They speak for themselves, and may the Holy Spirit fix them in your hearts to-night. May I repeat them? "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." I am not a father confessor, I am not a thought reader, but there may be one here to-night who is a backslider. God is speaking to you. How kind is He to those who fall. Yes, that is true, His arms are open widely to receive the returning one. To cover him with kisses. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

The only further point is, He says, "With My whole heart have I sought thee." Under the law there was the demand to keep God's precepts, His commandments and His statutes, but here is a man who says that with his whole heart he had done it. "Oh let me not wander from Thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." You see when a man gets into the presence of God like this he takes a humble place. He gets right down where he should be, on his knees. Now, as I close I would read the last verse of the psalm. I wonder whether it can be the language of someone here. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek Thy servant for I do not forget Thy commandments."

HABAKKUK. THE PROPHET OF FAITH.

R. McCallum.

Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Monday evening, July 31st.

OF Habakkuk himself nothing is known from the Scriptures except that we may gather from his book of three chapters that he was contemporary with Jeremiah.

Conditions in Judah could scarcely have been worse. Within violence was rampant, iniquity abounded, judgment was perverted, and strife and contention prevailed, and the prophet complains that God is doing nothing.

“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto Thee of violence and Thou wilt not save!” Yet in his complaint there is an underlying faith, in spite of the present doubt and protest, for does he not ask, “How long?” and in his perplexity he turns to the only One who could shed light on his bewilderment for he expressed the agony of his doubt to God.

The experience of the prophet is not unique. Every age and every generation of believers, not least our own, has had its perplexing circumstances when wrong has prevailed and righteousness has suffered. Among the people of God, strife and contention have been rife, right judgments have been suppressed. Evil men have encompassed the righteous, and in spite of the cries of the godly, God in His heaven has been silent. This mystery of the silence of God is old but not obsolete; persistent to-day but not new: not merely the public taunt of the unbelieving, but the secret burden of the elect.

In the days of pagan Rome when men were thrown to the lions for their faith in Christ, how many a martyr must have recalled God's sovereign power in stopping the mouths of lions for Daniel. What God had done for Daniel He could do for them. They faced their doom triumphing in trust and with songs of faith upon their lips, and they proclaimed their confidence in His power to save until their dying groans silenced their expression of faith. And God did not intervene! Recalling the history of the Hebrew youths who faced the burning fiery furnace confident that their God was able to deliver, and who experienced a great deliverance, men went to the stake, asserting the power of their God to do the same for them, until the smoke choked their confident assertions and the cruel flames consumed their flesh. But the heavens were as brass! And so through the Christian centuries, amid the welter of wrong and in spite of the cries of the just, the Heavens have been silent, and to-day we renew the plaintive cry of Habakkuk, “How long shall I cry and Thou wilt not hear?”

To understand this book aright we must notice that it is in the form of a dialogue. In vv. 1-4 of chap. 1 the prophet speaks: in vv. 5-11 Jehovah answers: while in the remainder of the chapter the prophet speaks again. And God's reply is that He is working. Beyond the mystery of His silence is the enigma of His ways. “Behold ye among the heathen and regard and wonder marvellously,” saith Jehovah, “for

I work a work in your days which ye will not believe, though it be told you." God explains how He is about to raise up the Chaldeans as instruments of judgment against Judah. That bitter and hasty nation, fondly imagining itself to be achieving its own destiny was as a matter of fact the rod of Jehovah for the correction of His wayward people. And now the prophet who had formerly reproved God for doing nothing exclaims in effect, "O God this is worse than ever." His new difficulty proceeds from his lofty conception of God. How can God, "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" use that which is more sinful to correct that which is less evil, and how can His judgments proceed through those who are altogether outside of covenant relationship, and wholly submerged in an idolatry in which their successes will but confirm them.

Conscious that his remonstrances have merited divine reproof the prophet is now impressed by the sense that reasoning and argument must give way to patient waiting upon God. Wise is the man who, like Habakkuk of old, stands upon the watch-tower "to see what He will say unto me." God's ultimate answer will be a demonstration to sight, not an argument to reach the reason; but His immediate answer is an appeal to Faith. The Lord answered and said, "Write the vision and make it plain upon tablets that he may run that readeth it." Notice that the object in making the message plain is not that the runner may read but that he who reads may run. What is the message? Clearly this, "The just shall live by his faith." The unrighteous shall perish and come to nought in spite of present apparent

success, but "the just shall live by his faith."

Such a runner was the beloved apostle Paul. Three times in his epistles does he emphasise the message of the vision given to Habakkuk. In Romans 1. 17 the emphasis is on the *just*. The *justified one shall live by faith*. The initial act of faith brings justification and life. In Galatians, where the apostle is correcting the erroneous teaching that while this initial act of faith brings life and blessing the life of the believer is regulated by law, the apostle, using the same text, emphasises the necessity for living by faith. "The just *shall live by faith*." Faith is not only the initial *act*, it is the constant *attitude* of the believer. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord (surely, by faith), so walk ye in Him" (again, by faith). In Hebrews 10, the emphasis is on *faith*. By faith we walk; by faith we live. This was the truth recovered from obscurity by Martin Luther: it is a truth requiring to be fearlessly proclaimed to-day so that those who read may run with the message.

Our faith implies a great confidence in the vision given to the prophet, a vision given not for his day but for a time appointed. "For the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not tarry." It is most interesting to observe that in the quotation already referred to in Hebrews 10, taken from this book, in v. 37, the impersonal pronouns of this passage all become personal. "For yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." The fulfilment of the vision awaits the

personal return of our blessed Lord. The adjustment of the world's wrongs tarries for the coming of Israel's Messiah. But "though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry (beyond the appointed time)." This indeed is our Blessed Hope — the Lord Himself shall come and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (ch. 2, v. 14).

We are not merely trusting that some unexpected surprise will await our patience or our labours, we are resting upon Divine assurances and certainties, and though these tarry, they will surely be fulfilled. Such is the Divine promise. At the end of school session, in attempting to encourage those who had worked and who had failed to achieve that for which they had hoped, I recounted the story of the two frogs. One fine summer evening, so the story goes, two small frogs fell into a jar of cream. Both started to kick out for dear life but their efforts apparently achieved nothing. Perceiving which "little pessimist" complained that their labours were merely a fruitless waste of time. They must both die. They might as well drown now as after complete exhaustion at the end of hopeless efforts. And so he concluded the struggle, submerged and succumbed. But "little optimist" bravely persevered, hoping against hope, and in the morning to his intense surprise found his industry rewarded. The unexpected had happened and he found himself perched on the top of a pat of butter.

Well, dear brethren, the story is, I judge, good enough as an incentive for school children. I would

even present it with whatever comfort it bears to our perplexed and persevering politicians. But it is not the kind of encouragement that we as Christians receive from the Scriptures. Our Hope, intelligent and assured, may tarry—must tarry until the time appointed—but it will be fulfilled. When Michael Faraday, greatest of electricians, and yet simple and humble believer in Christ, lay on his death-bed, a favoured journalist was permitted an interview. The question to which he desired an answer from this famous scientist of original thought and fertile imagination was, "What are your speculations now?" To which Faraday answered with dignified confidence, "Speculations, I have none. I am resting on Divine Certainties. For 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."

Yes, thank God, "the soul of the wicked which is lifted up and is not upright in him" shall yet be brought low. Success, or apparent success, established by covetousness in blood and iniquity and based upon moral corruption and idolatry, will as the prophet foresaw and foretold, be visited by Divine retribution. God has not abandoned His judgment. "The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Chapter 3 is a prayer that is "mostly praise." It is a prayer upon Shigionath, which I am told simply means "loud cries." In Psalm 7, the only other place in which the term is used, the loud cries are those of agony, here they are the cries of exultation.

The prophet reviews the past

history of the nation and finds as the predominating lesson the faithfulness and the power of God. God is not limited: His supplies reach down from sources of which we are entirely ignorant: yea, if all should be destroyed He is able to re-create. In this knowledge his joy becomes exuberant, even while he trembles at the day of trouble coming upon the nations. It has been well said, "Our joy is always in proportion to our knowledge of Him"; and so the prophet becomes positively hilarious with gladness as he proclaims, "I will joy in the God of my salvation." His ecstasy is not because of circumstances but in spite of them. He visualises the most desolate of conditions: the prospect depicted could not be more depressing. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock

shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls." Yet says this prophet of faith, "I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the Lord of my salvation." May the Lord give to us in these days of strain and shock an equally buoyant confidence, so that our feet may be made like "hind's feet." Sure and unerring as we walk in difficult paths, overcoming by faith.

The last sentence is the dedication to the chief Singer. For us this is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who as the risen One leads the praises in the midst of His assembly. May our hearts be so attuned to praise that in adoring worship we shall find ourselves contributing to the harmony of that great orchestral company that recognises Him not merely as the Director of our Praises but as the Object of our adoration!

"Proving what is acceptable to the Lord." Eph. 5. 10

Here is a word that should appeal to the heart, for it is as the affections are drawn out to the Lord that there will be an earnest desire to prove what is agreeable to Him. The opportunities every day will be many and chiefly in little things. To prove is to test things, to enquire will this be agreeable to the Lord or will it just suit my fleshly desires? Is there anything in your daily path about which you can hold communion with the Lord? If so persevere in that, let no influence deter you from it. The Lord's presence with you and His approval and sympathy will be wonderful compensation for any sacrifice it may impose.

Again, is there anything in your life that you allow or indulge in that you know is not acceptable to the Lord? If so, have done with it, judge it to be unworthy of one who has been called to walk with the Lord. Refuse it, for to go on with it means the loss of His approval, and the sense of His presence and favour. And can anything compensate for that? He died for us not to deliver us from eternal judgment only, but that He might have our company, and nothing less will satisfy His love. To have Christ at home with me on earth, is only surpassed by the blessed hope of being at home with Him in heaven.

“THERE IS A PATH.”

J. A. Sinclair.

Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Wednesday evening, August 2nd.

Scriptures read: Jeremiah 10. 23. Proverbs 16. 25. Job 28. 7-15; 20-28.
Psalm 36. 8. 46. 4.

THE three points on which I want to speak and which I hope to use as three pegs on which to hang a few simple and practical remarks for my younger friends are, first of all, that word in Proverbs, “There is a way.” That is a warning—it is a way to avoid, the way of walking by sight. Then in the book of Job, “There is a path”—obviously the path of faith, a path which has not been detected by the very keenest eye in nature, the vulture’s eye, nor trodden by the most vigorous specimens of nature, the lion’s whelps. That is the path of faith. Thirdly, in Psalm 46 “There is a river”—a source of constant refreshment and satisfaction for the Christian who puts God first in his life, even though he does walk through a desert world.

I might commence by making a very commonplace remark, something even our children are familiar with. Perhaps you will identify it if I tell you a little incident that happened in my own home a few weeks ago. Coming home rather late, on going upstairs the voice of my small daughter bade me come in and say good-night. The bedroom was dark and, as I made my way across the carpet, I stumbled over a chair or toy, or something like that. I heard a small voice say, “Be careful, father, these are dark and difficult days.” Well, I was compelled to admit there was much truth in it in more ways than one.

To come to the serious point where I want to start, none of us will

deny that we are living in very very difficult days. We are living in the shadow of great world events. The storm clouds have gathered over Europe and there are sinister forces at work that this world has never seen before. I should not be surprised if many of you, like very many people in this land, are perplexed, anxious and troubled, and do not know just what to do. Now all these things are very disturbing, but I do not want to occupy you with them, but with that which will carry you through them.

What I am concerned with is to endeavour to help my younger brethren who are confronted with these difficulties, anxieties and problems which we who are older do not have to face. And yet in one way these problems are the same as they have been since the days of the Caesars. The problem of how you can be a Christian in the world that has crucified your Saviour and still rejects Him, and how you can steer a straight course through it according to the will of God.

Anyone who comes in contact with young people will be aware of the sort of questions that are exercising their minds at the present time. I will give you a typical one. One is sometimes asked, “How can I be sure that God has a plan for all our lives, and mine in particular? How may I know that I am in the right path to work out His plan for me?” That is not an unimportant question. Another question arising out of that, whether one should take

up whole time service for the Lord at home or abroad, or go into business and earn one's living? How can you know which is the right thing to do in that? Then I have had questions put to me about National Service. What about conscientious objectors? Then again a very common question that comes to us from scores of people is, which is the right body to belong to? Which is the right company of christians to be with? Looking round at all the sections, parties, societies and activities, good and bad, in the Christian church to-day, which is the right one? I want to say a word to you young people whose parents are Christians. You ought to thank God every day of your lives for the privilege of being reared in a household or family where the Word of God is owned, and taken to places where the Word of God is faithfully preached. I am very thankful, although I was not brought up in what you call "the meeting", that before I got out of my teens I was brought in contact with those who met together as brethren and who honour the Word of God. Don't despise those who honour the Word of God, nor the place in which that Word has put them. Sometimes you don't value it as much as those who have been brought into it later. These are all very difficult and important questions, but, broadly speaking, it comes to this, there is a way for you and me to tread in a world like this where we can be sure we have the Lord's approval and are fulfilling His holy will.

People say you must just do the best you can. Duncan Matheson, the Scotch evangelist who was greatly used of God, and hundreds were converted through him, left his converts to pass on to other places.

Someone said to him, "Why don't you wait and get your converts together, build them into a company and teach them the truths of the Church of God?" He answered, "I have not time. I have to get on and preach in the regions beyond, and anyhow they will all 'waddle' home to heaven somehow." Well, he was an evangelist and had to do his own work, but the Lord has not left you and me to "waddle" home to heaven anyhow. There is a way for us to tread, a pathway pleasing to Him, and I believe I can say after much exercise and a good deal of experience of taking the wrong way, you can be just as sure that you are in the path that God would have you in as you are sure of your soul's salvation. There are certain conditions attached to it, but you can be as sure and certain and as much at peace in your mind that you are in the path of God's pleasure, as you can be that you are going to be with Jesus for ever bye and bye.

Now the first verse I read is a very important one, because it spells a warning. Jeremiah lived in a very difficult day. There was corruption and bribery, the prophets prophesied falsely and the priests bore rule by their means, and there was Jeremiah faithful to God in a very difficult position. You know what happened to him eventually — he was persecuted and cast in a pit. He might have said, I shall have to plan, and think, and walk very carefully. But instead of walking by sight he lifted his heart to God and said what would be a very good thing for you and me to say at the beginning of our Christian course. He said, "I know that the way of a man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

That is the beginning of all wisdom. To distrust self and to distrust men, to cease from man and to trust in the living God. If you arrive at that just conclusion you won't think yourself clever enough to steer a course through all these difficulties, and you will eventually arrive at this, you must walk by faith, you must walk in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

No one is of sufficient ability, sufficient acuteness of mind, sufficient wisdom to mark out a path for his feet in a world like this. I couple with that the verse in Proverbs where we are warned that there is a way that *seemeth* right, and of the very serious consequence of taking that way. "The end thereof is the ways of death."

Now I just take one illustration from the Scriptures to show you the importance at the very commencement of your Christian life of taking the path of faith in the living God and distrusting your own heart. You remember the interesting story of the call of Abram and of the time when Lot and Abram had to part. That was not just a division, it was a sensible arrangement. They both had large flocks and many servants and Abram said, in effect, "Don't let there be any unpleasantness between us. If you go that way I will go this way, and if you go this way I will go that way." Lot did not look up to the Lord and say, "I know the way of a man is not in himself and I cannot direct my steps. O Lord, guide me." What he did was this; he looked this way and that, and saw a well watered plain, he saw something that looked right and very attractive. "That is the way for me," he said, "I will go that way, Abram." Abram went

the other way. What really happened with Lot was he chose the way that *seemed* right, but you know what his history was, it got darker and darker, until the end won't bear thinking about. He made the mistake at the very beginning. I mention that because it is at the beginning that a very little deflection will have far reaching consequences, and you want to be right, to begin right, to continue right and to finish right.

Have you been puzzled and troubled and anxious? You want to serve the Lord, and men need your service, but you have not definitely committed yourself or your pathway to Him. It is astonishing what reserves we have, how we fear to trust Him wholly, but the path of faith means to commit your way wholly to Him, and I do urge you to distrust yourself and recognise that you cannot by your own wisdom discern the path which will carry you through all the difficulties, through all the shoals and pitfalls, to the glory of God and the pleasure of the Lord Jesus Christ. But He can lead you in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake, and His will for you means your greatest blessing.

A few days ago I was talking to an old Jew. He likes his Bible and he said one thing that rather struck me. He said, "You know, there is a very important verse in the Bible that has always been a great help to me." I said, "Which is that?" He said, "I don't know the exact chapter or verse, but this is what it says, "Don't try to be too clever." I assured him that my Bible does not give that rendering and I think I have almost every translation in my house. "Well," he said, "it says something like that." I said, "Is it

this, Be not wise in your own conceits"? He said, "That is very like it." The Bible does say that. Don't trust your own wisdom. He that trusteth his own heart is a fool. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is the ways of death.

Now I come to Job 20, where we get the pathway of faith spoken of as something that was hidden, but God has brought it to light, and I connect it in my mind with this beautiful word in Proverbs, "Wisdom's ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace." Here is a way beyond nature, something that the strongest forces of nature can never detect nor walk in. God has revealed it and it is the true and only pathway for us through the world to His glory.

Now I want to tell you that there is one Person and one Person only Who has trodden the whole of that pathway and experienced every difficulty on that road. That Person is your Saviour. He came into this world, took upon Him the form of a servant, and trod the whole pathway of faith. He began and He completed it. He is the Author and Finisher of faith. Every saint of God treads a little bit. Does not Hebrews 11 tell us of a great many people who trod stretches of the road? but the Lord Jesus Christ has trodden the whole road. He has passed through this world in complete dependence upon God and in willing and absolute obedience to God's word. He was separate from every evil thing, He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and walked through the world for the glory of God, even unto death. Every phase of earthly life and suffering and temptation has been trodden by the

Lord Jesus Christ—that is the pathway of faith. You and I could not tread that path until He had been here to tread it first, and He went right to death. Had it not been for His death we would never have been able to start on that path. It is because He has died and He has risen and ascended as our Saviour, and has taken us up in His grace and redeemed our souls that He says, Now follow Me in the path of faith.

Now I feel that one of the things we very much need to recognise is that we are here in this world as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ—Those to whom He said, Take My yoke and learn of Me. How much, beloved brethren, are we setting ourselves day by day to follow the Lord Jesus Christ? To be marked by the same grace that marked Him? To grow more like Him day by day in our speech, in our dealings with one another, in the character we bear towards the world? Do people take account of us that we are Christians? Do they say we are Christ-like?

In the path of faith we take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. He says, I am meek and lowly in heart, and as we follow Him we shall be like Him. The path is one of dependence, of obedience and of communion with the One Who has gone before. I sometimes think it is like coming out of the house on a dark night, stepping right out, and when you step out you cannot see whether the path goes this way or that and if left to yourself you would stumble into the ditch. And someone comes and takes you by the hand and leads you along. Bye and bye your eyes get accustomed to the darkness and you begin to see a little way yourself.

Now if we are to be here for the Lord Jesus Christ we must walk that path with Him, the life that we now live the apostle says, we ought to live as He did. The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me. You know that hymn we often sing:—

The Lord is Himself gone before,
He has marked out the path that we tread,

It's as sure as the love we adore,
We have nothing to fear nor to dread.

For the path where our Saviour has gone
Has led up to His Father and God
To the place where He's now on the throne,
And His strength shall be ours on the road.

Now my last point is this, that though the Christian treads the desert path across a sandy barren waste, and though there is nothing in this world that can contribute anything to help him, there is a river, there are streams, beloved friends, of constant satisfaction that the world can never give you. Bye and bye, in the millenium, the City of God is going to be the centre from which will flow refreshment to the whole earth. We, even now, have got streams of refreshment.

We have the fountain of life, we have the river of God's pleasure, something that we can continually enjoy. The Lord Jesus Christ has revealed the Father. God has declared Himself. We know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, and we have the joy that the Father gives.

"Thou hast made known the Father Whom
we've seen
In Thy blest presence, infinite delight."

Then there is all this wealth and treasures of God, wealth of knowledge, wealth of blessings, that come out in connection with the mystery of God whence all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are flowing out to us. I think that the question we ought to ask ourselves is not how much do we know of these things but how much do we enjoy them? Have we made them our own, and how much are we drinking at this source of eternal satisfaction while we seek to tread the path of faith to His glory? May the Lord bless these few simple thoughts. They may suggest a line of exercise which may be fruitful in our lives. May the Lord grant it,

The more fully I am acquainted with the Scriptures, the more I am formed and swayed by them; as one has said, "I not only get thoughts from Scripture, but Scripture forms my thoughts," and thus I am kept from man's ways and devisings, and adhere simply and truly to God's ways and manner of acting.

The great fact of the grace of God in the gospel is that not only is the sinner to be forgiven, but he is to be made MEET to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. The first meets the sense of need and gives wonderful relief, and we should have been satisfied with that, but that would not satisfy God. God is love, and He delights to draw those whom He blesses into nearness to Himself. God's delight in blessing is infinitely greater than ours in being blest.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

The Way of Peace.

J. T. Mawson.

"In nothing be anxious: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4. 6, 7. R.V.).

WELL known and often quoted words, but have we grasped their full meaning? Is it possible that in the midst of war and alarms by day and night we should have a peace that passes all understanding keeping our hearts and thoughts? Well, that is what the immutable word of God proposes, our part is to put it to the test. "The Lord is at hand" precedes His wonderful words. He is near. He is so near to us, so interested in us and so accessible that the instant circumstances arise that cause us anxiety we may refer them to Him, we may tell Him how we feel about them and what our requests are in regarded to them. That is surely the meaning of the words. And not only these words but many others could be quoted to prove that God is delighted when His children confide in Him with child-like trust, it must grieve Him when they carry their anxieties and burdens on their own spirits and are dumb towards Him.

The sense of the nearness of God—He is round about them that fear Him—and His ever opened ear to our prayers, and His ceaseless and minute care of us fills our hearts with thanksgiving and opens our mouths with simplicity and confidence, and we realise that God is greater than the worst of circumstances and nearer to us than they are. The result is that His peace that passeth all understanding stands round us and keeps our hearts and thoughts, those gates of the soul at which the circumstances would

batter to gain an entrance within us for fear and doubts and murmurings and repinings. God is glorified and we are kept in peace as we confide in Him. It does not follow that we shall get what we ask for, but this peace is better than our request, even as Paul found the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be better than the boon that he asked for thrice.

OUR STRONGHOLD AND HOPE

The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. (Nahum 1. 7).

Nahum's prophecy is a short one that describes in graphic terms the terrors of war. The aggressor is there, the mighty men, the steel chariots that race in the streets and burn like torches, and flash as lightning; the horsemen, the glittering spears and the flashing sword are there; there are the multitude of the dead, they stumble over great heaps of corpses; and the Lord is there, slow to anger but great in power, taking vengeance on the oppressor. Yet in this same prophecy there are gleams of light that fill the soul with confidence and teach us where our refuge is even in the darkest of days. What words could bring a greater peace into a troubled yet trusting soul than these. "The Lord is good; a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

Then what encouragement there is to look beyond the gloom and tribulations to the time when woes and

wars shall cease, for we read, "Behold upon the mountains the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (1. 15). We know that the only one who can bring peace to the earth is the Lord Himself. Not the destruction of dictatorships by the vengeful sword of the democracies, but the personal appearance of the Son of Man will bring peace to distressed nations. It is the nail-pierced feet that will appear upon the mountains of Judea and judge the nations for the glory of God and for the peace of Israel.

We look for Him from heaven first to take to Himself His blood-bought Church and then to appear in glory with sword and sceptre, bringing in peace as a result of righteousness. This is our hope and it is both sure and certain. In view of all it means we cry, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Meanwhile He is a stronghold in the day of trouble and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

THEY WERE NOT CONFOUNDED.

"Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted and Thou didst deliver them; they cried unto Thee and were delivered; they trusted in Thee and were not confounded" (Psalm 22. 4, 5).

It cannot be questioned that this psalm was the language of the Lord Jesus in His great sorrow as the Sin-bearer, in those dark hours when He was forsaken of God for our sakes. He recalled and recounted the fact that never had anyone cried to God in vain, and never had one trusted in Him and been confounded; no not one. He alone, amazing fact, suffered thus; but we know the reason: it was that we might never be confounded, that we

might be delivered when we cried, that we might trust and not be afraid.

And as never before the cross did any one cry to God in his distress and find God's ear closed against his cry, so has it been since the cross. How full of comfort are those words in Hebrews 13. 5, "He hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." "So that with good courage we say, the Lord is my helper: I will not fear what shall man do unto me?" R.V. These words were uttered first to the lonely wanderer Jacob, and then to the warrior Joshua, and lastly to the worshipper Solomon, they are brought into the New Testament it would seem specially for us and at such a time as this.

But while we draw the comfort that lies in the Word of God for us let us never forget that our safety is the result of our Saviour's sacrifice, that we shall never be forsaken because He suffered this for us.

FAITH AND FORGIVENESS

"Have faith in God . . . and when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11. 22-26.

Two things are necessary if our prayers are to be heard and answered: faith towards God and forgiveness towards all others. The Lord Himself has joined them together in these memorable words, and we must not put asunder what He has joined together. Other Scriptures teach us the same thing, 1 Tim. 2. 8 for instance, though there a third

necessity is brought in — “holy hands”, personal holiness, “without wrath”, no hard feelings towards others, and “without doubting” faith in God. Herein may be the secret of many unanswered prayers. Two brothers kneel in the same prayer meeting; their being there indicates that they have some faith in God, but they have hard and unforgiving thoughts towards each other; their prayers are vain and empty words.

We must search our hearts, for pray we must; there never was a time in our day when prayer was more needed, both in private and public; it is useless to pray in public if we do not pray in private, and we must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for prayer. We must pray in faith Godward, believing that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, but He will not hear us unless we forgive one another. He has met us with full forgiveness, cancelling all our debt to Him, and we must bear His character towards all,

whether near at hand or afar off, whether brother or sister in the Lord or man of the world.

If we do not forgive we are not forgiven *as children* and communion with God our Father is suspended, His Spirit within us is grieved, and it is presumption to go on as though all was right, it is insincerity and displeasing to God. True prayer is communion with God, it is speaking to Him with the confidence of an uncondemning heart, “and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3. 22).

This is a time when hard feelings should be judged, offences forgiven, breaches healed and fellowship restored, that united and effectual prayer might rise up from earnest, sincere and agreeing hearts to God, who is “very pitiful and of tender mercy” for men in the miseries and His own well beloved saints in their perplexities and fears.

Peace.

“And He arose, and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Peace, be still”
(Mark 4. 39).

Oh, blessed calm! Both wind and wave,
 Though wild, obey His will;
 And tempest-tossed disciples prove
 The power of “Peace, be still.”
 So precious, Lord, our hearts would rest,
 Through life’s tempestuous day,
 In Thine own keeping, ever blest,
 Thy perfect love our stay.

Do you not know that the Lord has a far greater solicitude for your family than you could have? Go to Him with this knowledge in your heart about them; confide in Him your disappointed hopes and your fears, your joys and your sorrows, and draw from Him comfort, support and wisdom. Your resources are in Him and not in yourself.

A DIVINE FELLOWSHIP.

David Ross.

Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Wednesday, August 2nd.

“For *as* the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, *even so* the Son quickeneth whom He will” (John 5. 21).

“*As* the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father: *so* he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me” (John 6. 57).

“*As* the Father hath loved Me, *so* have I loved you: continue ye in My love” (John 15. 9).

“This is My commandment, That ye love one another, *as* I have loved you” (John 15. 12).

“They are not of the world, *even as* I am not of the world” (John 17. 16).

“*As* thou hast sent Me into the world, *even so* have I also sent them into the world” (John 17. 18).

“*As* My Father hath sent me *even so* send I you” (John 20. 21).

IN our prayer meeting this morning a brother prayed that the young believers at our Conference might realise that there is a *fellowship* to which we are called which is not of this earth. This evening we have been told of the path which we are called to tread and in which we need to know this wonderful fellowship. Fellowship means partnership, sharing, reciprocity, correlation, and that is why I have read from John's Gospel all these passages with the correlative particles, “even,” “as” and “so.” Fellowship implies the presence of some one with us, and in Christianity this presence is none other than that of the Son of God.

Towards the end of the first century an old man sat down to pen one of the most wonderful books ever written, telling of his ineffable experience of the Infinite revealed in space, and the Eternal manifested in time. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life.” The apostles had the in-

estimable privilege of becoming aware of through their natural senses of the embodiment, the incarnation of Life, and of thus entering into fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and John wrote his beautiful Gospel and Epistles that we too should enter into this divine fellowship in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I sometimes try to imagine the feelings of a seeker after God reading this Gospel for the first time. One great writer, Lord Charnwood, thus describes the effect its study had on him: “I have found there is a Presence which to the normal mind is dear and awful and strangely near, and through that Presence I have come to know God. It has ceased to be a matter of doubt with me that there is a living God, and simultaneously with the passing of that doubt, I have come to believe that the nature of the living God was revealed to man in Jesus Christ.”

Have we come to such a confession? Have we all, like Thomas, bowed in that august Presence and

said, "My Lord and my God," and thus entered into this fellowship with God?

FELLOWSHIP OF LIFE.

I want to speak of this fellowship in a five-fold way. First of all it is a fellowship of *Life*. What a tremendous amount there is in this Gospel about *Life*, the word occurring thirty-six times. What is *Life*? What is the origin of *Life*? The answer to these questions still elude the philosophers, scientists and thought explorers of to-day as of yesterday, but their solution for the Christian is Christ. In godless Russia a newspaper correspondent sat on a bench in a boulevard next to a young woman reading a New Testament. "An interesting book?" he queried. Somewhat startled, the woman replied, "It is a holy book." In her youth she had been a member of the Communist League of Youth, for she wanted to learn about the origin of life, why we live, and whither we go. She got no satisfaction. Her questions were put off, but eventually she was informed that everything was material. She was told that her mother was matter and so was she and there was nothing more except vibration.

"Horrible," she exclaimed. "And now you know the origin of everything?" sneered the questioner. "Yes, now I know. Everything is vanity except the Gospel. It is like a cool well, full of stillness. In it I find rest from the desires of the world."

Yes, Christ in the *Source* of Life, a quickening, that is a life-giving spirit. But He is also the *Support* of the life which he brings, so that all who eat of Him the living bread shall live by Him. This eating of His flesh

and drinking of His blood must not be interpreted by any crude materialistic conception of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, but shows that through His death and only through His death His life has become available for all who appropriate it (make it their own) by faith in the once crucified, now risen Son of God. And those who feed on Him find Him to be the only true *Satisfaction* of Life. He is come that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly. It has been remarked that some Christians have just enough Christianity to make them miserable, spoiled for the world, but living poor, feeble, anaemic spiritual lives, instead of knowing the abundant, vigorous pulsations of that eternal life which Christ gives. Young men and women, seek not your satisfaction at the miserable springs of this world. Those whose means have allowed them to taste most deeply of them have *blase* written right across their faces. One of them, a young millionaire, before ending his life by his own hand, wrote his own obituary, "Died of old age at 21." "As I live by the Father, so shall ye live by Me," the Source and Support of life and its boundless, endless Satisfaction.

FELLOWSHIP OF LOVE.

This Fellowship is secondly a Fellowship of *Love*. This is another of John's favourite words. Just think what this poor world would be without natural love, the love of man and wife, of mother and child, but we are speaking now of divine love. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you, abide in My love." "Love one another, as I have loved you." This love was fully manifested in the Son of God and has three wonderful characteristics. First, it delights to

serve, it goes down, it stoops even to the menial task of washing the feet of those from whom it might have demanded such service. The King of love, God's equal, took upon Himself a servant's form and humbled Himself. Love seeketh not her own, is not puffed up. Man ever seeks the highest place, but in this divine fellowship the true way to salvation is self-humiliation. A great preacher once pictured a little wristlet watch envious of the position of Big Ben, being raised to that height and being thus completely lost to view. "It's elevation," said he, "had been its annihilation." Divine love led Jesus to the lowest place, and God the Father has raised Him to the highest.

How this love *sympathises*. "Jesus wept," and the onlookers said, "Behold how He loved him." The world of sin and suffering needs such a sympathising Jesus, but it can only see Him as He is manifested in His saints. There was a time when the christian apologist, Jestullian of North Africa, could say, "The working of such love puts a brand upon us; for see, say the heathen, how they love one another."

Do the present day heathen say this of us sneeringly as they see christians quarrelling among themselves? Thank God for all the experience we have had of true christian love even during this wonderful week at Bangor, and may He continue and deepen it. There is no love that sympathises with the broken hearted sons of men like that of Jesus. "The Holy Bible," called the colporteur in a busy thoroughfare of Prague, "the Book which brings joy and gives comfort in every sorrow! Only ten crowns." "If it does, I would gladly give not ten crowns but a hundred," answered a

young man, who confessed himself unhappy and exasperated because of the loss of his child, through the doctor's carelessness. Then the colporteur told of his own bitter losses and of the sympathy and succour of the One who said, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." And thirdly, His love *sacrifices*. We all know John 3. 16 well, but are we equally familiar with 1 John 3. 16. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." We can all *talk* love, but the measure of true love is in deeds, not words; in sacrifice, not in sentiment. How touching the words of Jesus on His way to the Cross, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you." The hour of sacrifice had come.

FELLOWSHIP OF HATE.

But this fellowship of love has its reverse side, and calls us to fellowship in the *Hate* which the world meted out to the Son of God. "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 15. 1-11 gives us *Union* with Christ in that wonderful life of His; 12-17 speaks of *Communion* with Him in the sphere of Divine love, while in verses 18-25 we find the inevitable sequel, namely *Disunion* from the world which hated Him without a cause. Those who enjoy the intimacy of Christ must be prepared for the *scorn* of the world, for the servant is not greater than his Lord. He must be ready to have fellowship in the *sufferings* of Christ, nay more than ready, able to count it a privilege to suffer for His sake, as the early disciples could. And not only early disciples, but christians too of modern days, like the missionary in

China, who could say, when his arm had been smashed in an anti-christian riot, "I never knew such intensity of joy, as when I suffered actual physical pain for the Master's sake." Perhaps the feebleness of our joy is the measure of our willingness for this fellowship of suffering. This fellowship will also result in *separation* from the world, not the separation so stressed by Pharisees ancient and modern who view themselves with complacency and others not as they are, with contempt, but a separation unto Christ resulting in such conformity to His likeness that the world which could not endure His goodness, will cast us out, even as it did Him. Have we not just sung the words, words which first came home to me in power as I sang them in German in Berlin, before I knew they were in our English hymn book.

"Are we here on earth rejected?
'Tis but fellowship with Thee;
Should we not with joy expect it—
Disallowed like Thee, to be?
Thou art worthy,
Thou from earth has set us free."

FELLOWSHIP OF PURPOSE.

But now we come to the fellowship of *purpose*. "As Thou hast sent me." God had a wonderful purpose in connection with this world, and for the fulfilment of this He sent our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. John speaks repeatedly of Him as the "Sent One", God's missionary to the world. And for this He was also the *Sanctified One*, absolutely set apart for God's will in which the Father and Son were so completely one that there was absolute unity, identity or *sameness* of thought and purpose, and to this fellowship we also through grace are called. "Even so have I also sent them into the world." His mission was to reveal the Father and ours is the continuation of His. How have we answered to this? As He was

the wholly sanctified, so also is His desire that we should be sanctified through His Word which is Truth. And all this was to result in such a oneness, an identity, a sameness of thought and word and purpose, that there should be a testimony in the saints that the Father really had sent the Son, and that His life was being perpetuated in His people. And what about this testimony, brethren? Well might we bow our hearts in bitter shame, as we think of the wrangling and squabbling, the miserable personal prejudices and antipathies which might well cause the world to question whether the inbreak of the Infinite and the Eternal which we maintain took place in the first century ever did occur, or if it did, whether it accomplished its mission. But we know that it did take place, and that, despite all the outward failure, there is in a very real sense an underlying unity in the Spirit which no failure can destroy, and which no artificial attempt at union can ever achieve. But let us all be exercised, young as well as old, rank and filers as well as leaders, to be more and more in conscious fellowship of purpose with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

FELLOWSHIP OF POWER.

Lastly there is the fellowship of *Power*, Resurrection Power. What a wonderful transformation the fellowship, the Presence of the Risen Christ made to those despairing, defeated, disillusioned disciples trembling behind their shut doors. Hopes had been completely shattered and all seemed lost. Perhaps they questioned, Were we deceived? Was there ever anything in it all? And how easy it is for us in the disappointments and vicissitudes of life, even of Christian life, to feel like that and to listen to the temptations

of the Wicked One, to give up, to throw everything overboard. "Then came Jesus and stood in their midst." We need to see His hands and feet and side and learn therefrom not only the Passion of His Love, but also the perfection of His Power. What a revelation of God we have in the Pierced Hands. Dr. Zwemer, a missionary to the Mohammedans, was told by one of their holy men that, when he had not time to repeat with the aid of his rosary the ninety-nine names of God, he held up the palms of his hands. The markings on the left gave the Arabic for eighty-one, and those on the right for eighteen, and thus he had the ninety-nine. But there is one name of God of which Mohammedanism knows nothing and that is *Saviour*, and to find that we must look not to our own hands or the labour of our hands, but to the pierced hands of Jesus. The *showing* of the Hands must precede the *sending* forth in Service and missionary activity. What a wonderful ordination.

Christ the Son of God hath sent me
To the midnight lands,
Mine the mighty ordination
Of the pierced hands.

In this all are called. What a midnight of darkness is settling even over so-called christian lands, and the call is not only to "darkest Africa", but to the pagan towns and villages of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. What they need is Christ bearers, Christ carriers, consecrated lives as well as lips. And in our service whether to saint or sinner, we must be prepared for

pierced hands and feet.

"Lord, when I am weary with toiling,
And burdensome seem Thy commands,
If my load should lead to complaining,
Lord, shew me Thy hands—
Thy nail-pierced hands,
Thy cross torn hands,
My Saviour, shew me Thy hands.
Christ if my footsteps should falter,
And I be prepared for retreat;
If desert or thorn cause lamenting
Lord, shew me Thy feet.
Thy bleeding feet,
Thy nail scarred feet,
My Jesus, shew me Thy feet.
O God, dare I shew Thee,
My hands and my feet.

It is a fellowship of complete *surrender* on our part, but it is a fellowship in which He wields all the power, for it is the Risen Christ who says, "All power is given unto Me. Go ye forth into all the world." And as He sends us forth, He tells us that it is in the fellowship of which the Holy Ghost is the dominating and guiding power. He breathed on them and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

What a marvellous fellowship! Of *Life* of which Christ is the Source, the Support and the Satisfaction; of *Love* which serves and sympathises and sacrifices; of *Hate* enduring the scorn of the world, with its attendant suffering and separation therefrom; of *Purpose* sent of the Father, sanctified by the Word and sharing in the same thoughts with Father, Son and saints of God; and of *Power* shown in the pierced hands of the Risen One, to whom we surrender, owning Him "Lord and God", who endues with the mighty Spirit's Power for life and service.

"After ye have Suffered Awhile."

(1 Peter 5. 10)

It is no use to hope that we shall be stablished and settled and deeply rooted if no rough winds assail us. Shrink not from the winds of trial, but take comfort, believing that by their rough discipline God is fulfilling this benediction to you.

LIGHT FROM HEAVEN.

HERE are words that call for earnest consideration. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6). From whence has that light shone which has dispelled our fears and filled our hearts with peace? Not here from Bethlehem, nor even from Calvary, but from heaven. It comes from a glorified Saviour. The light of Bethlehem is wonderful—"the Word became flesh." Only thus could He reach us, but even so His coming could only have condemned us apart from His death—He died for the ungodly—there shone out the light of God's love; but all that Bethlehem meant and all that Calvary meant is embodied in the glorified Saviour. The full undimmed light of the glory of God's grace.

It does not repel us as Sinai repelled the children of Jacob; it in-

vites us to draw near, and the nearer we draw the happier we are and the better off we are, for we draw near to the source from whence all the blessing comes. Light is good, and this light is supremely good; it is the full revelation of God, whose delight in the work that His Son accomplished is such that He has set Him there in the highest place in heaven at His own right hand. Our Substitute, our Saviour is in highest glory, and the light that shines from Him invites us to share in all the benefits that His work has secured for us. If we understand it, we realise that the place from which the light shines is our home and our destiny, and that we can never be really at home anywhere else. All the glory of God rests upon my Saviour there in the glory, and as I behold Him there I shall become more and more like Him and more and more assured that He has won that place for me.

The Blessing of Tears.

NOT yet is God wiping away all tears from the eyes of His children, but He is certainly turning them into blessings. You will see further through your tears than you ever saw through your smiles. God does not forbid laughter, often He makes us to exult with holy joy; but sorrow and a riven heart will bring you nearer to God than ever you will come in your lighter hours. How wonderfully clear many an obscure passage in the Bible has become to us when we were bowed down with

grief, and how near Jesus seems to be when we weep. He knows what tears are, for "Jesus wept." The eyes that John saw as a flame of fire in the Revelation, Mary at the grave of Lazarus saw as a fountain of water. Yes, tears are a blessing when we look up through them to Jesus our great High Priest, who is touched by our sorrows, and pours out His sympathy, and ministers His succour, so that we know Him better, and to know Him is the chiefest thing in time or eternity.

There are no times in life when the opportunity to gather wealth into the soul is as great as when it has to suffer. If a man looks to God in his suffering it is the turning hour in his life.

FAITH.

A. J. Pollock.

Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Thursday evening, August 3rd.

Scriptures read: Hebrews 11. 6. 2 Corinthians 5. 7. 2 Peter 1. 2-11.

‘**W**ITHOUT faith it is impossible to please God.’ The language is plain, the meaning clear. Let us put this sentence up against our lives, and see how we stand in relation to it.

We all profess to desire to please God. Shall we do it by living self-centred lives with very little bringing in of the unseen God and His will into our everyday actions? Some think the great thing is to make sure of heaven by putting our faith in the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, and having done that to live as if it did not matter whether we please God or not. Anyone with that idea leaves us decidedly doubtful that they are in truth Christians at all. To treat a transaction called faith as one that benefits me, like a first class ticket to heaven, with no obligations on my side, sounds like pure selfishness. Faith is made of sterner stuff than that.

Faith is not an initial act and done with. Faith is the motive spring of the whole Christian life. We “must believe that God is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Note the word, “*diligently*”—diligently seek Him. Does that characterize you and me?

“We walk by faith, not by sight.” That is the normal attitude of the Christian to the unseen world. The Christian is governed by absolutely different ideas to what the man of the world is.

The man of the world is self-centred, his range of vision bounded

by time and sense, blind is he to the true values of life, and the claims of God upon him—his life is disaster, and he knows it not. The Christian is governed by eternal values, verities outside of time and sense.

What led Moses to leave the palace of the Pharaohs, and give himself to a life of indescribable hardships? Faith! Moses endured “as seeing Him that is invisible.”

What led Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and become a stranger and a pilgrim in Canaan to the day of his death? Faith! He died in faith. “He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”

They were noble men. What made them noble? What lifted them out of the common rut? They were men of like passions to ourselves. What was it that governed their lives? Faith!

“Faith is a simple thing,
But little understood.”

But let us take it for granted that we are really in earnest, desirous of pleasing God, seeking to walk day by day by faith, then there are other qualities we do well to add to faith. Faith is a quality that needs developing in certain directions to make it truly helpful.

The Apostle Peter bids us add to our faith virtue or courage. Of all the religions in the world Christianity is the one that needs courage. Every religion except that of Christianity is man-made or devil-made, and appeals to man in the flesh. It does

not put him in antagonism to the world. He has no need to be ashamed of it.

But Christianity is different. Faith condemns the world. We read of Noah, who prepared an ark for the saving of his house, and by so doing he condemned the world. It needed great courage to back up his faith and build an ark far inland under blue skies.

We Christians generally feel ashamed of letting our light shine. It takes courage to ask a blessing in a public restaurant. It takes courage to give tracts out. It takes courage to preach in the open-air.

We heard an interesting story lately of a railway man, a Christian, in the U.S.A. His rail trips took him away from home for a week at a time. He longed to testify for the Lord, but shyness kept him back. One day he said to his sons, "I want you, while I am away, to get me a gold button with JIM engraved on it." Returning at the end of the week, he asked for his button. The sons had not attended to their father's wishes. He gave them another week. On his return they had not moved in the matter. He gave them another week, saying if the button was not forthcoming this time, he would be obliged to stay at home, and lose a week's wages.

Returning home the third time he found an expensive gold and enamel button with JIM engraved on it awaiting him. When he returned home the next time his boys asked their father why he wanted this button. He replied that he belonged to the Lord, but was shy in speaking about Him. He wanted to testify of His Saviour as he went about. People seeing this button

asked him the meaning of it. He answered that his name was James, and Jim is the short for James, but that it meant something far better, viz. J stands for Jesus, I for is, and M for mine—*Jesus Is Mine*.

In that way the ice was broken, and so he sought to add to his faith courage. Do we let our light shine? Do our friends and acquaintances realise that we are governed by faith? Let us add to our faith courage.

But we are exhorted to add knowledge to our courage. We have known Christians marked by faith and courage, yet lacking knowledge do more harm than good in their testimony. There is such a thing as casting pearls before swine.

Let us give an illustration. The writer knew a Christian, who did not think it right to vote for parliamentary candidates. When called upon by two canvassers, and asked for the promise of his vote, he replied, "I cannot vote. I am dead." The canvassers looked with amazement. One of them replied, "How can you say, you are dead?" The Christian simply sent them about their business saying, "I am dead, I cannot vote." The plain English of it was that they thought they had to do with a harmless lunatic, and we don't wonder at their conclusion.

What that Christian wanted was knowledge, knowledge of how to take a right stand as a Christian in a sensible way. To that end could we recommend anything better than the study of how our Lord dealt with men in His testimony, for He trod the life of faith, and we are bidden to look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith. There are ways of approaching men that

will commend themselves to them, and not sound foolish and tactless. Let us add knowledge to our faith and courage.

Then we are bidden to add temperance. Generally speaking temperance in our minds is connected with abstaining from spirituous liquors. But temperance here has a wider significance. It means self-restraint. "Every man that striveth for the mastery *is temperate in ALL things*". Not in one, but in *all things*. We are apt to go to extremes. We need to recognize the flesh in us, to curb our tempers, our egotism, our love of gain, to be a law unto ourselves is divinely right.

Then we have to add patience. This is a test. Are we prepared to plod on, persevere, continue steadfastly as the Scripture puts it? To go by fits and starts is disastrous in the end. "Knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1. 3).

Then godliness is to be added, that is bringing God into my life, living my life in relation to Him, and seeking to please Him. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness

and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and *godly* in this present world" (Titus 2. 11, 12),

Then brotherly kindness is to be added — kindness to a brother or sister in Christ. Are we kind? "Love suffereth long and is kind" (1 Cor. 13. 4). "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4. 32).

Add to that *love*—love is the divine nature and we are made "partakers of the divine nature", and love is its great characteristic. In brotherly kindness there is an object for my love that draws it out, but love is nature and *seeks* for an object on which to expend it.

Now if all these things mark us, and abound, we shall not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us put ourselves alongside of this standard and see how far we answer to it. May it be our great desire to please God. Without faith that is impossible. May we walk by faith and not by sight; the mark of a true Christian.

"He Careth for you."

Let all who are sad take heart again,
 We are not alone in our hours of pain;
 Our Father looks from His throne above
 To soothe and comfort us with HIS LOVE.
 He leaves us not when the storms are nigh—
 And we have safety for He is nigh.
 Can that be trouble which He doth share?
 Oh, rest in peace, for THE LORD DOTHS CARE.

“WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO GOD.”

J.N.D.

DO we believe that with the innumerable throng of the redeemed we shall soon sing the everlasting anthem of praise to the Lamb? It is astonishing the simplicity of heart there is when we believe that “we are on our way to God.” Whenever the soul has got hold of this, believing in God, knowing His love, that He has brought us out of Egypt (the world) and that we are on our way to Canaan (our heavenly home) there is a spring of heart that surmounts everything.

There may be a great many things by the way to exercise our hearts and thoughts; but if this feeling predominates, they only come in by the way. If my mind be fixed on present circumstances and present difficulties, and on God’s helping me through them; there will not at all be the same spring of joy. For then I make God to be simply the servant of my necessities. The heart rests

and centres there, and God sinks down into a mere help in time of trouble.

It is quite true that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble”, but to bring Him down to be only this changes the whole aspect of things. If our hearts are fixed on being with Jesus in His rest and glory, on being in the Father’s house, our own present difficulties have the character of difficulties by the way; we can then rise over trouble, however felt. And our thoughts about God are not merely that He will help us in the circumstances in which we are—our hearts being fixed on Him, we live in the freedom that arises from the constant certainty that all that is Christ’s is ours.

If we lose the joy of the glory, the difficulties we meet by the way are insurmountable; for our hearts do not know what they contend for.

A Throne in Heaven.

“And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne”
(Rev. 4. 2).

WHAT quietness and rest it brings to the spirit, to look up from the turmoil of this visible, fleeting, and lying world—from the shows and shams of its tinted scenes, from all in life that startles and appals us and know that there is a throne above it all and One sits supreme upon it. God is supreme, and though that supremacy is not manifested yet in a public way, we who have faith doubt not that He is above and behind everything, and that soon everything will be brought into subjection to His will. “Thy

kingdom come” is not a vain and foolish prayer.

The shadows are passing, and the reality is behind. Nothing lasts here, our trials are all hastening away, we look beyond and above the storms to the throne upon which God sits. How small all our conflicts and ambitions seem when we look up to the throne, and to the One who sits upon it. We know that against His changeless purpose all the waves of time and circumstance and all the self-will of godless men, break in vain.

PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

R. Turnbull.

Address at Bangor, N. Wales, Tuesday evening, August 1st.

Scriptures read: 1 Corinthians 3. 8-17; 6. 19-20.

MY message to-night will not be anything new. What I have to say is more to stir up your hearts by way of remembrance. I hope that by the grace of God we shall be moved to respond to His desires for us; and if there be in our lives or in our hearts anything that is hindering God's will being done in us and through us may we discern it before Him, and in His presence judge and dismiss it from our lives, and thus in the power of His might be here in this life for His glory and the blessing of others.

What is before me is on the lines of *privilege and responsibility*. We all know that in everyday life we have certain privileges, but with them all there are the RESPONSIBILITIES. And the greater the privilege the greater are responsibility. So it is in the Christian's life. In this favoured country we are greatly privileged. We can come together as, by the grace of God, we do this week, to read and consider His Word in the quietness of His Presence, none daring to make us afraid. Our privileges are immense, but our responsibilities are correspondingly great. If we were to go to Central Africa and make the acquaintance of those native converts, converted six months, or a year, we should feel that their privileges as compared with ours have been comparatively few, and I take it their responsibility is comparatively small. It is God Who takes account of these things. He knows!

With regard to our *privileges* I have particularly in mind the

thought of the Church. The Church of Christ for which He died, and our responsibilities in that connection. We enjoy our privileges and delight to take advantage of them but I hope we shall be able to weigh up in the presence of God, not only the value of the privileges but the seriousness of the responsibilities that come to us. If we are to rightly appreciate God's favour to us and our privileges we must not forget the place in which God found us by His grace when He brought us to Himself. I came across a story the other day in an old volume of "Scripture Truth." The story is told in an article written by Doctor Saeed whom some of us were privileged to meet when he was here some years ago. The story was with regard to a Persian shepherd, Ayaz, who by his devotion and faithfulness to his king Mahmoud, came into prominence and ultimately was appointed Prime Minister. This appointment was the cause of sore distress to the other ministers over whom he had been placed, and they decided to send a deputation to His Majesty, their king, to point out how unfair it was that this man, a peasant, a shepherd, one who was not of high rank or birth, should be exalted above them and made Prime Minister. They told His Majesty their feelings. He listened and replied, "He is my most faithful and trustworthy servant, and I have every confidence in the Prime Minister. But in order to satisfy your minds you may watch his ways, and if there is anything that is not right and you think it should be brought to my notice, you are free to do so." After

watching some time they noted that once a week he went into a room, the door of which was always kept locked, and usually spent about an hour in it, then came out and locked the door again. Ah, they thought, we have come across something here. We are quite sure this man is taking advantage of the king. We are sure he is hiding some of the king's treasure or doing something he ought not to do. We think we had better tell the king this, and off they went and told him. He did not believe their story but he gave them permission when the Prime Minister was not there to burst open the door of that room and make a search. This they did, and to their astonishment all they could find was a parcel, and in it an old dress as worn by the peasants of the country, and a pair of old shoes. This puzzled them immensely and they could not understand it, but that was all they could find. However, they sent their report to the king. He sent for the Prime Minister and presented the parcel to him, saying, "Tell me, Ayaz, what this means." And this was his reply—I will read it to you. "Those are the shoes and that is the dress I used to wear when I was a shepherd. I open them out and look at them once a week lest I should forget what I once was and how unworthy I am of all the kindness and honour your Majesty has bestowed upon me." Was not that lovely? I think so. To-night will you come with me into such a room, and look back upon what *we* once were. Turn to Eph. 2. "Dead in trespasses and sins." "Walking according to the course of this world," and it is coursing on as quickly as time can carry it to destruction. "According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." "Fulfilling

the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath." "Without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope, and without God in the world."

We were speaking in our Bible reading about the Christian hope, but in this chapter we are described as "without hope and without God in the world." Then in verse 13 we are reminded that we were "afar off." If we turn to Romans 5 we find that we were "without strength, ungodly, and sinners." It is well that we look back upon this condition in which we were lest we forget the infinite grace that has saved us, and how unworthy we are of all the honour that our blessed Lord has been pleased to bestow upon us, and at such a cost. I believe, if like Ayaz, the shepherd of old, once a week—the oftener the better—we went alone into our room locking the door after us, and opened out the parcel to remind us of what we were, it would humble us and fill our hearts with praise and thanksgiving. Are we not privileged? God has taken us from that condition in which we once were and associated and identified us with Christ for ever—wonderful beyond words!!

There are some people in this world who take delight in tracing back their family history two or three hundred years. Such a pursuit does not concern us as Christians. So far as we are concerned we can trace our history back to Adam, and we find we are children of a fallen race brought into the condition which is described for us in Eph. 2. But, thank God, our blessings go back and back right into eternity, and what do we find?

We were chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid, and that is far beyond the comprehension of any man who is not born of God. God has wrought in our hearts, He has worked wonders in His power and love and by His grace. He has opened our eyes to see our need in the first place, and then to see our Lord Jesus Christ as the one Who died for us that we might be delivered from that awful position in which God found us. Our sins are forgiven, we are made heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. We are brought into the family of God, not because we believe in the Fatherhood of God, a popular doctrine to-day—but because we are the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. God is *our* Father—thank God for that!

But more than that, we are members of the body of Christ, of which He is the Head; we have our part in the Church, which is His body, and for which Christ died. I confess we feebly realise what is meant by that; part of the Church for which Christ gave Himself! What is the Church? One is carried back in thought to the Gospel of Matthew (ch. 16), when the Lord Jesus asked His disciples, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? Peter answered, "Some say John Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." And then the Lord turned the question and said, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter's answer again, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." The Christ, the Messiah, the Sent One of God, the One in whom all God's promises centre. The Son of the life-giving God. And the Lord Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, flesh and blood hath not revealed

this unto thee but My Father which is in heaven." This was a special revelation to Peter declaring the truth as to One in their midst. And then Jesus said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

People talk about failure in the Church. Yes, if we look at things through the eyes of man, definitely so. But when we think of the Church as that which Christ is building upon this Rock, Himself, the One declared by Peter, as the Son of the Living God, the gates of hell (the very kingdom of the devil and the power of darkness) cannot prevail against it. Remember that you and all true christians form part of the Church by the grace of God.

When we turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians (ch. 5), the Church is shewn to us in another aspect of it; it says, "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." And you form part of it. Not here as a building but to be His eternal companions! We should ponder these words. They may be well-known to us, but oh the mighty truth that is involved! the grace that is in them! Christ loved the Church and gave *Himself* for it—not only His life—it does not say He gave His life or His blood. He did, but He gave *Himself*. Could He give anything more? He gave *Himself* for the Church, and why? That He might sanctify it, set it apart for Himself, and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word. The cleansing is going on now so that in the future

day He might present it to Himself, without a spot, without a blemish, without a wrinkle, in the fulness of its perfection.

We learn from Eph. 3 that unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is now displayed the all-varied wisdom of God. The more I think of that verse the more I wonder, but it is true. God says it and I believe it. The principalities and powers, whoever they may be, look upon Christ's assembly in this world, and as they see it responding to the love of Christ and being subject to His holy will, and fulfilling its responsibility as His witness in the world they learn God's wisdom. That young sister at one time walked in the sight of the Lord, seeking humbly to serve Him, but she has been turned aside perhaps by worldly companionship, is part of the Church, but she is not taking her part in this responsibility. Why? She has lost the appreciation of the privilege. Her defection has not changed the Lord's love for her, she can never be less than part of the Church, where in the coming day He will present her to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. But in failing in her responsibility she is losing the privilege of being a witness for her Lord during His rejection by the world. And my dear young brother these heavenly principalities and powers look down and see you and take note of your life. What do they see? You did run well but have been hindered. How they must marvel at your unfaithfulness! Yet you are dear to the Lord, nothing can change His love to you, and you are part of His Church, for which He gave Himself

From Eph. 2. 20-22 we learn that we are also the household of God,

"in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God." The dwelling place of God on earth. Every Christian forms part of that, for the Spirit is in every one. Is not that a privilege? The living stones come to the living Lord, according to 1 Peter 2, and they form part of that spiritual house, and you as a living stone have been built into that house of God by Himself. How are you answering to that? It is all grace that has put you into that privileged place; you could not have attained to it, but being in it, how are you answering to it?

In 1 Cor. 3 God's house is looked at in its local character as the assembly, and you and I have our part in the building. It is God's building, God's temple on earth. The apostle Paul, as a wise master builder, had well and truly laid the foundation. Then he speaks of others who are building thereon. What part are you and I taking in the building of this structure? It comes very close to us does it not? In the building of an important structure the architect draws the plans and in due course the foundations are laid and the clerk of the works is appointed, and his job is to see that the building material is according to the specifications. If he comes one day and finds some work that is not according to specification and he does his duty to the owner of the building he will insist that the builder pulls it down and puts in the right material. It seems to me in this chapter it is not exactly the builder who is coming under review but the material the builder is using. Do you follow me? We are here to take our part in the building. We are looked at as builders and the material is at hand. It is spoken of under two headings divided into

threes. "Gold, silver, and precious stones." "Wood, hay, and stubble." You can see at a glance what is meant by that. Gold, silver, precious stones. Not a piled up heap of course. Some precious stones so small in size that one can hold them in the palm of the hand, but oh, how valuable. I was in Paris and was taken by a friend to the diamond market, and saw men handling diamonds as though they were pebbles from the seashore. I was told that in one particular man's hands were stones worth thousands of pounds.

Gold, silver, precious stones, and all the materials under that heading will come under the scrutiny of the Lord, and be tested by fire. On the other hand we have the wood, hay, stubble. It may be a lot to look at, a tremendous pile. "I am so busy in my service I can hardly get done what I have to do, I am so fully booked up," said a good brother to me one day when I asked him how he was and what he was doing in the way of serving the Lord. He certainly filled his spare time in many

activities. A tremendous pile of service. I am not here to criticise him. His material may have been taken account of by the Lord as gold, silver, and precious stones, but the day is coming when it will be tested, and so will your material and mine. The gold and silver and precious stones will stand the test of the fire thoroughly, and the wood and hay and stubble will be burned up like tinder. What are these — gold, silver and precious stones — and how shall we obtain them? They describe the imperishable preciousness of Christ, and the Holy Ghost dwells in us to take of His things and shew them to us, and as we walk with the Lord and are taught by His Spirit we obtain this precious material and our own souls are edified and we are able to edify our brothers and sisters also. Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, don't forget it. Walk in the Spirit, then instead of having the wood, hay and stubble—things of the flesh and world that must be burnt up, your work will abide; you will not have lived in vain.

"Whose I am and whom I serve." Acts 27. 22.

This was Paul's boast, "Whose I am." What dignity, what confidence, what affection, the utterance breathes, and the fact and thought of it made him superior to the greatest men of that company. How could he do other than serve the One who possessed him, who had bought him with His own blood. And the meaning of the word "serve" here is more adoration than labour, the labour would flow from the adoration, and the adoration from the greatness and the blessedness of the One who had made Paul His own possession. Wake up, Christian. You are just as dear to Christ as Paul was. You are equally His, let your worship flow up to Him, and for His sake labour for others' good.

"Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold on Thee—
In this alone rejoice with awe,
Thy mighty grasp on me."

“WE HAVE SINNED.”

J. T. Mawson.

An address at Sutton, on Sunday, October 1st.

Please read 1 Samuel 7.

“Then Samuel took a stone, and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Samuel 7. 12).

THIS bit of divinely-given history of the people of Israel may be a help to us in this time of distress. They were God’s chosen people, He had redeemed them out of Egyptian bondage and given them the land of Canaan for a national home and a possession, but they had turned their backs upon Him and had chosen to worship and serve the gods of the heathen, with their unspeakable abominations, and God had left them to their own devices and the mercy of their foes: and bitterly they suffered for their folly. But now they had begun to yearn for the former days and to “lament after the Lord.” Samuel’s faithful ministry among them and his intercession for them coupled with Philistine tyranny had done its work in their souls. Then Samuel spake to them on God’s behalf. “If ye turn to the Lord with all your heart, put away the strange gods from among you, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistine. And the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth and served the Lord only.” The Lord did not turn from them when they turned to Him, for His mercy endureth for ever; He is the much-neglected but ever patient God, very pitiful and of tender mercy, and He is the same to-day for us as He was for those ancient people in their day; and we shall prove this as they did if we turn wholeheartedly to Him.

We cannot call any nation christian in the *vital* sense of the word,

for vital christianity is intensely individual, the result of the new birth by the Holy Ghost, and personal faith in the Lord Jesus our Saviour. Yet the British nation professes the christian religion. The heads of the German and Russian peoples have abandoned this position, but we may be thankful that the King of these realms in Privy Council has ordained this 1st day of October for a day of public prayer. The result may be largely formal, but we may be sure that thousands of sincere and sorely burdened hearts are sending up their cries to God this day. It would have been well if a call to repentance and confession had been joined to the call for prayer, for these are sorely needed. In our chapter it was when Israel repented of their idolatry and put away their false gods and confessed with repentance “we have sinned against the Lord” that Samuel interceded for them and God heard his prayer and delivered them.

If the question arises as to why repentance and confession are called for at this time in this land I will answer by reading from 2 Timothy. “This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be *lovers of their own selves*, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, *unthankful, unholy*, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*;

HAVING THE FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF."

We may plead that we have to look across the North Sea for "truce-breakers", but where upon this earth are men lovers of themselves and of pleasure more than lovers of God than in this land? What a man loves more than God is his idol; and if God has not the first place in a man's life He has no place. But there is one charge in this heavy indictment and another in chapter 4 that I must put together and stress. "Having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof", and "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Here is not man's treachery to his fellows but a state of things in which religion is fashionable but God unreal and unwanted? The first is, broadly speaking, ritualism, and the second religious rationalism, and the second is worse than the first. In ritualism the profession is kept up, there are forms, ceremonies, sacraments and the outward parade of religion but the power is not there. "These people draw near with the lip but the heart is far from Me." But rationalism—moderism, is the proud denial of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ, the record of which we have in the Holy Bible, and that by men who claim to lead the religious life of the people. The fable and farce of evolution has dispensed with the Creator, and since man is laboriously but successfully climbing out of the slime to a godlike stature and character, what need has he of a Redeemer? The blood that cleanseth from sin is an insult to him; he is his own Saviour and needs none other, and all this while still holding to the name of Christian.

These are the Ashtaroth and Baalim of modern Christendom, and must not God be against them? Surely because these false gods have been set up in this land there should be deep heart searching and confession and repentance in the church of God.

How do we stand in relation to these things? Hear what the word says. "Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: FROM SUCH TURN AWAY." Have we done that? Do we separate ourselves in faithfulness to the Lord from all that is pretentious and false, and by standing for the truth bear witness against the false? How are we to intercede with God in this hour of need if we tolerate or sanction that which is obnoxious to Him? And how have we acted in regard to the inrush of modernism, bold criticism of God's holy Word, and the rejection of His great salvation secured for men by the blood of His dear Son? Hear what we ought to have done. "*Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.*" Have we done that, and endured afflictions in doing it, (many have in Germany) or have we sought the easier path of bearing witness only among those who appreciate and applaud us?

There is surely need for repentance. "Be zealous therefore, and repent" is the Lord's own word to all who have ears to hear. But will the mass repent? I fear not, for evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3. 13). The darkness will deepen and the evil increase until the Lord comes forth to judge the world in righteousness.

But the challenge is to every one of us. Are there no idols in our

hearts and lives? We may not spurn God's holy gospel, but having believed it, are we governed by it? The last of the Apostles after discoursing on the blessedness of knowing the true God and Eternal life, and all the favour that has come to us as those who are born of God through Him, closes his Epistle with this solemn charge, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." God is sifting out the hearts of men, let us be swift to answer Him; let us yield our hearts to Him, and say, "Search me, O God." Whatever challenges the supremacy of Christ in our lives is an idol, it is iniquity, and "if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66. 18). We cannot pray with sincerity if the eye is not single, or if the heart is divided. And because this is so it would be well for us if in the presence of God we went over these nineteen solemn features of these last days, beginning with "men shall be lovers of their own selves", and ending with "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" and discovered how we stand in regard to them.

The way that Israel travelled from their deep degradation to their triumphant Ebenezer is full of interest and instruction; let us consider the steps they took in this journey.

They lamented after the Lord and put away Baalim and Ashtaroth.

Most surely these days are like those of our chapter and if we are to have God as our helper and deliverer in days of darkness and distress we must begin where Israel began, and 2nd Timothy confirms this thought and helps us, for there we read, "Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ [the Lord] depart from iniquity" (ch. 2. 19). "If a man purge himself from these he shall be

a vessel unto honour" (verse 21). "Free also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (verse 22).

They gathered unto Samuel at Mizpeh.

They were united in their misery, but also in their search after God, and it was to Samuel they gathered, he was their hope, for he was the one great intercessor of his day, a type and foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus who ever liveth to make intercession for those who come to God through Him. It was to Mizpeh they came, and Mizpeh means the watch tower and reminds us of the words of the prophet Habakkuk, who at another crisis in Israel's history said, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon my tower, and see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." If we draw near to God in prayer we must heed His word to us. For His word is a light and lamp for our feet in the darkest of days, and there is no other.

They poured water out before the Lord and confessed, we have sinned against the Lord.

They owned in this dramatic way their helplessness and nothingness. Their sin and departure from God had brought them to their wits' end. It would be a blessed thing if this spirit of humility and confession spread among the people of God. "Humble yourselves in the sight of God and He shall lift you up." "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." "Submit yourselves therefore unto God" (James 4). To God we must look, our confidence must not be in mighty munitions and fearless battalions but in God. He fights for the humble, and approves

of those who in their weakness look only to Him.

And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord.

The confession of sin and helplessness on the part of the people was right, their repentance was a proof of God's work *within* them, but more was necessary. God is holy and righteous, and on what ground could He meet them and bless them? Only on the ground of a spotless, sinless sacrifice. The eyes of all Israel were turned to the lamb that was sacrificed for them. Of course it spoke of Christ. The first word of public testimony that was given to Him when He appeared amongst men was, "Behold the Lamb of God." He offered Himself without spot to God, and it was for us, for we read, "Christ also loved us, and hath given Himself FOR US, an offering and a sacrifice TO GOD for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5, 2). The testimony of John the Baptist is our testimony. If any feel the burden of sin, we say, "Behold the Lamb of God"; if any are longing to be rid of the idols that have oppressed them and to be right with God, we say, "Behold the Lamb of God"; if any are looking on to the future with fear and uncertainty, we say, "Behold the Lamb of God." In Him alone is salvation; His blood cleanseth from all sin. It is because of His perfect offering, and the efficacy of His blood that God can bless us and meet us when we turn to Him. God has set Jesus forth "a propitiation [meeting place] through faith in His blood."

The blood of the Lamb of God has not only made complete atonement for the sins of all who believe, but it is to them the proof and measure of God's love, for He com-

mendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, and if this love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us, the Baalim and Ashtaroth must be swept out. What attraction could the fictions of Rome and the "vain babblings and opposition of science, falsely so called" have for those whose faith has grasped the meaning of the blood of the Lamb? and what place could dead forms and all the ceremonies that please the fleshly mind have with those who have seen God revealed in Jesus?

"And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them."

We cannot say whether the war will be long or short; we make our requests known unto God, and tell Him all our fears, and desire nothing that would be contrary to His holy will. We may have to suffer deprivations, but He is able to sustain us in trials and carry us through. Spiritual victories against spiritual darkness and the rulers of it are greater than victories in the air or on the land or sea, for they are eternal in their issue, and these victories God will give us if we turn to Him. His eyes "run to and fro in the whole earth to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him", and "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

"Then Samuel took a stone . . . and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

We may leave the issue of the great conflict now raging with God.

He has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Romans 12. 9), and not one word of His will fail, but we may pray that His chastening hand may not be in vain on this greatly favoured land, but that many may turn to Him wholly and find their strength and solace in Him whatever the future may hold. He is good, a very present help in time of trouble and He knoweth them that trust in Him, and all such will surely build their Ebenezer to His glory, for none ever trusted Him in vain.

A Christian who had had fifty years' experience of the goodness of God said that if she had raised a stone of remembrance every time the Lord had helped her, she would have built a solid wall fifty years in length. She had found the Lord ever by her side, a very present help, renewing His mercies every morning, and never failing in His compassions. And many can say, and

we among them, "there has not failed one good word that He has spoken," and if in our wall of Ebenezers there are gaps, they mark the times when in self-sufficiency and pride we thought we could manage our own affairs without reference to God; then we had to learn sore lessons as to our folly, and own that independence of the Lord meant disaster for us. But even then He was not far from us, and as when He arose from the dead He appeared to defeated Simon (Luke 24), so has He often proved to us that His grace is greater than our failure. And because of all this we can say, as we look back on the past, "*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*" We have been kept by the power of God, and with confidence we can look on to the future when He will present us "*faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*" To Him be thanksgiving and praise both now and for ever!

All hail! O glorious Son of God,
 In triumph risen again—
 All heaven resounds with joyful laud
 The songs of ransomed men;
 The mighty chains of death are riven,
 The risen Christ is throned in heaven.

The Preacher's Life and Character

What manner of man should he be who is called and gifted of the Lord to serve Him in the ministry of the word? Should not the casket—even if only an earthen vessel—bear some evidence of the value of the jewel within it? Must not he upon whom the gift is bestowed bear some moral insignia in keeping with it? Must he not make full proof of his ministry, and that by his manner of life? Must not the expounder of the truth of God be in himself an exponent of the value of the truth he presents? Ought not the evangelist to be able to say, "I would to God that not only thou but all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am except these bonds"?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Armageddon

"We are being asked if this war is Armageddon, spoken of in the Bible. May we have some help on this subject."

NO, this is not Armageddon. Armageddon will be "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" as it is described in Revelation 16. 12-16. To it will be gathered the kings of the earth and of the whole world. It will not be fought in Poland or in any part of Europe but in Palestine. "He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (verse 16). Armageddon means the hill of Megiddo, which according to our maps is in the valley of Jezreel, in the heart of Palestine. It has been the scene of some of the greatest victories and defeats in Israel's history.

"The kings of the East"—Asiatic nations, will be there (verse 12), and the power of that coming trinity of evil—the dragon, Satan, the beast the dictator of the revived ten kingdomed Roman empire, and the false prophet, Antichrist, an apostate Jew and master of Jerusalem—will influence the whole world; there will be no neutral nations. Joel describes the world-wide enthusiasm for war; even agriculture will give place to it, for they will beat their plowshares into swords, and their

pruning hooks into spears, and the weak will say they are strong (Joel 3).

It may be that these nations will gather in the first place to contend for the coveted prize, Jerusalem, but being gathered they will unite to fight against God and His Christ, to hold the world against His intervention in righteousness. It will be an anti-God, anti-Christ pact, and incidentally, to obliterate the Jew. The battle itself will be short and decisive; it is described in Revelation 19. 11-21. It will not be a war of nation against nation; or democracies against dictators, but men in open and avowed defiance of God, the great apostacy. It could not be as long as the church is here on earth. "There is one that restraineth now, until He be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2. 7. R.V.). This one is surely the Holy Spirit of God who has His dwelling in the church of God, the bodies of believers. When He is taken out of the way at the rapture of the church to heaven, the apostacy which is already working will develop with great rapidity only to meet its doom at Armageddon.

The Master.

"One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23. 8).

Let us speak OF the Master
Whenever we meet,
No theme is so precious,
So stirring and sweet,
So kindling and quickening
To faith and to love,
As Jesus, our Jesus,
In glory above.

Let us speak FOR the Master
Wherever we go,
Displaying our colours
To friend and to foe;
Exalting His Person,
His work and His ways,
His cross and His coming,
And all to His praise.

THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL.

J. T. Mawson.

The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel. Col. 1. 5.

THE patient efforts of the peace-loving rulers of the nations and the prayers of multitudes of God's children have failed to hold in check the dogs of war, and this fact has brought into fresh prominence the truth of the coming and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only hope for righteousness and peace in the earth. Many are asking, "Is this the beginning of the end?" and "Is the coming of the Lord near?" It ought always to be near to those who love Him, to them it is the next thing. It was near to His heart when He sent to His Church that last message "Surely, I come quickly," and it is the heart of His Church that respond with words that must be dear to Him. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." One thing is sure, we are nearer the fulfilment of that last word of His than ever before.

His coming again to receive "His own" to Himself (John 14), is "that blessed hope" and we heard of it in the gospel that we have believed, if indeed the gospel we heard was the full and true gospel. It told us of our certain translation to heaven at His coming, there to be conformed to His glorious image, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. The hope of Israel is an earthly one to be realised when He shall *appear* in great power for their deliverance, ours is a heavenly one to be realised at the rapture of His saints to His own glory, before He appears to judge the world and deliver Israel.

In the first of his Epistles, Paul wrote to his Thessalonian converts, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God: and

to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus, our deliverer from the wrath to come" 1 Thess 1. 10. (New Trans). That was the beginning of the hope. In one of the last of his Epistles he wrote, "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, *that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*" (Eph. 5. 25-27). That is the end, the high peak of the hope of the gospel, to be followed by His appearing in glory to judge the world in righteousness, when His glorified saints shall appear with Him.

It is evident that there is the danger of being "moved away from the hope of the gospel" 1 Col. 1. 23. We must watch against this. Many have been moved away from it; their eyes have been turned from heaven to earth; they are not looking for the Saviour, but are hoping to "build a better world" when the war is over, just as they hoped that the last war would end all war. Such a hope is vain, but the hope of the gospel is not vain, it is a hope both sure and steadfast as a strong anchor, and it holds the soul steadfast and true though "the foundations of the earth are out of course, and the mountains be carried into the depths of the seas."

There is a remarkable word in Ezekiel 12. The prophet had been sent to the people with a word as to coming judgment; it

had not been immediately fulfilled and the mockers said, "He propheseth of times that are far off" and their jest became a proverb in Israel. The prophet had an answer to their mocking, given him by the Lord, it was, "There shall none of My words be prolonged any more, but the word that I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord." We have what answers to that in our day, we are warned as to it in Peter's second Epistle. "There shall come *in the last days* scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" Our answer is "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10. 37); and the word that He hath spoken shall be done.

The question is asked, Why does not God deal in summary judgment with the men whose ungovernable and devil-inspired ambitions break up the peace of the nations? But if God were to judge all the bad men in the world, how many would escape? "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. 130. 3). God is not indifferent to the unrighteousness of men, He has said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," we may rest in that, but this is not the day of judgment but of mercy: it is the day of God's long suffering, and "we account the longsuffering of our Lord salvation." "The Lord is not slack concerning this promise as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2. Peter 3).

If God is longsuffering with men, we may well be, especially as we consider that this longsuffering has been shewn in all the grace of it to us, but we need patience, or en-

durance while we wait for the Lord.

The Scriptures recognise this. Paul rejoiced in "the patience — or enduring constancy—of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," that was one of the evidences of the true conversion of the Thessalonian believers, and he prayed for them that "the Lord would direct their hearts into the love of God and the patient waiting for Christ," or as a better reading gives it, "the patience of Christ." The thought is a moving one. "He is waiting with patience for the hour of His supreme joy and for the glory of His universal throne, and we share His waiting time: we have part in His patience as we shall have in His glory. But the power of God only can maintain us in this patient waiting, apart from that power we are sure to be moved from our hope, hence we read "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all PATIENCE and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1. 11).

We do not now speak of the signs of the last days that abound, we are not looking for signs but for Him, and the most blessed sign of all that His coming is near would be an increased desire in the heart of His church for His coming. It is the Spirit and the *Bride* that say Come, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." If the distresses of these days turn our thoughts more thoroughly to Him it will be well, and will hasten the day of His appearing. He cannot appear to judge the world in righteousness and bring peace to the nations while His church is here. And while we look onward to His appearing and pray "Thy Kingdom Come," we wait for the realisation of our hope which is to be *for ever with the Lord*.

THE MAN OF GOD.

E. P. Brown.

Notes of Address at Bangor, N. Wales, August 2nd.

Scriptures read: Deuteronomy 33. 1; I Kings 17. 18-24; 2 Kings 4. 8; 1 Timothy 6. 6-15; 2 Timothy 3. 14-17.

MOSESES is called the "man of God" in various Scriptures. The title of Psalm 90 is 'The prayer of Moses, the man of God,' In Ezra also and here in Deut. 33. He was a man of faith, that is the first feature of a man of God, God is real to him, and greater than circumstances. If we are to be men of God we must be men of faith. In Hebrews 11, that chapter which has been called the "Westminster Abbey of the Bible" because it gives us the glorious epitaphs of the men of faith, Moses has a special place. He was set apart for God from his birth, but when he came to the age of responsibility he refused the wealth of the world and great position in it. He refused to be "a man of the world" for he saw Him that is invisible, God was more to him than Egypt. He might have had the throne of that great land but he refused it. Men covet such things and strive after them, but they were as nothing in the eyes of Moses whose faith reached out to God, he fled from them, as the man of God in Timothy is exhorted to do.

Then he turned away from the pleasure of sin, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. This choice of his shewed him to be not a man of the world, but a man of God. The man of the world considers what pleases himself, he caters for his own enjoyment and lives without God, he is blind and cannot see afar off, but Moses looked onward to the time when the people of God would be no more afflicted, a nation of slaves, but a

royal nation, and he was prepared to share their affliction with the future of God's promises in view. God and the word of God guided his choice.

Next he esteemed the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. The treasures of Egypt! They were incalculable, and they might have been his; he might have enjoyed them while he lived, and had them buried with him when he died for the spade of the excavator to discover, but the reproach of Christ was more to him than the treasures of Egypt. It may seem strange to read of the reproach of Christ in relation to those ancient days and the people of Israel, but we know from the New Testament that God had the glory of His beloved Son in view from the beginning, and all His ways in the world were working towards the due time for His appearing, and those faithful patriarchs looked forward to the fulfilment of God's promises in relation to Christ, and so were able to rightly appraise the treasures of the world. It meant suffering and reproach for them in "man's day" God's promises as to Christ had no place in man's schemes nor has He now; the chief corner stone has been refused but faith looks onward to the day of Christ. "O that men were wise and would consider their latter end," said Moses in his psalm. Moses looked on to the end, and we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Then he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the King. What was the King and his wrath and all his power, when compared with God? The man of God who walks in the fear of God does not fear man, no matter how great he may be.

Elijah is called a man of God. He was a righteous man, he stood for God and His rights in the midst of Israel when they had turned to idols. He stood before God, we read. Every believer in Jesus, the great Saviour, can stand without fear before God, for there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, but Elijah stood before God to hear His word and to declare it, and to stand for God before an apostate nation. It involved him in suffering and separation from his people, but God sustained him. He was dependent upon God's provision for him wherever he went. He had confidence in God and was simply obedient to the word of God, He did what God told him to do, and God did not fail him, when the brook dried up the Gentile widow fed him day by day, and the meal and the oil lasted as long as it was needed, the widow's confession at the end of the year was "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord is in thy mouth of a truth."

Elijah was furthermore a man of prayer, and no man is a man of God apart from prayer, it is the expression of his dependence on God and his confidence in Him, the man of the world prides himself on his independence, but the man of God owns that his resources are not in himself or his possessions but in God. James cites Elijah as the example of the power of a man of

prayer; he says, "the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Our next illustration is Elisha, and what marked him was grace. A man of God must be a man of grace. The Lord Jesus was full of grace, and the man of God must walk in His steps. It was a time of great need in Israel when Elisha appeared, but he was equal to all the need. He shewed how good God would be to a needy people, and his grace overflowed to Gentiles. Whether a bankrupt widow whose sons were threatened with slavery or a mighty general stricken with leprosy, it was all the same to Elisha, the grace of God knew no limits and he was there to tell out that grace and to show the goodness of God.

Turning to Timothy, we have a very searching word. The beloved Apostle, his father in the faith, had learned what the path of the man of God was in contrast to that of the man of the world. He had great advantages, advantages of birth and education and mental ability and personality, things highly prized by men of the world but he counted them all loss for Christ. So he was well able to write to Timothy and warn him against those things that would spoil him as a man of God—making haste to get rich, the love of money, perverse disputings, these were not of God, but of the world, and no man could be a man of God and pursue them. "But thou, O man of God," says the Apostle, "*flee these things,*" and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness"—beautiful things, seen in all the perfection in Jesus. They are enduring riches and belong to

eternal life, and not the life of the world.

Finally, if the life of the man of God is to be sustained and if he is to be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, he must have the

Scriptures, he must give himself wholly to them, he must continue in them and not be a Bible student only, but an exponent in his own life of the word, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Everlasting Consolation.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work. (2 Thess. 2. 16-17).

EVERLASTING consolation! What a word is this! It meets the sorrows and needs of to-day, and will be just as good to-morrow whatever it may bring. It is not for time only, it is everlasting; we have it now, it is what heaven will be to us. "Now he is comforted" said Abraham, and Lazarus, who had lived a life of suffering on earth. And what consolation the thought gives, that our present light affliction which is but for a moment works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This everlasting consolation lies in the knowledge of God. Underneath us are His everlasting arms, above us is His banner love, He leads us to our rest and His glory in our rearguard. "If God be for us,

who can be against us?" His presence is our pillow at night and our strength and arm by day. He Himself is the consolation that He gives.

This everlasting consolation is a gift to us, and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God even our Father, are joined as the givers of this gift; it is the gift of their love to us, and their love will be disappointed if we do not appreciate and enjoy the gift, and could any gift be more suitable for these days. Consolation in the present distress, and joined with it this good hope of soon being taken out of it, how well calculated it is to comfort our hearts and establish us in every good word and work.

Lord, I was in the far-off land, I loved from Thee to stray,
 And when unto myself I came, a swine-herd far away—
 One moment—then the welcome sweet, the kiss, the Father's home;
 Far distant was the distance: to Thy bosom, I am come.

Our God and Father, may our souls repose
 In the deep sense of Thine unfailing love!
 Kept by Thy peace, in Him who died and rose,
 Till we are gathered to Thy rest above.

BRITAIN, THE JEWS AND PALESTINE.

THE British Government has been the subject of considerable criticism and severe condemnation because it has not been able to carry out in its completeness the Balfour Declaration that pledged it to make a National home for the Jews in Palestine. The Declaration was universally applauded at the time and Britain received the Mandate from the League of Nations to put it into operation, but since then difficulties have arisen that seem insurmountable. Knowing that Jerusalem and the Jews are to play a prominent part in the events that will close this age, and that the end of it is surely drawing near, we might enquire whether there is anything in Scripture that bears on the present situation and why Britain with all good will has not been able to establish peace in Palestine.

The 18th Chapter of Isaiah is a very remarkable one and appears to throw a flood of light on our subject. Of it in his "Lectures on Isaiah" published as long ago as 1871, Wm. Kelly said, "It is true, as Henderson says, in common with very many, that the chapter is not a "woe" like the preceding, but an appendage to it, with a call summoning attention — "Ho!" to the land unnamed, which is described. (i.e., the opening word of the chapter should be "Ho" and not "Woe").

One nation shall seek to befriend the Jews in the time and way spoken of . . . "Ho, land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the river of Cush" (i.e. beyond the Nile and the Euphrates) means a country outside the limits of those nations which up to the prophet's day had menaced or meddled

with Israel. Egypt and Assyria were the chief of those powers; for there was an Asiatic as well as an African Cush. The land in question lay (not necessarily contiguous to, but it might be far) beyond either of these countries. This comparatively distant land espouses the cause of Israel, but the protection would be ineffectual in result however loud the proffer and the preparation. The use of "wings" to convey the idea of a cover for the oppressed or defenceless is too common to need proofs.

The second verse shows, in addition to the previous characteristics of this future ally of the Jews, that it is a maritime power; for it sends its ambassadors in light ships, (literally of bulrush and papyrus) on the face of the waters. Israel is the object of their anxiety. "Go, ye swift messengers to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto, a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled" The differences between the land in the first verse, which sends out its messengers and ships, and the dispersed people, hitherto so formidable but of late ravaged by their impetuous enemies, stands on no minute points of verbal criticism, but on the general bearing of the context which the English-reading Christian is quite able to judge.

Thus far we have seen the intervention of this unnamed land, described as the would-be protector of Israel, actively engaged with their swift ships it would seem on a friendly mission in quest of that scattered people. But another enters the scene who puts an arrest on the zeal of man (verses 3-4). Univer-

sal attention is demanded. Great events tremble in the balances. Signs are given, visibly and audible—*God is not favouring this busy enterprise*. Man is active: Jehovah, as it were, retires and watches. It is like the parching heat before the lightning, as the dewy cloud in the heat of harvest: a moment of deep stillness and suspense, after efforts to gather in the Jews by the patronage of the maritime nation of verses 1 and 2. All has seemed to flourish but what is man without God? “For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flowers, he shall cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.” Thus total failure of the whole plan ensues. Everything in appearance betokened a speedy ingathering of good to Israel, and their national hopes seemed to be on the eve of being realised, when God brings all to nought, and lets loose the old passions of the Gentiles against His people. The issue is that “they shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them” (verses 5-6).

It was not Jehovah’s time, and yet it was. For “in that time shall a present be brought unto Jehovah of Hosts of a people scattered and peeled and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto: a nation meted out and trodden under foot. Whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of Jehovah of Hosts, the mount of Zion.” Thus will the presumptuous help of man be rebuked, as well as the renewed wrath of the nations once more preying on the poor but loved people of Jeho-

vah. For as surely as they turn again to rend Israel, He will appear in the midst of the desolation, and with His own mighty hand accomplish that which man as vainly seeks to effect as to frustrate. The Jewish nation at that very season, shall be brought a present to Jehovah, and they shall not come empty handed, but emptied of self with lowly grateful hearts to Jehovah in mount Zion, after their final escape from Gentile fury, for His mercy endureth for ever.”

It is an arresting chapter, and if we rightly interpret it, it clearly outlines what has already taken place, but shews as clearly what is yet to be. Nothing could have been more promising and prosperous than the beginning of Britain’s intervention, “the bud is perfect and the sour grape is ripening in the *flower*”. The Jewish univervsity was established, from which its founders boasted that light would shine forth to the end of the earth; towns and cities sprung up, the land yielded a wonderful increase and the Dead Sea its fabulous wealth. Then the Arab, with Ishmael’s and Esau’s deep hatred of Jacob, rose up in opposition to the scheme, and all that promised prosperity is to end in bitter woe for the Jews in the land. Their woes will be great in other countries but nothing to what they will suffer in Palestine, for there, “they shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the field shall winter upon them” — a most graphic portrayal of the great tribulation,—“Jacob’s trouble.”

We should gather that Britain will be compelled to relinquish the mandate, and whatever other nation

steps in will find Jerusalem to be a "burdensome stone," until the Lord intervenes on behalf of His people, as He most surely will. Then without man's schemes and politics He will gather His people and fulfil His word to them. "He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" Matthew 24.

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" Isaiah 35.

It is useless to blame the British Government for the failure of its efforts, the failure is from God, as the final triumph will also be: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away."

When the waters are rough and the sky dark, look towards the shore, the lights shining there will attract and encourage you. Stephen saw those lights and they made him more than a conqueror. He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly unto heaven and saw his Saviour there. There where his Saviour was, was his destination, his home, and from thence came the grace and power that carried him through.

Supposing it had been revealed that the Lord would come at a fixed time, the tendency would have been to be occupied with the event. But He Himself is our hope and we can wait for His coming with patience if He is dwelling in our hearts by faith, if He is the treasure of our hearts while we wait.

And hungry souls there are, that find and eat
 God's manna day by day—
 And glad they are, their life is fresh and sweet,
 For as their food are they.

O Lord, in that celestial throng,
 Ourselves, our very selves we see
 Fruit of Thy sufferings, who, ere long,
 Shall reign in life and light with Thee.

Sweet, blessed hope! But why, O why,
 These lingering years, this long delay;
 While love, with ever wakeful eye,
 Is watching for the break of day?

“BE STILL!” “STAND STILL!” “SIT STILL!”

W. Bramwell Dick.

Psalm 46. 10: Exodus 14. 13: Ruth 3. 18.

WE invite our readers to turn with us to the Word of God for consolation and encouragement. Psalm 46 is very familiar and yields just that of which most are in need. We quote verses from J. N. Darby's New Translations.

“God is our refuge and our strength, a help in distress, very readily found.”

How delightful is this! When in trouble, how prone we are to say “If only I could find someone who understands to counsel and help me,” but first then we find that such a person is not easily found. But God who is so great, Who upholds the Universe, “He is very readily found.” He knows; He understands; He is always available; He is infinite in power and in mercy; His wisdom is perfect; His love is divine; and He is “very readily found.”

What a God is ours! verses 2 and 3 suggest tumult upon earth, the raging of the sea; the passions of man at work; a storm such as that which has just broken over the nations and in contrast, “A river,” a quiet, peaceful river with its calm. Something like that we find in the “city of God, the sanctuary of the habitations of the Most High.”

There we find God; (verse 5); there we see His power; (verse 6); there we can say “Jehovah of Hosts is with us; the God of Israel is our high fortress.” (verse 7). Yet sometimes natural feelings get the better of us; we become restless; in despair we ask “What can we do? What shall we do?” Just then the word comes to us:—

“BE STILL!”

That is just what flesh cannot do. We are such restless, stupid, creatures. But the word is “*BE STILL*, and know that I am God.” Then He graciously lets us into the secret of why He permits the upheaval. “I will be exalted among the Nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” (verse 10). Then we see that He is working out His own plan for His own glory; and when we learn that, encouraged by Himself we say: “Jehovah of Hosts be with us; the God of Jacob is our high fortress,” (verse 11), and on the bosom of divine love we rest.

In the well-known story of Exodus 14, we see how this works. The children of Israel were in a tight corner. If they looked back the Egyptians were bearing down hard upon them; if they looked forward the Red Sea was before them; if they looked on either side there was no escape. They did not look up. How like ourselves when in a difficulty. They vented their rage on Moses, they forgot God. Moses' word to them was:—

“STAND STILL!”

Did it sound absurd? Flesh says “We simply must do something, we cannot stand still.” The world that does not know God says:—“God helps those who help themselves.” We, His children know, or should know, that God helps those who cannot help themselves.

Here was the Word:—

“*FEAR NOT: STAND STILL* and see the salvation of Jehovah which *HE* will work for *YOU* today. Jehovah will fight for

you, and we shall *be still*.”
(verses 13, 14, New Trans).

Their murmuring ceased; their trial ended; and their song of praise began after they had learned their lesson and even prepared to stand still. As it was with them so it will be ever.

In the charming little book of Ruth we learn a similar lesson. Ruth had experienced bitter sorrow. She had learned of God, now she was going to learn God. In her devotedness to her mother-in-law she had decided to accompany her to the land of Israel. When urged to return to her own people how beautiful was her language:—

“Do not intreat me to leave thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. Jehovah do so to me, and more also if ought but death part me and thee.” (1. 16-17 New Trans).

What splendid decision, and unalterable determination was this! The Lord prospered her way. He

brought her contact with Boaz, she found favour in his eyes. Her mother-in-law saw how Jehovah was working on her behalf, and “she said:—

“*SIT STILL*,

my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall.” (3. 18). It worked out so well that she became the wife of Boaz, she was the great-grandmother of David; and her name appears in the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ, as found in Matthew 1. 5. How well was Ruth rewarded for heeding her mother-in-law’s advice to “*SIT STILL*.”

There may be dark and difficult times ahead for us if the Lord leaves us here a little while. Our sympathy goes out to, and our prayers rise for those who have to engage in service of some form or another; those who have to part with loved ones; and those who will be affected directly or indirectly by the conflict. To all our dear fellow believers in such case we would say in the Lord’s name:—

“*BE STILL!*” “*STAND STILL!*”

“*SIT STILL!*”

and see how wonderfully the Lord will work on your behalf.

Note well the character and the attitude of those who discern the mind of the Lord in His word; they are the poor of the flock. Not the proud, the arrogant, the self-sufficient, but the lowly, the contrite in heart—are those to whom the Lord looks. And having no sufficiency in themselves they wait upon the Lord. Their expectation is from Him; they are dependent upon Him. The waiting means prayer of course, but confidence also, and in direct contrast to the restless, impatient spirit of the world, it means quietness and strength. This is the attitude of those who have learnt what they are and what God is. And such are instructed; they learn things that are hidden from the wise and prudent, for these things are revealed to the babes. “Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.”

SYCHAR'S WELL.

James Houston.

John 4.

GRACE is like a mighty overflowing stream. It sweeps on its course, surmounting all obstacles. If dammed at one point, it flows out on another. If, for example, it cannot flow out to Judaea, it will flow out to Samaria. The Lord left Judaea and went to Samaria.

He came to Sychar's well. Wearied with His journey, He sat down on the well to rest awhile. It was about the sixth hour (v. 6). The heat of the sun would be strong then, and probably there would be shade at the well, as was usually the case. But what a picture! The Lord of glory in lowly grace resting from His wearisome journey. The Man at Sychar's well! His journey from Judaea to Samaria is but a miniature of His journey through this world in quest of lost sinners. Grace in Him moved Him to seek the lost; and what a journey was His from glory to Calvary! Truly we can say: "But none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed, nor how dark was the night the Lord passed through, ere He found His sheep that was lost. Out in the desert He heard its cry, sick and helpless and ready to die." If there ever was a lost sheep, it was the woman of Samaria. And if ever we get a view of the seeking Saviour it is here on Sychar's well.

It was necessary that He should go through Samaria. Why? Because the lost sheep was there, the object of His search. And notice, of all places it was *Samaria*. That place condemned for its idolatry. That place against which the prophets had said so much on account of its wickedness. That place that

became a byword of reproach. That place whose inhabitants the Jews hated and with whom they would have no dealings (v. 9). But grace in the Saviour rises above the prejudice of the Jews and the sin of Samaria. It seeks the lost. For that cause it was manifested. In the Saviour that grace was seen. None was too deep in sin to be saved!

"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water" (v. 7). She was all alone. Sinners often find themselves in solitude. Their sins drive them there. Society shuns them. Perhaps this woman was shunned. It was not usual for women to go to draw water alone. Be it as it might, it was thus arranged in God's ordering. She had to come where she came, and she had to come as she came. How perfect are God's ways in grace!

The Lord asked her to give Him to drink. "Give Me to drink," He said. What condescension we see here! No wonder she is astounded at His humility. For a Jew to ask drink from a Samaritan! It was something unheard of. But grace in Him not only brought Him to her, but brought Him *low enough to reach her*. It is this that draws the sinner to the Saviour. What an attractive power it is! Yea, we may say irresistible!

As she thought of His humility, He took the occasion to give her a revelation of Himself. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (v. 10). On hearing

this, she might well gaze at Him in silent wonder. Who was He? What was this living water He would give her? All this was strange to her, yet she was attracted to Him. There was something in Him that was in no one else. She did not know Him, but her need drew her to Him. How often this is the case of awakened souls.

At first her thoughts of Him did not rise very high. She thought of the well; it was deep; He had nothing by which to draw water. Whence could it come? She did not know Him, but He knew her and sought her in grace. How degrading sin is! How it deprives the sinner of all knowledge of God. An ox knows its owner, and an ass its master's crib (Isaiah 1. 3), but a sinner does not know the Saviour. Does not this show the dreadful effects of sin?

But who was this Saviour? Was He greater than father Jacob? This patriarch gave the well to his posterity, after he himself had drunk from it, and also his cattle. How difficult, nay, impossible, apart from grace, for the sinner to know the Saviour! Her thoughts do not rise above the well and her pot. Here is a deep well; He has nothing by which to draw water; how can He give her water?

But the blessed Lord does not leave her in ignorance; nor does He expose her ignorance to create embarrassment, and put her to shame. Gently He leads her from material things to spiritual. Anyone who drank material water would thirst again; anyone who drank the water He gave would never thirst again. This water would be in him a well of living water springing up into

everlasting life (v. 14).

Here she was arrested. She was really thirsty, morally so. This thirst moved her to say, "Sir, give me this water" (v. 15). Need she had of it; well she felt it; now *she* asked for drink. Notice *He* asked her first for drink; then He led her to ask Him for it. This is how grace works in the sinner. To have thirst, moral thirst, completely quenched; to have a perennial fountain in one's own heart, ever filling, ever satisfying—surely this was above all things to be desired! "Sir, give me this water."

But before she could have her thirst satisfied, before this fountain could pour forth its life-giving streams into her heart, there was something that had to be settled, and that was the question of her sin. Her conscience had to be reached; conviction of sin had to be produced. In order to do this, her sin must be discovered. "Go, call thy husband and come hither" (v. 16). Here was the test. Who was her husband? Meekly and truly she answered: "I have no husband" (v. 17). The one with whom she was living was not her husband. Five husbands she had had, and the one then cohabiting with her was not her lawful husband. All this spoke of *sin*. She had to be faced with it. It had to be discovered, confessed and put away, before the living water could fill her heart. The Lord must ever work His work of grace *through the conscience*. There is no other way by which He can accomplish it; but the exposure of grace in a sinful life leads to the complete forgiveness and clearance of the sins it discovers. The wound grace may make in the conscience is preliminary to a work of settled peace. Sin

must be discovered, dealt with, confessed, in order to lead to a blessing.

She, however, advances rapidly in the knowledge of Him. She sees He is a prophet. "Sir, I perceive Thou art a prophet" (v. 19). Who could give her a revelation of her sinful life but one who had the mind of God? A prophet knew God's mind; now He could not have known her life otherwise. It is marvellous to see how the awakened conscience leads to knowledge of God. It knows it has to do with God. The great question of evil is raised by light from God. The conscience is the avenue through which this light passes. Hence the sinner in whom conscience works conviction of sin feels he has to do with God.

Shame might have filled her to the point of embarrassment. She might have fled from His presence like a shadow from the light. But grace held her fast. Law convicts, condemns and drives away; grace convicts, clears and draws to itself. What a difference! She is convicted by Him, yet she is drawn to Him!

She changes the subject to worship, not that she had not known about it, but she wanted to know now where to worship. There had been conflict long enough as to Jerusalem and Samaria, antagonistic centres of worship. Which was right? The Lord owned *Salvation*

was of the Jews. But as to *Worship* it would appear He disowned Jerusalem. The Jews are viewed as reprobate in John, and Jehovah's feasts had degenerated to "feasts of the Jews." There was a worship to which He drew her attention, a worship entirely apart from any of a favoured nation on earth, it was the worship of the Father. This was not performed in a perfunctory, ceremonious way, through visible ordinances, but in Spirit and in truth. This supposed the full revelation of the Father in the Son and in the power of the Spirit. The Father's love known and enjoyed in the Son through the Spirit. Touching this she reached the highest point of Christianity. But such is grace. It lifts up the beggar from the dung-hill. It was there she found herself. It sets him among the princes, that is, amongst the blessed and most exalted of God's people. It was there she was raised, to a revelation such as knowing the Father, and to privileges such as worshipping the Father, as could not possibly be higher.

We may well contemplate the place of lowliness to which the Saviour came to seek and save the sinner, and the place of exaltation to which He raised His own when sought and found; and doing this, we see that it was grace that brought Him down and raised up His own. Such is the scene we have at Sychar's Well.

Be not to me, my God,
 As one that turned aside
 To tarry for a night, and trod
 His onward way. *Abide*
 With me as light divine
 That brings unto my breast
 Those gladdening scenes e'en now as mine,
 Soon my eternal rest.

THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT.

T. Oliver.

"But ye are come to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than Abel" (Heb. 12. 24).

ELSEWHERE the adjective "new" in connection with "Covenant" is the translation of *kainos* implying newness of kind or quality, but here the usage is unique of another word *neos* which means newly made i.e., young or having all the freshness of youth in comparison with that which had long since become old.

God had ever in mind the purpose to bless the earth, but He could not do so according to man's responsibility which had been conclusively demonstrated as an unreliable basis throughout 4,000 years of probation. Pursuant of this end, Moses became the mediator of the first Covenant which spoke of God's claim over man and required a satisfactory response from him. But that was a complete failure on man's side. Therefore the prophetic Scriptures with ever increasing emphasis brought to light that God would establish a New Covenant with Israel, no longer on the ground of man's responsibility but on the basis of His faithfulness. That would involve the law written in the hearts of the people and the forgiveness of sins.

No less a person than Christ could affect God's purpose. He died for the sins of the people who were under the first Covenant. He met man's accumulated liability and became the Mediator of the New Covenant by redemption. But the blessing is more comprehensive than meeting the needs of individual men and women. Its bearing has re-

lation to man on the earth. Therefore the blessing is secured for the earth as to the whole creation which shared with man the consequence of his sin. So under the New Covenant all creation will share with man its benefits. "The earnest expectation of creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8. 19).

The new Covenant expresses God's disposition of love primarily towards Israel. But it has also relation to all men. What God will establish for Israel is also His purpose for mankind in a general way. God's disposition towards all men was manifested in the death of Christ. So in instituting the Supper on the night of His betrayal the Lord said to His own "this cup is the New Covenant in my blood." The New Covenant was ratified in His blood. He is the Mediator or the One by means of which the Covenant was established.

Then the second expression puts emphasis on the blood which was sprinkled by analogy with the procedure under the Old Covenant. The blood of sprinkling testifies to the righteousness and grace of God relative to the removal of sin. The blood of Christ was shed on earth just as that of Abel was, but the former spoke better things or acted more powerfully in bringing about incomparably better results than the latter did. Indeed the blood of Abel called for vengeance, but the blood of Christ speaks of righteousness accomplished for God therein. So that

the dread entail of human guilt is broken for the believer who comes into the benefit of remission of sins.

The blood of Abel testifies to the first flagrant act of man's self will in the world. The incident was the forerunner of a flood of violence which soon filled the earth and ultimately brought God's judgment in a flood of water to cleanse the earth. But subsequent to the flood, mankind soon took on the character of the antediluvians and that character of violence has been sustained ever since.

Man came under the sentence of death by his disobedient act in Eden. But he hastened the incidence of the event by hatred and violence. Abel was the only one of the worthies before the flood named in scriptural record who was short lived, and without progeny. Sin was introduced against God in Eden and shortly after the expulsion therefrom sin was manifested by man against his most intimate neighbour!

The blood of Christ does not call for retribution against the Jew as that of Abel did against Cain whereby he could no longer continue near to God, but became a wanderer on the earth. The grace of God bringing salvation commenced operations at the blood-stained city of Jerusalem, just seven weeks after the arch-deed of violence had been committed. The blood of Christ invoked

forgiveness of sins and peace with God even for the brutal soldier who drove his spear into the side of Christ.

The blood of sprinkling is God's answer to the defilement wrought by man. It is the witness of the righteousness of God accomplished in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood is the means of purgation of sins. All the sin and defilement which has come in by man has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, so that God is now satisfied perfectly.

There is a practical bearing on the Christians so that they may be separate from the world and its glory. "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2. 9). The Christians now get the blessings of the New Covenant in the sequel of the death of Christ. These are administered in His Lordship. In partaking of the Lord's Supper, He presents Himself to the partakers as the Mediator of the New Covenant.

But the benefits of the New Covenant are not exhausted in the Christian era, indeed they are relative in a primary way to the world to come which will be founded on the same redemption. While the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness dwells, repose on the same basis, viz., the infinite glory which has accrued to God through the virtue of the blood of Christ.

The shield of faith has two sides, glorious with the gold of heaven. On the one side is inscribed "I BELIEVE." On the other side, carved as deep, outlined as large, and pregnant as the other with all joy and strength for the soul, "I BELONG." This was the shield that Paul carried into the good fight. It is the shield we must all use. We belong to the One in whom we have believed.

“HE . . . OFFERED UP HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN.”

F. B. Hole.

THE more attentively we examine the history of Abraham, the more we perceive how it was characterized by new departures in the ways of God. Not only did he receive the first of the special revelations of God's Name; not only was he the first to receive a Divine call out from amongst men, and to have his faith declared to be the way of righteousness, but he was the first to have hopes connected with a heavenly city and country. We also find that, as far as we have any record, he was the first to apprehend God as the God who raises the dead. What we may speak of as the “resurrection world” came into his view, and this comes before us in verses 17-19 of Hebrews 11.

Two episodes in Abraham's life stand out with special prominence. They are recorded in Genesis 15 and 22. The earlier of the two is cited by Paul in Romans 4, as showing that a man is justified before God apart from works by the faith that takes Him at His word in the teeth of all appearances. The latter is cited by James in chapter 2 of his epistle, as showing that before men a man is justified by the doing of those works which are the direct result and fruit of the faith which he professes. Both apostles find in Abraham a great example of faith. The one points out the faith that God saw on that starry night when He gave His word as to the coming seed; the other to the act of faith consummated in the land of Moriah, which fulfilled the statement that, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness,” and led to his being called “the Friend of God.”

Genesis 22 begins with the statement that “God did *tempt* Abraham.” He was “*tried*,” as we read in Hebrews 11; that is, he was put to the *test* by God. Genuine faith always is put to the test, inasmuch as it is of value. This is plainly stated in 1 Peter 1. 7, and we see the same rule of action prevailing among men. That which is valuable is tested: that which is valueless is thrown away. Faith is of great worth in the sight of God.

We turn to Genesis 15 to find God giving His word to the childless Abraham that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and Abraham taking God at His word with the simplicity of a child, and consequently being accounted righteous. But we have to pass on to chapter 17 to find the feature which moulded his faith and imparted to it a very striking character. The promise of a large and powerful posterity was repeated to him when he was well into his one hundredth year and Sarah his wife had completed ninety. All hope of a child according to nature was gone. In a reproductive sense both of them were dead. Abraham was fully alive to this, as verse 17 of that chapter shows. For years he had believed that he should have a seed as the stars of heaven, just because God had said so; but now this renewal of the promise brought him face to face with that, which made the fulfilment of the promise impossible according to all human calculation.

It was now quite evident that if God was going to fulfil His promise He must be going to raise up a living child from dead parents. Was

Abraham ready to believe this? He was, and the latter part of Romans 4 amplifies this part of the story for us. He did not consider his own physical condition, nor Sarah's: he did not stagger because the thing was humanly impossible. Against all human hope he believed in hope, because he believed in God as One who quickens the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were. The God, in whom he believed, was to him a God of resurrection power. *The very essence of his faith lay in that.*

In due time God fulfilled His word, and Isaac was born. Here was a child of miraculous origin—a child born in the power of resurrection. And in this seed of supernatural origin all the promises were vested. Incidentally we may remark that Israel is the only nation which had in this way a supernatural beginning, and it is in keeping with this that God's purposes for the blessing of the earth await their restoration to His favour, and when once more they are nationally blessed, "the receiving of them" will be "life from the dead" (Rom. 11. 15). They will get that national resurrection of which the prophets have spoken (see Isa. 26; Ezek. 37; Dan. 12) and the whole world will share in the revivifying and renewal of those days. All this, and much more, was latent in Isaac the child of promise, for of him was to come in due season the Seed, to whom the promises were made; that is, Christ.

To test the faith of Abraham God demanded the sacrifice of Isaac. The previous chapter in Genesis shows us that years before Abraham had had to face a lifelong separation from Ishmael, and though it was grievous in his sight

he had responded and given him up. It was one thing however to give up the child born after the flesh, when the child of promise was actually possessed, and quite another to yield up the child of promise just as he was coming to maturity; leaving in possession nothing save faith in the invisible God who raises the dead. In the presence of this great test the faith of Abraham triumphed.

It is worthy of note that the Jews, as a people springing from Abraham after the flesh, have been confronted with the same test in principle, and have wholly failed. Of them "as concerning the flesh, Christ came" (Rom. 9. 5), and in the promise of that they made as a nation their boast. Yet when He did come, and it began to appear that He was not going to remain among them in the flesh to honour and glorify their nation, but that He was to die for their sins and rise from the dead, they did not desire Him. *They did not wish to surrender Him on the old basis, and receive Him on the basis of resurrection.* He became an offence to them, and they stumbled at that stumbling-stone. Under this test the faith of Abraham shone out brightly, and he did not stumble.

In offering up Isaac, Abraham offered up "his *only begotten*," for the command in Genesis was, "Take now thy son, thine *only* son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him." It is evident that the older son Ishmael did not count in divine reckoning, neither did the other children born to Abraham after the death of Sarah. Isaac stood out, unique and alone. It is an interesting fact that the same word is used for "only" as is translated, "darling," in Psalm 22. 20; as also

that the words "only begotten" in Hebrews 11 are the translation of one compound word which is applied as we know to the Lord. Its application to Isaac shows that we must not press too literal a sense into it. It has the significance of special and unique, the supreme object of affection.

Isaac was to be offered up "for a burnt offering," as we read in Genesis. Now the burnt sacrifices, according to Leviticus 1, were "of a sweet savour unto the Lord." No sweet savour ascends to God from the fallen race of Adam; so it is significant, we think, that this child of supernatural birth should be the one selected by God for a burnt offering. In this of course he was a striking type of Christ, who became Man that He might be the sacrifice on behalf of men, and who took up Manhood by way of the Virgin birth, so that in His case the entail of sin, which lay in the Adamic race, might be broken, and as a consequence there might at last be a Burnt Offering, the sweet savour of which should be *intrinsic and eternal*. In Christ is found the great reality: in Isaac we see the forecast and type.

In asking for Isaac God asked for the one who was the crown of all Abraham's hopes and the chief object of his affection. It was a test of both love and faith. Did Abraham love Isaac more than God; the gift more than the Giver? Abraham made all the preparations to offer him up, and thus showed that God commanded his heart, and consequently his obedience. The same test comes to all of us in a variety of ways, but very specially in the manner the Lord Jesus indicated when He said, "He that loveth father or mother . . . son or daughter

more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10. 37, 38). The Lord set forth the same fact, but in somewhat different words, in Luke 14. 26, 27.

Without a doubt it is easier to set aside one's nearest and dearest relations in favour of the Lord than to take up the cross personally and hate one's own life. But it is just this latter thing which the martyrs have actually and literally done; and though we may not be called upon to tread literally in their footsteps, we need to cultivate the martyr spirit, that puts God first in our affections, and yields up anything and everything which would be a rival or displace Him.

But how can we reach the point where we are ready to do this? Truly the Lord must be pre-eminent in our affections, but also we must share Abraham's faith in God as the One who raises the dead. Abraham said in effect: "God gave me this son in supernatural fashion, as one raised up out of death, and all His promises are vested in him. Now He demands him from me, to be yielded up as a burnt offering. But though He does, cannot He do again what He did before? I received Him as a living shoot from a dead tree. God will surely verify His own word, that in Isaac my seed is to be called, by raising him from the dead." Hebrews 11 assures us that he reasoned thus in faith, saying that he accounted "that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead."

Faith always lays hold of God and of the revelation which He has given. *Divine light* shines in the revelation, and faith is the *spiritual*

sight which apprehends and appreciates the light. The Lord made Himself known to Abraham as the Almighty God, and in connection with that promised the birth of Isaac. Faith discerned the significance of this and trusted in Him as the God who raises the dead. At a later date Hannah proclaimed this fact in saying, "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up" (1 Sam. 2. 6). A mere baby can do something which kills and brings down to the grave. The greatest and most powerful of men can do nothing to make alive and bring up. God can do both with equal ease.

Now this exactly lies at the heart of our Christian faith, for "we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4. 24). Moreover the Christian position is one of identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. We are dead with Him and also risen with Him, and hence there comes to us the word, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6. 11). The fact is that all our lives here are to be lived on this death and resurrection principle, and if this is well established in our souls we shall find it possible to follow in the steps of Abraham and yield to God that which we most love, if He be pleased to put us to the test. Whatever it may be, we shall account that God is well able to restore it to us on a resurrection basis, or, what is even better, give us an abundant recompense in the resurrection world which is to come.

In the case of Isaac death and resurrection did not actually take place. Abraham was tested up to

the last moment and then a substitutionary sacrifice was provided. His faith had counted on the resurrection power of God, as we can see even in Genesis 22, where his words are recorded, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, *and come again to you.*" Isaac came again, not as one actually raised from the dead, but as one received from the dead in a figure or parable. Thus he became a child of resurrection in a double sense: once actually as regards his birth, and then figuratively as offered to God.

Are we not conscious that there comes to us a call from God similar to the one that reached Abraham? We fear that we have largely overlooked it. The general trend of Christian thinking is in the opposite direction. We think and talk so much of what we can *gain* rather than *give up*, of what we may *acquire* rather than *yield*. In a general way we speak of what we might accomplish for God if we had more power, more influence, more men, more money. Does it ever occur to us what might happen if there were *more renunciation*? Abraham's life was one of renunciation. He gave up country, kindred, father's house, and then he yielded the best of the promised land to Lot; he gave up Ishmael, and finally Isaac in whom was vested the Divine promise. But this is the man who was called "the Friend of God." His abundant recompense lies in the heavenly city and country.

In the New Testament we find Paul marked by the same feature. In Philippians 3 he does not tell us of what he set out to acquire for Christ, but of those things in which he *suffered loss* that he might win Christ. In verses 5 and 6 we have the things that he yielded up, and in

result he had Christ as his gain and he came forth in the power of His resurrection. Paul got his "Isaac" back in risen power, which is vastly better than possessing him according to the flesh. And Paul is an example to us, for in that very chapter he says, "Brethren, be followers together of me."

Let us not say, as did some in the days of our Lord, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" If we do not misread the signs of the times, days are closing in upon us when things are about to be taken from our hands. Liberties and opportunities are disappearing rather than increasing. Things that we have long supposed to be necessities for the work of the Lord are likely to fail us. Do we know Him as the

supreme Master of all human improbabilities, as the God who raises the dead?

Nothing short of this will carry us through the days that remain to the church on earth, be they few or many. No power short of the power of resurrection ever has been of any real avail, though by a long run of comparative ease we may have been beguiled into thinking so. So let us take God's way. If we have obeyed the exhortations of Romans 6, and yielded ourselves to God, we surely shall be enabled to yield to Him at His demand any "Isaac," that we may be possessed of. All will be restored to us in resurrection power, possibly in this world, but certainly in the world to come.

"A great Multitude of Fishes."

"*MASTER, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.*" It must have meant something to Simon to have to confess such signal FAILURE: "*nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.*" That was FAITH indeed, and stands to Simon's credit. Whatever the rest might do he would obey the Master's word. Then the great multitude of fishes; a FULLNESS of blessing that must have surprised them all. Without the Lord failure; at His command, a fulness that surpassed even the expectation of faith. And these things were written for our learning. What could Simon do but fall down at Jesus' knees? He realised that he was in the presence of God, the Creator, and he felt his sinfulness, his utter unfitness for that presence. Yet to whom could he go? I am inclined to think that the Lord's words to him must have surprised

him more than the great catch. "Fear not." Divine power was there, and divine holiness, but divine grace also. Grace that could take up a sinful man and change and cleanse him and make him a vessel, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, was there in the Lord.

We are sure that Simon never forgot the miracle of the fishes. He would possibly think of the night's fruitless fishing in relation to his own determination to stand for the Lord and his utter failure in the high priest's kitchen on the night of the betrayal. But on the day of Pentecost how skilfully he cast the net, at the word of the Lord and in the power of the Holy Ghost inclosed a great multitude of men. It was the fulfilment of the Lord's words to him, "Thou shalt catch men." It is a very interesting story and very instructive, and was written for our learning.