

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

"Thy Word is Truth."

THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL
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1940

"The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old . . .

"Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors."

Proverbs 8. 22, 34.

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

John 6. 63.

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Scripture Truth

VOLUME XXXII.

“THY WORD IS TRUTH”

1940

THE GLORY, WEALTH AND PATIENCE OF THE LORD.

J. T. Mawson.

Scripture read: Revelation 3. 14-22.

IT is not my intention to depress you by discoursing on the tragedy of the Laodicean church. I have a happier and more heartening theme. We know that this Laodicean condition describes one of the last and worst phases of the church's career on earth, but it describes also the condition into which individual christians may fall; it may describe your condition and mine. We should face the danger, that being forewarned we may be forearmed. Let no one think that he does not need these words of the Lord to His backslidden church, recorded for us by the Holy Ghost; every one of us needs them or it would not have been said, “He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.”

The Lord is very jealous of our affections and spiritual condition, and He has His own way of speaking to us and searching our hearts. Some time ago I visited a dear brother in a mental institution. He was in the hospital ward at the extreme end of it. As I sat talking to him I noticed a man at the other end of the ward beckoning to me. I went to see what he wanted. He said, “You are a gospel preacher.” I said, “By the grace of God I am.” “Yes,” he added. “But you are growing lukewarm. Don't grow lukewarm, good afternoon.” I had nothing to say in answer as to myself; his words searched my heart and made me pray, “O Lord preserve me from

drifting into that condition so obnoxious to Thee.” It is easy to drift. A shrewd and earnest Christian was asked as to the church to which he belonged. He answered in one word, “Lukewarm.” “And what is the cause of that?” he was asked. “There is no cause,” he said, “it's just chilled down naturally.” That is our tendency and our danger, and everything around us contributes to this natural chilling down, and the only way in which we can be preserved from it is by keeping the fire burning within our souls.

There is only one way by which the fire in our souls can be kept burning and that is by setting the Lord always before us, and specially as He shews Himself in His word to the Laodiceans. He tells them what He is, what He can impart and what He does. The knowledge of Him as He here appears will keep us from backsliding, and even if any of us have drifted into this lukewarm condition a sight of Him in this threefold way is well calculated to recover us to the warmth of first love.

He says, “I am the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” Every heart here will be surely stirred by the thought that God has had a Man in the world who was in absolute accord with His holy will; who Amened every thought and word of God. Every man of Adam's race thought of himself; they said

“Nay” to the will of God, for self governed them, and the very essence of sin is *self*, and all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But Jesus did not come short. He is the Amen. As He came from His high glory into this world, He said, “Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40. Hebrews 10). It was the Amen that uttered those wonderful words. His determination was that every thought of God’s heart should be fulfilled; that His will should be done in its full and blessed completeness; that there should be a perfect response in a Man on earth to God in heaven, and a “so be it” to His will.

When those shepherds looked upon Him lying, a lowly babe in the manger at Bethlehem, they looked upon the great Amen. Angels must have marvelled at the long-suffering of God who waited as the centuries between Adam and Christ rolled slowly by, but it was for this He waited. To Him all the prophets bore witness; for His day all the men of faith had looked. Do you wonder that when the due time arrived a multitude of Angels joined in the joyful words, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”?

In the Amen is finality, the full and final revelation of God. Nothing could be added to that revelation when the Amen had uttered His voice. And therein lies the great and unforgivable sin of Modernism, it takes from the revelation or adds to it, it attempts to sweep away the Amen, and says there has been no Amen as yet, no finality and never will be until man has evolved himself upward from the ape to God; it

refuses the revelation that came down from God to men. It has no certainty, no assurance, no true Christ and hence no true God, and no Amen, and its condemnation and eternal judgment are just (ch. 32. 18. 19).

But the Amen must be also the *Faithful and True Witness*, all would fail without this, but this He was from the first breath that He drew in the manger to His last upon the Cross. He could say “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, lo, I have not refrained My lips, O Lord. Thou knowest I have not hid Thy righteousness within My heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy loving kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation” (Ps. 40. 9, 10). But this made Him the object of Satan’s inveterate and implacable malice and the scorn and hatred of men; the Faithful and True Witness was the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. How popular He might have been if He had only compromised a little, Satan would have given Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and men would have crowned Him King. But He would not compromise. He was the Faithful and True Witness in words and works. His words were the Father’s words equally when He said “Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest” and “How shall ye escape the damnation of hell”. His works were the Father’s works as completely so when He drove the money changers from the Temple as when He gathered the children to His bosom. The nature of God which is love was fully revealed in Him, but He also bore true witness to God’s holiness and hatred of sin.

But the witness would have been

incomplete without the Cross. If you would know what God is, look at the Cross. See there God's beloved Son given for a rebel world. See there sin arising in its might to crush and destroy the Son of God and see the love of God rising higher than it all, yes, at the Cross God's love celebrated its mighty triumph, making the climax of man's hatred the occasion for the manifestation of supreme and invincible love. When Jesus said "It is finished", God was glorified, the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness had finished the work that God had given Him to do.

He became incarnate and lived and died on earth but He has been raised again from the dead, and as the risen Lord He is *the beginning of the creation of God*, a new creation that can never be soiled or spoiled by sin, but upon every part of which He will stamp His own character, And I call upon you who have believed and all that is within you to bless His holy Name, for you are part of that new creation, the creation of God. As the Amen Jesus stood alone, He was unique, the Second Man out of heaven; as the Faithful and True Witness He stood alone, distinguished from all other men by the Father's voice from the excellent glory, and none could share with Him the curse of the Cross. He was the holy Victim there, made sin for us, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. But now He is raised from the dead, the glory of the Father raised Him, proof that the price He paid for our redemption was enough, that eternal justice was vindicated and Satan defeated for ever. Now He has companions, He calls them His brethren, they are the much fruit brought forth by the death of the Corn of Wheat (John 17. 24), you and me, who have Him

as our Saviour and our Lord.

He is the Leader, the Head of this new creation and He has breathed His own life into us, He has imparted to us the Spirit, so that not only is the life of it ours but the power of it as well. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 48), and "As He is so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 1). Having part in the nature, life and power of the new creation we find the Father's will to be good, acceptable and perfect. It is as being joined to Christ. "One spirit with the Lord" that we have this place and power. Christ Himself stamps His own character upon the new creation and so upon us as we are subject to Him. It is the great triumph of grace that we who always said "Nay" to the will of God should now say "Amen" to it; that we should desire to be faithful and true witnesses and have our part in the creation of God; but we shall not know the power and blessedness of these new creation blessings by looking at ourselves and wondering how far we are in them, it is as we behold them in Christ that we are kept, as we behold His glory we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

Now we may have accepted these great things as doctrine and yet never have appropriated them by faith and made them realities in our soul's experience by the Spirit. Was this the cause of the Laodicean's lukewarmness? It does appear so, for they had let go these realities for the vain show that man in the flesh makes; they had turned from the second Man to the first. They were a boastful crowd, and wherever you hear boasting, even if it be in spiritual possessions and positions there is the Laodicean spirit; it is self; it is

the flesh. I am not going to dwell upon that, though it might be good by way of warning, but what I want is to keep before you the Lord Himself and the true riches that He has to impart.

He says, "I counsel thee to buy of Me." To buy may mean parting with something that has been highly prized, it certainly means the appropriation of that that the Lord has to impart and it involves a personal transaction with Himself. He has three things to impart, Gold tried in the fire, white raiment and eye-salve. I think all will agree that gold in Scripture is a symbol of what God is: His nature, His glory. Here it is gold tried in the fire. I speak with the greatest of reverence when I say God has been tested to the uttermost. His long-suffering, His nature, His love was tested when Jesus was here, tested by the opposition of sinners, tested fully and finally at the Cross, and with what result?

"Inscribed upon the cross we see
In shining letters, God is love."

God, as revealed in the cross of Christ, is the gold tried in the fire.

What a wonderful thing the knowledge of God is; to be able to say to Him, "Thou art My God", and to know that nothing can separate us from His love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! To wake in the morning with the knowledge of Him in the heart, to be able to say, "I know God and He loves me, He has power and all wisdom, and I may commit my way to Him for this day and be perfectly quiet and at rest, no matter what I may have to meet: to lie down at night and say "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell

in safety": to be able to say in days of stress and danger "If God be for us, who against us?" This is the treasure we may have in our earthen vessels: this is the gold tried in the fire.

The *White Raiment* is Christ. Paul knew this when he desired "to be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith" Phil 3. 9. There never was a time in man's history when his moral bankruptcy and stark nakedness were more evident than to-day, only excepting that one day when from the frenzied multitude there rose the cry, "Away with Him, crucify Him." The princes of this world crucified the Lord's glory. And we have to chose between this man and Christ. Consider what man is in whom the works of the flesh appear, then read the Gospels and consider Christ, and say which you prefer, to whom are you attracted? Will you have the first man as your covering and character before God and man, or Christ? To be clothed in the beauty of Christ before God and to have him as your character before men is to have the white raiment that thou mayest be clothed.

THE EYESALVE is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit within the heart, opening the eyes of the heart to see and appreciate what Christ is. It is by the Spirit's teaching that we discern the true character of the world and of man, and of self. We learn that in our flesh good does not dwell, and it is in vain to look for it in the world that has refused Christ, and it is by the same Spirit that we behold the glory of the Lord. He takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us, and glorifies Him.

Is it not a very wonderful thing that we, once without God and without hope in the world may now know the triune God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—active towards us for our enrichment and satisfaction; that we may know Father, Son and Holy Ghost in their infinite blessedness in our soul's experience. It was this that the Lord offered to the Laodicean church, and this He offers to us.

Now I pass on to how He acts. He says, "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." I question whether in the whole of the New Testament there are words in which there is more pathos than in those words. Think of it. The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, who has the wealth of heaven to give, who loved His church and gave Himself for it, shut out, and the door barred against Him! Room inside that church for pride and boasting, for the world and the things of the world, but no room for Jesus! Yet He stands at the door, not with anger in His heart, but unrequited love; not with stern rebuke upon His lips but tender entreaty. He does not knock with glittering sword but with pierced hand.

It does not appear as though there was any hope of repentance on the part of this church as such, but the Lord appeals to the heart of the individual, to your heart and mine, "*If any man hear My voice.*" He yearns for responsive affection; time, labour, money, are all right in their place and may be used for Him and His service, but it is companionship that He seeks; communion is His great desire, and nothing can satisfy love but this. It is love that speaks

in His voice. Do we hear it? Have we any object that would divide our hearts with Him and gradually force Him out? May the thought of His love set us free from it, that He may be the object bright and fair to fill and satisfy our heart.

"I will sup with him and he with Me." He will come down to our things and commune with us about them, sharing the joys and sympathising in the sorrows, and lifting us above our things that we might sup with Him, that we might have part with Him in His joys and have fellowship with Him in His sufferings.

Then finally, there is the promise to the overcomer, and just as it seems that He reserved for this church the greatest revelation of His glory and wealth and love, so it seems to me that the reward offered to the overcomer is the sweetest of them all. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, *and am set down with My Father on His throne.*" I venture to say that the dearest thing to the heart of the Lord is the approval of His Father. How has that approval been expressed? The Father has set Him with Himself on His throne. Says the Lord, The overcomer shall have My approval and I will shew that approval by setting him with Me on My throne. He who gives Me his companionship while the mass shut the door upon Me, shall be My companion in the day of My glory. Are you ambitious, my young Christian friends? Let your ambition run in this line. We are ambitious, said Paul, that whether present or absent we should be well pleasing to Him. The Lord grant that every one of us may have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

CHRIST AS THE SUFFERER.

Inglis Fleming.

IN the first epistle of Peter the Lord is seen throughout as

THE SUFFERER

From various points of view He comes before us in this character.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS WERE A SUBJECT OF PROPHECY.

That Christ should suffer is the burden of the Old Testament prophets, who "enquired and searched diligently" into their own writings.

"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1. 11).

In type and picture as well as in direct statements these sufferings were plainly indicated. Joseph in many forms of sorrow and trial was a remarkable type of Christ. The sacrifices under the law all pointed to Him as the great Sacrifice. Psalms 22, 40, 69, 102 and others very manifestly speak of His refusal. Isaiah 53, Zechariah 13, and many other passages bring Him before us in His rejection and in His subsequent reign.

To the people of Israel who looked for freedom from their enemies a *suffering* Messiah was a stumbling stone. Their teachers could not understand such Scriptures. They expected a glorious King and Deliverer, and so far they were right. That He should suffer first was a matter of profound perplexity to them. Some indeed suggested that there must be two Messiahs, a suffering one and a conquering one.

The mystery is solved for us in the

verse quoted above. The sufferings of Christ would precede the promised and purposed glories.

To-day we stand between the period of His sufferings and the time of His glory.

We look back with adoring eyes at His past sufferings, and as we look forward we rejoice in the prospect of His future glories. The crown of thorns of the past is set aside. The Lord is already "crowned with glory and honour", and soon He will come forth in majesty, crowned with "many crowns." The diadems of glory soon will be upon His brow. And He will "reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

In chapter 2 the Lord is seen in His sufferings *for us* as we read,

"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2. 21-24).

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AN EXAMPLE

The example of Christ is before us now. His bearing when He suffered is prominent. He fulfils Isaiah's prophecy, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth He not His mouth."

Moral glory was manifested equally in His silence, as in His words. With Him there was no sin, no guile, no reviling, no threatening, perfection shone forth in every act. And He "bare our sins in His own body" in order that we, being dead to sins, being done with them altogether, "should live unto righteousness." Once we were as wandering sheep, now we are under the direction of the Shepherd and guardian of our souls. He is our Leader and Guide, and we are called to follow Him in His wonderful pathways.

In our earthly pilgrimage we may be called to suffer. If so let us make sure that it is either for righteousness, or for Christ's name sake. Let it be manifest that it is not for evil doing in any way. Christ has suffered for sins. Do not let us suffer for sins then. In chapter 3, His sufferings are presented in a deeper way.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AS A SACRIFICE FOR SINS

"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just (One) for the unjust (ones), that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3. 18).

In no other way than by His becoming a sinoffering, could the righteous demands of God's holy throne be met. In no other way could the heart of God, towards man, in his guilt and need, be manifested. In no other way could our sins be blotted out. In no other way could we be redeemed from under the power of Satan. In no other way could we be near to God.

It was God's desire that we should be brought to Himself, brought to know Him, brought to confide in

Him, brought to love Him, brought to worship Him, brought to serve Him, as sons and priests before Him for ever, in His own house, the Father's house.

That all this might come about, the Lord Jesus came into perfect manhood here. "Lo I come to do Thy will, O My God", were His words as He came. And "I do always the things that please Him," marked His every footfall as He went His way in answering obedience, even unto death, the death of the cross. Nothing could deflect Him from His purpose, nothing could deter Him. Nothing could discourage Him even in His rejection.

We hear Him say, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12. 50). The baptism of death and judgment, at Golgotha, must be accomplished before He could tell out that which was in His heart. He was straitened, pent up, in spirit until the sufferings of the cross being finished, He could as risen declare the glorious results of His completed work.

He had said, "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). He in His life of perfection was alone. But He had come in order that there might be much fruit for God, in the carrying out of all His Father's purposes of grace towards man, according to His own good pleasure.

In resurrection the words of triumph fell from the lips of the risen Lord, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, "I ascend unto My

Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20. 17). Now He could make known the spoils of His victory. Now they were brought to God, that in fullest acceptance and relationship they might rejoice before Him, and be His worshippers and His witnesses.

In resurrection-life we are bound with Himself in the presence of God. In His death as our Substitute we have died. In His life as the Risen One we live.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS ARE THE WAY OF VICTORY FOR US

Victory over sin and the world is to be ours. His sufferings being accomplished and He being risen and we being quickened together with Him, a practical effect is to be produced in our lives.

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Our own wills once swayed us. We lived for the accomplishment of our own lusts, in pleasures and desires of various kinds. In the death of Christ our self-life, our sinful life, has been brought to an end. Now applying that death to ourselves, arming ourselves "with the same mind", we judge the "flesh of sin" and in the power of the Holy Spirit we can live the rest of our time here in the world, to the will of God.

For this we are here. As holy priests we can tell out our heart's praises, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus

Christ. As royal priests we can "shew forth the praises" (the excellencies) "of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 5. 9).

Thus we who believe can be here for the pleasure of Him who hath called us. We are placed in various circumstances and positions and relationships, and in these we have differing responsibilities. But each one of us has his own peculiar service to perform. Thus we are exhorted,

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

His grace is many-coloured. We are not all alike. "To every one of us "his work" has been appointed. Let us each one of us seek from God the knowledge of the function we are to fulfil, and then wait on our ministering. And all we do has this end in view.

"That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 5. 10, 11).

For us the present is the time of testing and trial. That God may be glorified in us, and our spiritual good and growth are in view.

We are to be

PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

for awhile, "that when His glory" shall be revealed "we may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4. 13).

Very little some of us know of this in these countries of privilege. In many a place our brethren in Christ are suffering for His Name's sake. They bear shame and con-

tumely for His sake. They have a present reward, "the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon them." And God is glorified in them while they are evil spoken of.

If we are called to suffer as Christians, to suffer for Christ's name sake we are to glorify God on this behalf. It is an honour to suffer for Christ's sake. He has suffered from man's rude hands, and we should count it a privilege to be allowed to have part with Him in this. In His atoning sufferings He was absolutely alone. None could be with Him then. His is *all* the glory of that work while the blessing flows to us.

It is left for us in the joy of His completed sacrifice to stand for Him in loyalty and faithfulness in this world of His rejection.

In chapter 5 Peter tells us of his being "a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."

GLORY FOLLOWS THE SUFFERINGS

To all who came in contact with him Peter preached Christ. He stood as a witness for the rejected Lord. This was his mission. Before long he was to seal his testimony with his blood.

This may not be ours. It has been said, "It is easier to die as a martyr than to live as a Christian." Peter did both. The latter is ours in any case. The former we might be called to do if our Lord yet tarry. But the glory is in prospect. It is this that is our only certain future.

An aged servant of God was interviewed by a young man who was

giving up his means of livelihood for conscience sake. "If when I take this step this thing happens and the other thing comes to pass, what then?" he said. The older one at once replied, "There's no future but glory for the Christian."

Blessed it is to know this, and to leave every matter in the hands of infinite love and wisdom and power. Therefore we are encouraged by the words,

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

The latter part, "He careth for you," has been translated freely, "It matters to Him about you." Yes! *He ever has our good in mind.* And any suffering we may have to endure is *but for a season.*

"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Glory, *eternal* glory, *His* eternal glory is that to which God in grace has called us by Christ Jesus. The sufferings are but temporary, the glory is everlasting. Christ's sufferings have won for us this glorious future. "The glory that should follow" is great. Many glories shall be the portion of Christ. He is already glorified in God Himself. The kingdom glories are soon to be manifested. *Once* it was true of Him Christ "*must* suffer." Those sufferings are completed. *Now* it is true of Him, "He must reign." As King of kings and Lord of lords He will come forth in majesty. Then every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

LOVE AND ITS OPPOSITE.

A. J. Pollock.

“He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3. 14).

ASK the question of most people, What is the opposite of love? the very general answer would be **hate**. It is true that this is so, but it is not the whole answer. There is however a right hate accompanying right love. Our Lord exemplified this. We read of Him prophetically, “Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity” (Psalm 15. 7). This scripture is quoted, and applied to the Lord in Hebrews 1. 9. To love righteousness is to hate its opposite, iniquity. The more intense the love of righteousness, the more intense the hatred of iniquity.

We said just now that the answer that hate is the opposite of love is true, but not the whole answer. Weigh this well: self-love, self-centredness, is likewise the opposite of love. Love thinks of others, self-love centres on oneself, and thereby chokes and dams the flow of love to others.

This raises a very serious question. Love to be love, divine love, must be **practical**. Love does not consist in what you say, but in what you do. So we read, “Whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3. 17).

There is one very remarkable passage of Scripture, “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 John 2. 10). It is possible to profess to be in the light, to be very clear as to divine principles, to reel off Scripture with facility and correctness, and yet not to abide in the light. Do you love your brother? Is that your characteristic?

If the Apostle John states it in his way so does the Apostle Paul in his. He says in that wonderful chapter devoted to the outline of divine love, and

what a full and comprehensive outline it is, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (1 Cor. 13. 1). If love is not the spring in ministry, it is valueless and worthless.

Not by what I say, nor by what spiritual gifts I may possess, nor by material gifts I bestow, even to the length of giving my body to be burned, but by divine love am I measured. If I have not love, divine love, I am nothing and am not profited.

A naturally kindhearted man may give freely, but what we are considering just now is **divine** love. This is not natural to man. Believers are said to be “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1. 4), and that nature is love, “God is love” (1 John 4. 16). We may say it with reverence, God cannot help loving. Fire cannot help burning. Light cannot help illuminating. The divine nature cannot help loving.

We are made “partakers of the divine nature.” That does not mean that we are elevated to Godhead. That is very evident. But it is wonderful that in the divine nature we have moral qualities, which are the reflex of God’s own nature.

We may well measure ourselves by this test. Do we hate our brother? Are we really walking in the light? Not if we are filled with self-love and are self-centred. Even in moving in and out of what society we may enjoy, we certainly do not get very far with those who are self-centred. We may be self-centred in ordinary life, much concerned about having to pay a little extra for goods, and taking no thought for a brother, who is starving. Or it may be occupied with **my** ministry, and taking no interest in the ministry of others.

After all, the cure for this is to keep ourselves in the love of God. Then our hearts are enlarged. We are bound to respond to such an occupation . . . "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4. 7).

in the ocean. If it is in the ocean, it is bound to be full of the ocean. So if we are in the boundless ocean of God's love, in the light of the revelation of Him in Christ, there is bound to be a filling of our hearts with divine love, an absence of self-centredness, a going out in practical life to exhibit that divine life which is ours by the infinite grace of our God.

The fact is we are like the basket

THE WORD OF HIS POWER.

A. M. Chambers

"Upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1. 3).

The changing seasons do not cease,
Come winter's storms and summer's peace,
Springtime, and harvest's rich increase.

By Thy Word.

The sun arises in his might,
The moon rides high in silver light,
The stars bejewel still the night,

By Thy Word.

But heaven and earth away shall flee,
At Thy command dissolved shall be;
Still shall that word stand pledged to me,
Thine own word.

Settled for ever, steadfast, sure,
When all shall fail it shall endure;
'Mid crash of worlds I am secure
By Thy Word.

Then I can rest from day to day,
(Though kings and empires pass away,
And all man's vaunted hopes decay),
On that word.

"I will, therefore, that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2. 8).

It will be found that the one who becomes most fitted to speak the word of God to men, is the one whose voice has been first heard in supplication and prayer. His public service begins in the prayer meeting. The man who would preach but who does not pray is in a dangerous position. The one most fervent at the prayer meeting, is the one who will most persuasively arrest men.

What is our habit day by day? Is it to exhibit the lowly, obedient spirit of Christ, even if it lead to our being despised and passed by? Or is it to exalt self, to do our own will, to get our own way at all costs, even amongst the Lord's people, for there self-will may rule as well as in the world, to the grief of the spiritual, and the dishonour of the Lord? Only in the lowliness and gentleness of Christ can I serve the Lord and His people acceptably. His Spirit will lead me to put in the first place the will of God, and my own will in the dust.

A CONTRAST IN TWO SETS OF V's, T. Oliver.

ON the façade of the great church of St. Stephen in Budapest, there is an inscription taken from the Latin Bible, viz. **Ego Sum Via, Veritas et Vita**, i.e. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14. 6). These are three words with the initial letter V which are highly significant, because of the One who uttered them.

Caïus Julius Caesar, probably the greatest man of ancient history, lived in the century immediately before Christ. He was famous for the success of his lightning attacks in war. After one of these in the province of Pontus in Asia Minor, he sent the following laconic report to his Senate in Rome, also in three words with the initial letter V, viz. **Veni, Vidi, Vici**, i.e. "I came, I saw, I conquered." The authenticity of that statement has been disputed, but it has earned celebrity and at any rate was aptly descriptive of the general procedure of one of the most extraordinary of men. It was relative to man's way on the earth, admirably summarised by Scripture in the expression in John's Epistle, viz. "the lust (or desire) of the flesh, the lust (or desire) of the eye, and the pride of life." Caesar desired to have the province. On arriving there he saw that it was worth having and he took it by force and the pride of life was manifest in his despatch.

Man's covetousness is insatiable. The more he gets, the more he desires to have. But there is no permanency in the hold that he takes in seizing the bit of the world he has coveted. Three years after Caesar sent that memorable message he was stabbed to death by his most intimate associates who all owed their preferment to the grace of their chief. Such is the ingratitude of man in his natural state.

But Scripture is emphatic about the transient nature of man's possessions. The world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of

God abides for ever (1 John 2. 17). The world itself is slipping away so that there is no use trying to seize something in the hand which will be found on opening the hand to have evaporated. Nobody is anxious to acquire land on the edge of the cliffs of North Suffolk because it is gradually slipping over the edge into the sea.

Sweeping as that consideration undoubtedly is, the second in the text is more so. The lust or desire for the world is passing away too! If we have not yet reached that point in the experimental assessment of values, we are very shortly going to be face to face with the contingency. When everything pertaining to the world fades into oblivion and we have to face eternity. The Lord Himself in His ministry stated the problem in the words, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" That is the only property which is indissolubly his own. The only permanency is in doing the will of God. So that even the will of a Caesar vanishes in course of a very brief period of time. A dictator can do nothing more than he is permitted to do by a higher power, and he has not long to exercise his authority!

What a comfort it is to turn from the dictum of the greatest of mankind boasting of his power to the quiet statement of the Lord to His disciples in the upper room on the night of His betrayal. The Latin translator of the text did not miss the import of the passage in rendering "I am," as emphatic. That was the same proclamation from the burning bush to Moses by the self-existent Jehovah, the One who had life in Himself, the author of life and the life-giver. That gives character to the statement.

Three disciples gave expression to the thoughts which were perplexing the company. (1) Thomas was concerned about "the Way." Primarily

the way lay through the death of the cross. But the specific import of the passage is that He was personally the way. He had attached the disciples to Himself and so detached them from the world. He would conduct them spiritually to the Father, so that they might know God (in Whom they believed) as Father.

(2) Then Philip was concerned about the problem as to how they were to see the Father. They had been for three and-a-half years intimately associated with the Lord and yet they had not apprehended that He was the complete revelation of God as Father, i.e. the Truth. Not merely had He stated things as they really were, often to the intense discomfort and discomfort of His enemies, but He was in an intrinsic way the perfect exhibition of One Who was foreign to the best of mankind by nature and Whom nobody had seen. Even an excellent man like Nicodemus had not understood the Truth!

(3) Judas (not Iscariot) was concerned about "the Life" in his question "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world?" Jesus answered . . . "If a man love Me he will keep My word and My Father will love him and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him" (John 14. 22, 23). His words were public testimony to the Father. That there should be the introduction of divine persons to dwell within a man would necessarily be supernatural! That was the inti-

mation of a new kind of life which would keep a man in the light of the new revelation, i.e. the truth of the revelation of God as Father. The law revealed God to man but it took the Son of God who dwelt in His heart of intimate counsels and love to reveal God as Father to man.

In the language of the tenth chapter of the Hebrews we find in consequence of God having come out, a new and living way (i.e. continually "fresh," incapable of getting stale) had been constituted whereby man could have liberty to enter the inmost shrine of the presence of God, the Holiest, where God the Father is adored. If God had not come out, we could not have gone in.

The Comforter, the Holy Ghost "whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things" (John 14. 26). The Spirit of Truth is the living spirit of the revelation of God, the Father. So that gives the answer to the question of Judas. The Holy Spirit would manifest the Lord so that the disciples would be enabled to do greater things than they had seen. But these things would not be essentially different in character from what they had seen in Christ while here. His words and His acts testified the character of God, His Father. After His ascension, the disciples in the power of the Spirit would carry on the same kind of work but in greater volume, due to the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit.

"The End of all things is at hand."

The day of God's long-suffering is rapidly drawing to a close, and the day of wrath is at hand. The wheels of divine government are moving onward with a rapidity truly soul-subduing; human affairs are working to a point. There is an awful crisis approaching; precious souls are rushing forward along the surface of the stream of Time into the boundless ocean of Eternity. In a word, "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4. 7). "The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision." Now, seeing these things are so, let us ask each other: How are we affected thereby? What are we doing in the midst of the scene which surrounds us? How are we discharging our fourfold responsibility to the Lord, to the Church, to perishing sinners, to our own souls?

THE UNSEEN THINGS.

C.H.M.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4. 17, 18).

SOME of our modern prophets exhort us to look at “the bright side of things,” that so we may be able to pass comfortably and happily over life’s journey. But if they mean things visible, we may lawfully inquire, “Which is the bright side?” And if they mean things invisible, it is all bright there. In the one case, there is nothing but darkness; in the other, there is no darkness at all. If any one imagines that he can look at the bright side of the things that are seen, he is simply under a miserable delusion. There is not so much as a single ray of true light throughout the wide range of this present evil world, of which Satan is the god and prince. How could there be light in a scene from which the Son of God has been cast out? Impossible. To talk of the bright side of things in a region of sin and death, where Satan reigns, and Christ is rejected, is to offer a flat contradiction to the plainest teaching of holy scripture.

But we hardly think it needful to press this point just now. Thank God those who are taught by His Spirit are not in much danger of being drawn aside by any popular delusion as to human progress, or the improvement of the world. With all who have learnt to make the cross of Christ the one standard by which to measure men and things—self and the world, this question is definitively, because divinely settled.

It is very evident that the blessed apostle knew nothing about the bright side of things. He does not say, “While we look not at the dark side of things.” Nothing of the kind. He did not look at them at all. He kept his eye steadily fixed on the unseen things. He lived amid those eternal realities of which the living God is the

Source, Christ the Centre, and simple faith the power of realisation. And herein lay the grand secret of what he tells us in the profound and exquisite passage which stands at the head of this paper. It was this that enabled him to regard a long life of unparalleled toil and suffering as “light affliction and but for a moment.” Nor this only; it enabled him to see and own that the light and temporary affliction worked for him “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” How striking the contrast between the light and momentary affliction and the eternal weight of glory!

If we would form some idea of what the apostle calls “light affliction,” let us turn for a moment to 2 Corinthians 11, where, to speak after the manner of men, he is reluctantly obliged to allude to his labours and sufferings in order to bring the poor foolish Corinthians to a right sense of things. “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.” And this was “light affliction”! “Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.” And all this was “light affliction”! “In journeyings, often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.” And all this was “light affliction”! “In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.” And all this was “light affliction!”

Truly, such a record as this may well make us blush to think, much less to speak, of our little trials and difficulties and sorrows and sufferings. And yet the Apostle could not only count

them all light but momentary. But how was this? Was he a Stoic? Was he insensible or indifferent? Nay; he felt it all—could not but feel it. It is the most egregious folly for anyone to say we ought not to feel things. They might just as well tell us we ought not to have a head on our shoulders, a heart in our bosom, or a system of nerves. We may rest assured our apostle was not one of the visionary school who talk in this way. He was alive to everything, but above it. He felt all, but felt it with God. He was perfectly conscious of the circumstances but thoroughly superior to them.

But we repeat the question, how was this? What made all that long life of unexampled suffering, toil and conflict to be regarded as light and momentary! Here is the soul-stirring reply, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

Thus it was with Paul, and thus it must be with us. It is this which alone can preserve the balance of the soul while passing through the trials and difficulties, sorrows and conflicts of

this present time. If it were not for this, we could never get on. Were we to look at the things which are seen, we should be crushed in spirit and paralysed in action. To be insensible is impossible; to be indifferent is contemptible; to be superior is the precious privilege of every Christian. As an old pilgrim who had reached the advanced age of 103, said in reply to a friend, who had made some allusion to all the trials and difficulties of such a very long life, "Yes, yes, there have been trials and difficulties, but **I never meddled with them!**"

Thus it was with Stephen in that splendid scene at the close of Acts 7. He looked not at the things which were seen. He looked stedfastly up into heaven, and what he saw there rendered him superior to his surroundings; and not only superior to them, but a reflector of Christ in them. Thus it must ever be. It is not a miserable selfishness occupied with trials and trying to escape them, but faith occupied with the Man in the glory, and reflecting the beams of His moral glory upon the scene around.

That Blessed Hope.

The yearning, oh, the yearning, my absent Lord to see!
 The watch for His returning, my soul keeps constantly.
 With ever deeper longing I measure His delay,
 For all my hopes are thronging around His advent day.

If clouds ne'er veiled the sunny skies,
 How parched would be this earth of ours.
 When God permits dark clouds to rise,
 We may expect the showers.

Look up

Look not back, forget the things behind;
 Look never down, none do that would ascend;
 Look not around, the scene will daunt thee soon;
 Look up! look unto Jesus to the end.

BIBLE STUDY — MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters I. 1 — 4. 10.)

THE wording of the first verse of the New Testament directs our thoughts back to the first book of the Old, inasmuch as "generation" is the translation of the Greek word, **genesis**. Matthew in particular, and the whole New Testament in general, is "The book of the **genesis** of Jesus Christ." When we refer back to Genesis, we find that book divides into eleven sections, and all of them save the first begin with a statement about "generations." The third section commences, "This is the book of the generations of Adam" (5. 1); and the whole Old Testament unrolls for us the sad story of Adam and his race, ending with terrible appropriateness in the word, "**curse**." With what great relief we can turn from the generations of Adam to "the generation of Jesus Christ," for here we shall find the introduction of **grace**; and upon that note the New Testament ends.

Jesus is at once presented in a two-fold way. He is Son of David, and hence the royal **crown** that God originally bestowed on David belongs to Him. He is also Son of Abraham, hence He has the title to the **land** and all the promised **blessing** is vested in Him. Having stated this, we are given His genealogy from Abraham, through Joseph the husband of Mary. This would be His official genealogy, according to Jewish reckoning. The list given is remarkable for its omissions, since three kings, closely connected with the infamous Athaliah, are omitted in verse 8; and the summary as to the "fourteen generations," given in verse 17, shows that it is not an accidental omission, but that God disowns and refuses to reckon the kings that sprang more immediately from this devotee of Baal-worship.

It is remarkable also, inasmuch as the names of only four women are brought into it, and those not all such names as we might have expected. Two of the

four were Gentiles, which must have been somewhat damaging to Jewish pride: both of them women of striking faith, though one of them had lived in the immorality which characterized the heathen world. Of the other we know nothing but what is good. The other two came of the stock of Israel, yet of both the record is bad, and of neither do we know anything which is definitely creditable. Indeed Bathsheba's name is not mentioned; she is merely "her. . . of Urias," thus proclaiming her discredit. So again all is damaging to Jewish pride. Our Lord's genealogy added nothing to Him. Yet it guaranteed His genuine Manhood, and that the rights vested in David and Abraham were legally His.

But if the first 17 verses assure us that Jesus was really a man, the remaining verses equally assure us that He was much more than a Man, even God Himself, present among us. By an angelic messenger Joseph, the betrothed-husband of Mary is told that her coming child is the fruit of the action of the Holy Ghost, and that when born He is to bear the name of Jesus. He should save His people from their sins, therefore Saviour is to be His name. Only God is able to name in view of future accomplishments. He can do so, and how fully has this great name been justified! What a harvest of saved humanity will be garnered in days to come, all of them saved from their sins, and not merely from the judgment which their sins deserved! Only "**His people**" are saved thus. To know His salvation one must be enrolled amongst **them** by faith in Him.

Thus was fulfilled the prediction of Isaiah 7. 14, where a clear indication had been given of the greatness and power of the coming Saviour. His prophetic Name, Emmanuel, indicated

that He should be God manifested in the flesh—God amongst us in a far more wonderful way than ever He was manifested in the midst of Israel in the days of Moses, far more wonderful also than the way in which He was with Adam in the days before sin entered into the world. The two names are intimately connected. To have God with us, apart from our being saved from our sins, would be impossible: His presence would only overwhelm us in judgment. To be saved from our sins, without God being brought to us might have been possible, but the story of grace would have lost its chief glory. In the coming of Jesus we have both. God has been brought to us and our sins being removed, we have been brought to Him.

The opening verses of chapter 2 throw a strong and searching light upon the conditions that prevailed in those days amongst the Jews found in Jerusalem, the descendants of those who had returned under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. The King of the Jews was born in Bethlehem and yet for weeks they knew nothing about it. That Herod the king should be in ignorance was not at all surprising, for he was no Israelite but an Idumean. But of all people the chief priests should have been apprized of this great event for which they had been professedly waiting—the birth of the Messiah. We find in Luke 2 that the event was made known from heaven, within a few hours at the most, to humble souls who feared the Lord. The Psalmist has told us that, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (25. 14), and this is exemplified in the shepherds and others; but the religious leaders in Jerusalem were not among these, but among "the proud" whom men called "happy." (See Malachi 3. 15, 16). Consequently they were as much in the dark as the wicked Herod.

But there is worse than this. It is not surprising, again we say, that Herod should be troubled when he heard the news, for here was ap-

parently a rival claimant for his throne. We read however that "he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." So the advent of the Saviour produced not jubilation but consternation amongst the very people who professed to be waiting for Him! Evidently then something was terribly wrong, since it was as yet just the recoil of their perverted instincts. They had not seen Him; He had as yet done nothing: they just sensed that His advent would mean the spoiling of their pleasures instead of the fulfilment of their hopes.

Yet these men were well versed in their Scriptures. They were able to give a prompt and correct reply to Herod's enquiry, quoting Micah 5. 2. They had the knowledge that puffs up, and so they knew nothing as they ought to know it (see, 1 Cor. 8. 1, 2), and they placed their knowledge at the service of the adversary. The "great red dragon" (Rev. 12. 3—5) of the Roman Empire, the power of which was vested locally in Herod, was ready to devour the "Man Child," and they were ready to help him to do so. Theirs was the wrong kind of Scripture knowledge, and they serve as a beacon of warning for us.

The scripture they quoted presents the Lord to us as "Governor," who should rule. In Micah only Israel is in view, but we know that His rule will be universal; and this is the third way in which He is presented to us. In JESUS we see God come forth to **save**. In EMMANUEL we see God come forth to **dwell**. In GOVERNOR we see God come forth to **rule**. It was ever His thought to dwell with men, governing everything according to His pleasure, and to accomplish that He had to come forth to save.

When the Young Child was found in Bethlehem there was the pledge that all three things would come to pass, and though Jerusalem was ignorant and hostile there were Gentiles from the east drawn to His rising, and they

recognized the King of the Jews in Him. Do we realize how terribly they condemned the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The shepherds of Luke 2 knew of His birth within a few hours; these eastern astronomers within a few days, or weeks at the most; whereas several months must have elapsed before the priests and scribes had the smallest inkling of what had come to pass. First by a star and then by a dream God spoke to the wise men, but to the religionists in Jerusalem He did not speak at all, and there had been days when the high priest in their midst had been in touch with God by means of the Urim and Thummim. Now God was silent to them. Their state was as is portrayed in Malachi, and probably worse.

In Herod we see unscrupulous power allied with craft. When thwarted by the action of the wise men, he took, as he thought, no chances in his murderous onslaught on the children of Bethlehem. The fact that he fixed the limit of exemption at two years would indicate that the period between the appearing of the star and the arrival of the wise men at Jerusalem must have run into months. His ruthless and wicked action brought about a fulfilment of Jeremiah 31. 15. If that verse be read with its context it will be seen that its final and complete fulfilment will be in the last days, when God will finally cause Rachel's weeping to cease by bringing her children back from the land of the enemy. Nevertheless what took place at Bethlehem was the same kind of thing on a smaller scale.

Herod however was fighting against God, who defeated his purpose by sending His angel to Joseph in a dream for the second time. The Young Child was taken into Egypt, and thus Hosea 11. 1 found a remarkable fulfilment, and Jesus began to retrace Israel's history. How easily did God frustrate Herod's wicked design, and just as easily not long after did He deal with Herod himself. Matthew does not

waste words in describing his end: he simply tells us that "when Herod was dead," for the third time the angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream, instructing him to return to the land for death had removed the would-be murderer.

Joseph's first intention evidently was to return to Judaea; but tidings as to Archelaus succeeding his father having reached him, fear made him hesitate. Then for the fourth time God instructed him by a dream. Thus he, Mary and the Young Child were shepherded back to Nazareth, whence he had originally come, as Luke tells us. It is instructive to see how God guided all these early movements; partly by circumstances, such as the decree of Augustus and the tidings about Archelaus; and partly by dreams. Thus the schemes of the adversary were foiled. The "porter" held open the door into the "sheepfold" in order that the true Shepherd might enter, in spite of all that he could do. Also the scriptures were fulfilled: not only was Jesus brought out of Egypt but He became known as the Nazarene.

No Old Testament prophet predicted that He should be "a Nazarene," in so many words, but more than one said that He would be despised and an object of reproach. So in verse 23 it is "the prophets," and not one particular prophet. They had said He should be an object of contempt, which in our Lord's time was expressed in the epithet, "a Nazarene." In Darby's New Translation—large edition with full notes — there is an illuminating comment on this verse, as to the exact phrase used regarding the fulfilment, as contrasted with the earlier expression in chapters 1. 22, and 2. 17; showing the accuracy with which quotations from the Old Testament are made. It is a note well worth reading.

Nazarene is the fourth name given to our Lord in this opening Gospel. He is, as we have seen, Jesus, Emmanuel, Governor; but He is also the

Nazarene. God may come amongst men to save, to dwell, to rule; but alas! He will be "despised and rejected of men."

The third chapter presents John the Baptist without any preliminaries as to his birth or origin. He fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy; he preached in the wilderness apart from the haunts of men; in clothing and food he was apart from the customs of men; his theme was repentance, in view of the nearness of the kingdom of heaven. It was a very unique ministry. What other preacher has selected a wilderness as the geographical sphere of his ministry? Philip the evangelist went indeed to the southern desert to meet a special individual; but the power of God was so with John that the multitudes flocked to him, and were led to his baptism, confessing their sins.

In this Gospel there is frequent mention of "the kingdom of heaven," and for the first instance is here. No explanation is offered by Matthew, nor does he record any explanation as offered by John; the reason being doubtless that the coming of a day when "the God of heaven" should set up a kingdom, and all should see that "the heavens do rule," had been predicted in the book of Daniel. Consequently the term would not be unfamiliar to his hearers or to any Jewish reader. The same prophet had a vision of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven and taking the kingdom, and the saints possessing it with Him. Now the kingdom was **at hand** inasmuch as "Jesus Christ, the Son of David," was found amongst men.

When there is a genuine and powerful work of God, men do not like to be apart from it, especially if they are religious leaders: consequently we find both Pharisees and Sadducees coming to John's baptism. He met them however with prophetic insight. He unmasked them as having the characteristics of the serpent, and

warned them that wrath lay before them. He knew that they would boast of being in the proper Abrahamic succession, so he knocked that prop from beneath them, showing that it would not count with God. Nothing would do but repentance, and his baptism was with a view to that; but it must be genuine and manifest itself in fruits that were suitable. James, in his Epistle, insists that faith, if it is real and vital, must express itself in suitable works. Here John calls for just the same thing in regard to repentance.

These verses in the middle of chapter 3, give us a glimpse of what was wrong. The true Son of David and of Abraham having arrived, the kingdom was near, and no mere successional connection with Abraham would avail. Moses had given them the law: Elijah had recalled them to it after it had been forsaken: John simply issued a blunt call to repentance, which was tantamount to saying, "On the basis of the law you are lost, and nothing remains but for you honestly to own it with humble sorrow of heart." The great mass of them were not prepared for that, to their ruin.

John also announced the coming forth of the Mighty One, whose forerunner he was. There was no comparison between them, and he confessed his sense of it by saying he was not fit to carry even the sandals of His feet. He also contrasted his own baptism with water and the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. The great Coming One should exercise perfect discrimination, sifting the wheat from the chaff. **These** He will baptise with the Holy Ghost, and **those** with the fire of judgment; and the issues will be eternal for the fire will be unquenchable.

These words of John must have been tremendously searching, and they will be fulfilled when the millennial age is about to be introduced. Then the Spirit will be poured upon all flesh,

and not the Jew only—that is, upon all that have been redeemed. On the other hand the wicked will be banished to everlasting fire, as the end of chapter 25 of our Gospel will show us. Meanwhile there has been an anticipatory fulfilment of the baptism of the Spirit, in the establishment of the church, as Acts 2 shows. The context here decisively reveals that “fire” is an allusion to judgment, and not to the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, or any similar action of blessing.

When Jesus came forth for His ministry, His first act was to come to John’s baptism, and that in spite of the objection which John expressed. The objection served to bring out the principle on which the Lord was acting. He was fulfilling righteousness. He had no sins to confess, yet having taken man’s place it was right that He should identify Himself with the godly, who were thus taking their true place before God. Men of God in earlier times had done the thing in principle—Ezra and Daniel, for instance—confessing as their own sins in which they had but very little share, though sinners themselves. Here was the sinless One, and He did it perfectly; and lest there should be any mistake, at the very moment He did it, there was the opening of the heavens upon Him, the first great manifestation of the Trinity, and the voice from heaven declaring Him to be the beloved Son, in whom the Father found all His delight. In form as a dove the Spirit descended upon the One who is to baptise others with that same Spirit.

Jesus was not only taking man’s place, He was more particularly taking Israel’s place. Israel was called out of Egypt, then they were baptised to Moses in the cloud and sea, then they entered the wilderness. We have just seen Jesus called as God’s Son

out of Egypt, and now He is baptised; then as we open chapter 4 we find the Spirit, who had come upon Him, leads Him straight into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Here we find a contrast, for in the wilderness Israel tempted God and failed in everything. Jesus was Himself tempted and triumphed in everything.

Yet the temptations, wherewith the devil assailed Him, were similar to Israel’s testings in the wilderness, for there is nothing new in the tactics of the adversary. Israel was tested by hunger, and by being lifted up in connection with the things of God—seen more particularly in connection with Korah, Dathan and Abiram—and by attractions that might lead them to worship and serve another beside Jehovah, and they fell, worshipping the golden calf. Jesus met each temptation with the Word of God. On each occasion He quoted from a small section of the book of Deuteronomy, wherein Israel is reminded of their responsibilities. In those responsibilities they failed, and Jesus fulfilled them perfectly in every particular.

The devil always sows doubts of the Divine Word. Contrast 3. 17 with 4. 3 and 6, and note how strikingly this comes out. No sooner has God said, “This is My beloved Son,” than the devil says twice over, “If Thou be the Son of God.” The little word “if” is a great favourite with the devil! Jesus appropriately met him with the Word of God. That Word is indispensable to Man’s spiritual life just as bread is to his natural life. And man needs **every** word that God has spoken, and not just a few special passages only.

Are we all finding our spiritual life in “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”?

The closing words.

He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen. Rev. 22. 20, 21. (N.T.)

"A THRONE WAS SET IN HEAVEN." J. T. Mawson.

An Address on Revelation 4 and 5.

I WANT to speak of that which has been fundamental to faith in all ages and which can hold us now as a sure and stedfast anchor in stormy seas. "Behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." John was caught up through an open door in heaven to see this great sight, and we may see it through his eyes. It was an evil day in which he lived; the ruling power was a pagan, persecuting power, all his brethren, the apostles, had suffered martyrdom, and he was an exile in Patmos for his faith; the church too for which he had laboured was growing weary in the way; it had left its first love. There was much to discourage him; it seemed as though the tides of evil were unrestrained, and that the devil did as he pleased. Then it was that he was called up to heaven to see things that were to take place hereafter, and the pledge that all things that he saw would come to pass was a throne set in heaven and One sitting thereon.

God had not abdicated His throne; the sceptre of the universe was in His hand, and as it was then so it is now in this year of our Lord 1940. That sight must have greatly comforted John, and we need it if we are to be kept in peace and stedfast in our confession. God is still on His throne, almighty and absolute. This must be the foundation of all our faith, and the dominant factor in our lives.

No power of evil can challenge God's supremacy and succeed. Dictators may glory in their power to oppress and destroy their fellow men, but the Almighty God has set bounds to their ambitions. They could have no power at all except it were given them from above, and the omniscient God watches the way they use their power and He has said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." He makes the wrath of men to praise Him and restraineth the rest.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit John tells us how God appeared to him. "And He that sat upon the throne was to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like an emerald." We are in a book of symbols, but their meanings are easily discerned. The jasper is the clear, unsullied crystal—the diamond, but mingled with that pure and burning light was the blood-red ray of the sardine stone. It is the christian message that reaches us in 1 John 1. 5. "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." There is the clear crystal shining, and if that had been all no man could have endured its searching brightness, but there follows a fear-dispelling, peace-giving word. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and what lies behind the shedding of that blood? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The jasper and the sardine stone are one and proclaim the fact that "God is light" and "God is love."

The rainbow round about the throne bears witness to the fact that God is the covenant-keeping God, no word, no promise of His shall ever fail, He sits supreme upon His throne to bring to pass every word that He has uttered.

"Settled for ever, stedfast, sure,
When all shall fail it shall endure,
Mid crash of worlds we are secure
Who trust His word."

Now notice what is the first note of praise that is sounded in heaven. The four and twenty elders (representing the redeemed) cast their crowns before the throne and proclaim, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (vv. 10, 11). God is Creator, He has made all things and He made them for His own pleasure. All that He has made

must be accountable to Him, the Maker. Evolution, as taught by the modernists, is the devil's darkness, by which he is blinding the minds of men; and they love the darkness, for if they have evolved from the slime and God did not make them then they are not responsible to Him, they have no need to trouble themselves as to being pleasing to Him, they may please themselves and do their own wills.

The world has reached its present hopeless state because men have refused to consider God's claims, they have not sought to know His will, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." The Revelation is a Book of judgments and these judgments will most surely fall upon men for this very reason. God must judge all that oppose His will; His will must be done on earth as it is in heaven. He is long-suffering and very patient, not willing that any should perish, but the time is drawing near when the throne of grace will become a throne of judgment, and men, angels and devils shall see that God is just. How do we face up to this matter? We own that God is, we are not atheists, we believe that He is the Creator, and has made all things for His pleasure, and the all things includes you and me. Do we consider what will please Him? and are we fashioning our lives according to His will, which is good and acceptable and perfect? If we are wrong here we are not right anywhere.

"As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14. 11, 12). Let these great facts have their full weight in our souls—God is supreme, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient: He is the Creator and He has created all things for His pleasure, and whatever He has created is answerable to Him.

Lawlessness cannot go on for ever. God would cease to be God if He per-

mitted it; the day of grace and salvation is drawing to its close and those things that John saw in these chapters are near at hand. He says, "**I saw in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.**" This is the book of God's will and His counsels for the earth and mankind, but who can open that book and bring to pass what is written therein, so that everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord? That is the question, and a strong angel with a loud voice sends forth the challenge. Was there one man of Adam's race that was worthy to take up this work for God? "And no man in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth was found worthy."

And John wept much, and good cause he had to weep, for man had been made in the image of God and after His likeness, to fill the earth with His glory and uphold His Name, and the whole race had failed. Great men there had been, and to them God had given power and opportunity, but not one of them had stood wholly for God—Adam, Noah, Moses, David, Nebuchadnezzar and many another. When tested they failed, in the great crises of their lives they were found wanting, sooner or later self controlled their actions; they lived and ruled and died and left the world not one whit better than they found it.

But God is not baffled, nor can be, He has His Resource. "**And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.**" And John looked to see who it was that bore these great titles, and "**in the midst of the throne, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.**" It was JESUS: How well John knew Him, and how his heart must have thrilled as he beheld Him in the very centre of God's glory, who had once hung upon a felon's cross between two thieves. He had PREVAILED to open the book. He had prevailed by

treading His path of perfect obedience to the cross. He prevailed against Satan in the wilderness; the contradiction of sinners against Himself did not turn Him aside from the way of God's will: He set His face as a flint, and cried, "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done," in Gethsemane. He endured the cross and despised the shame. Thus He prevailed and shewed Himself worthy to undertake the fulfilment of all God's will in His universal kingdom.

"And when He had taken the Book" all heaven made haste to adore Him; the four and twenty elders fell down before Him and sung a new song—a song that shall never grow old—"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." The opening of the seals of that book will mean the fierce and righteous judgments of God upon the earth, but before they begin to fall the Lamb secures a countless multitude of men for God, men redeemed from all iniquity to be for God's pleasure for ever.

"The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3. 35). "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5. 22). The Lamb as it had been slain is the Son, and into His hand God has put the accomplishment of His will; and He will take away the sin of the world and fill the universe with the glory of God. We are on our way to this great day of the manifestation of His power and glory, but while we wait for it how are we affected? He will reconcile all things to God, whether they be things

in earth or things in heaven (Col. 1. 20). But He would begin with us. Have we recognised God's claim? Have we admitted that since He has made us we should live for His pleasure? How can this be? Well it seems to me, that there is but one way. As God will put the book of His will into the hands of the once slain Lamb, so must we put the book of our lives into His hands. He only can fashion and mould us according to God's will. Have we confessed Him as Lord, and surrendered ourselves to Him? He only can blot out the stained pages of the past. He only can fill up the future pages of our history on earth with what will please God. Has He not prevailed to do this? We have been redeemed by His blood, He has loved us and washed us from our sins. He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He is our one hope. Our own efforts to be what we know we ought to be most miserably fail, but the Lamb once slain will not fail.

He has the seven horns; symbol of perfect power, and the seven eyes, symbol of perfect wisdom, and His love is an unchanging love, as real and true to-day as when He died to redeem—what a combination is this—wisdom, love and power—all united in Him for our blessing! Let us commit ourselves to Him, spirit, soul and body, and trust Him wholly. He has not, and will not fail God, He will not fail us.

May God deliver us from self-confidence, that the power of Christ may rest upon us, and may we all be so affected and constrained by His love and glory that we gladly yield ourselves without reserve to Him, that His strength may be made perfect in our weakness.

O Father, Thy care is not to make
The desert a waste no more;
But to keep our feet lest we lose the track
Where HIS feet went before.

THE LOOK OF THE LORD.

“And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter . . . And Peter went out and wept bitterly” (Luke 22. 61, 62).

IN this solemn and touching history of Peter is recorded the manner of the Lord's dealing with **conscience** and **heart**, and in all true restoration there is an action on both. How blessed to diligently mark His own perfect ways of grace with His people! The root of Peter's failure was **self-confidence**, but of what nature? Not, I judge that self-opinionated estimation of himself in a general way which is so often to be found among the saints and servants of Christ. It was of a more particular kind, and of a more subtle form. The blessed Lord had really laid hold of Peter's affection, so that he really and truly, though after a natural way, loved his Master. Herein is the most solemn element of his fall—he denied the One his heart loved most!

The root, then, of Peter's denial of Christ was the confidence he had in **his own affection for his Lord**; the way of the Lord's love with restored Peter, in John 21, makes this manifest: “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?” went to the root-principle of Peter's fall. The Lord had said, before the hour of testing, that the sifting-time would come, had announced Satan's desire to have **them all given up into his hands**, but that Peter was the special object of His intercession: “I have prayed for **thee** that thy faith fail not.” Peter, in no wise arrested by such words from his Lord, reveals the folly of his heart by replying thus: “Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and to death;” and then the Lord declares what would be; but all was lost on Peter; he loved Christ, and that truly and genuinely; he had full confidence in his love; let who will deny or forsake, he never should, he would die with Him rather than deny Him. How strange to say, herein was Satan's power over Peter; the power of the enemy was in the fact that the ser-

vant loved his master, **and was resting in that as his security**. No doubt this was Peter's confidence, his shelter and stay, as the hour of testing and moment of sifting was announced; his love, so genuine, so true, so devoted, would repel the wildest assault of the enemy in the hour of fiercest battle.

We have said that Peter truly loved his Master, and that Satan found his opening for his will in that. Peter was also **impetuous**, and Satan wrought through **that** as well; he found in both **occasion and opportunity** for his attack. This has its solemn voice for us all.

The **steps** which led to the fall of Peter may also profitably occupy us. We shall see how blinded he was by the confidence he reposed **in his love** for Christ, for each step **down** might have arrested him, had he been within reach of the warning voice.

The first step is recorded in Luke 22. 45, compared with Mark 14. 37: “Simon, sleepest **thou**?” What words from His lips in the midst of His agony and bloody sweat! How much they contain! Alas! they were lost on Peter.

The next we have in Luke 22. 54: “Peter followed **afar off**.” Having slept during the agony of the Master, in common with the other disciples, he fled, having forsaken Him, and then is found “**far off**.” Was that the extent of the boasted love that would follow Jesus to prison and to death?

Next, we read of Peter sitting down at a fire **among the enemies of Jesus**: “When they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, **Peter sat down among them**.” What! Peter “**afar off**” from his Master's side, “**among**” the servants of Pilate, warming himself, in

company with the haters and rejectors of Christ! What a picture of, alas, too many of His own saints even now!

There is one other thought in connection with this which I would solemnly press upon the hearts of all who read these lines; it is this—how quickly a **position** such as this familiarises the mind to what is of the world; the **thoughts, habits, and language** of the age become natural and easy to us; we do not feel strange, or out of our true element, and soon become inured to such climate; and then, in a wrong position and our eye off Christ, a small thing will lead to a full denial of Him.

In Peter's case, the mere taunt of a maid, the assertion of a man, and the confident affirmation of another, bring out the complete, repeated denial—"Man, I know not what thou sayest." Then comes the signal foretold by the Lord: "And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew." This it was that awakened his conscience, by bringing to his remembrance "the word of the Lord." The action of the Lord's warning voice, **now** remembered, is very striking, his confidence in his affection had so blinded him, that when the Lord warned Peter of the coming storm, it was not only unheeded, but **refused**. How well the skilful love of Christ knew how to bring that warning word freshly back upon the conscience—the crow of the cock awakened memory, conscience is smitten as the word of Jesus is brought to mind. Alas! how often it is so with us, the Lord's warning voice and words are so often forgotten, until He Himself, by some simple agency—as

here—brings them back, as it were, to our consciences.

But there was something else, full of deep and tender solicitude for His poor child—even the Lord's **look**; "the Lord **turned**, and **looked** upon Peter." How affecting this unchanging, blessed love, which never gives us up! With all His freshly gone through agony, the subject of the heartless treachery of a Judas, in the rough and rude hands of His enemies, the Lord can remember His own poor wandering child. What true and real comfort is here for us! That look of Jesus had a double effect—it broke Peter's heart, yet it placed him in company with his Lord. Think of those bitter tears: "Peter went out and **wept bitterly**." It was the grace and tenderness of that look which broke up the fountains of Peter's heart. Conscience and Christ are both set forth in this dealing with Peter—the word, brought to mind acted on conscience, but the look of Christ acted on the heart.

There was, moreover, in that look comfort as well as sorrow, for Peter lived upon that look until he saw His Lord in resurrection; that visage, more marred than any man's, and that look, lived in his heart, and were engraved in its memories, and kept him, until that bright and blessed morn when Jesus rose triumphant, and appeared to him first of all of the twelve, and that alone. Such are the blessed ways of His grace and unchanging goodness towards us. May our hearts deepen in confidence as we retire from our so-called affection, to rest in His love, who never wearies of, or forgets His own.

It is a woeful mistake to measure difficulties by what we are. The question is what God is; then the difficulties that appear like mountains looming through the mists of our unbelief are but the occasion for the display of His power.

The only true revival in our hearts is the restoration of the Lord to the supreme place in our hearts.

WHAT THE GOSPEL DOES AND DOES NOT DO.

I WAS staying at a Hydro at which were other christians and every morning we met together to read and study the Word of God.

A Christian man who had not been able to attend these gatherings came to me one day and the following conversation took place: "I am told that you do not believe that the world will be converted by the preaching of the gospel."

"You have been rightly informed."

"Well that surprises me, I have been brought up to believe that the world would be converted by the preaching of the gospel and then the Lord would come and set up His kingdom on the earth."

"How long have you been a christian?"

"More than thirty years."

"Well, you know what sort of a world it was when you were first converted and you know what sort of a world it is now. Is it better or worse?"

"I should say about fifty per cent worse."

"Then the gospel is not making much progress."

"It does not seem to be in this land, but have you got Scripture for what you say?"

"Yes, I have. 'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him' (Revelation 1. 7). If the world is to be a converted world when the Lord comes, why should all kindreds of the earth wail because of Him? Would they not rather receive Him with joy and songs of praise?"

"I had not thought of that before, but can you give me another Scripture?"

"Yes, I can. 'And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?' (Revelation 6. 15-17). If the world is a converted world when the Lamb appears, why should He be wrath? and why should men seek hiding places from His face? And why should there be scores of passages that tell us that the Lord is coming as the Judge, such as Acts 10. 42; 2 Thessalonians 1. 7-10; Jude 14. 15; Revelation 19. 11?"

"Well, those Scriptures are certainly convincing; but if the gospel is not to convert the world, what is it for?"

"James tells us in his speech at the first great christian conference held at Jerusalem. He said, 'Simeon hath declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles **to take out of them a people for His Name**' (Acts 15. 14). And from that day to this that is what the gospel has been doing. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, 'I have chosen you **out of the world**' (John 15. 19). We read, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ 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). And the Redeemed in heaven sing, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God, **out of every kindred, and tongue and people and nation**' (Revelation 5. 9). The gospel is calling a people out of the world and every one that obeys its call becomes a part of the church of God. The word translated 'church' in our authorised version is **ekklesia**—the out-called ones. And all such are **not of**

the world even as Christ Himself is not of it (John 17. 16)."

"Then you don't think that the church's work is to convert the world?"

"No, it is to be in the world as the Epistle of Christ, 'written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God' (2 Corinthians 3. 3); and those who compose it are to be in the world 'shining as lights' and 'holding forth the word of life' (Philippians 2. 15), and shewing 'forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light' (1 Peter 2. 9). They are to be zealous in seeking the blessing of men, for it is not the will of God that any should perish. God's own compassion for sinners must be in their hearts, as Jude tells us: 'Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh' (Jude 23). The church has been left in the world throughout the centuries as a witness for Christ, and to shew the grace and mercy of God; but if true to its heavenly calling it walks in separation from the world, pressing on to its great destiny in heaven, which destiny is to be the wife of the Lamb (Ephesians 5. 25-27; Revelation 19. 7-9)."

NOTE. The song of the Redeemed in Revelation 5. 9. is not exactly about themselves, but is in praise of the Lamb who will secure multitudes out of the world for God, before the judgments fall.

"You make a great distinction between the church and the world."

"The Scriptures make the difference; the church is of God, and Christ is the Head of it, while 'the whole world lieth in the wicked one' (1 John 5. 19. N.T.). Satan is the prince and god of the world. The church has 'that blessed hope' of being caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4. 16, 17), while the judgments of God await the world as such.

"But why do we pray, 'Thy kingdom come'?"

"His kingdom will surely come and it will be one of universal blessing and peace, because righteousness will reign. The Lord is the Sun of righteousness and the Prince of peace, but judgment will precede the coming of His kingdom. 'He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass' (Ps. 72. 6). The blessing follows the judgment, the scythe of judgment first sweeps the field and then the blessing descends."

"While the christian waits and watches for the coming of the Lord it is his privilege and responsibility to preach the word and to say to all men, 'Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely' which is God's last gospel appeal."

The soul of a christian may be distressed or cast down, that is not sin, but sin will come in if there is distrust of God.

Prayer is sure work and the harbinger of blessing, and often what sets us praying for more is a first dropping of the love and grace of our God.

"My faith looks up to claim the touch divine,
Which frees me from this fatal strength of mine
And leaves me resting wholly, Lord, on Thine,
Yet make me such an one as Thou canst bless,
Meet for Thy use, through very helplessness,
Thine only: Thine, the glory of success."

“THE LORD IS GRACIOUS.”

Ingils Fleming.

THE grace, compassion and consideration of the Lord are displayed in a remarkable manner in the case of Judas Iscariot, when the betrayal was about to be effected.

The Lord knew all that was about to be enacted. “He knew who should betray Him, and had said, “Ye are not all clean.” “He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me.”

Then “troubled in spirit”, that such was the case, He testified to them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray Me.” One of those chosen to be with Him, to be His companion during His earthly sojourn, was about to barter Him away for thirty pieces of silver.

It was all before Him. He had seen Judas in conference with the priests. He knew that for the price of a slave the sordid agreement had been come to. He knew the details of the plot and the place where the crime was to be wrought. But “mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” In His mercy and longsuffering, He would give the traitor a final opportunity of recovering himself from the snare Satan had laid for his feet.

Wondering of whom the Lord had spoken, the disciples looked upon one another doubting who the treacherous one could be.

At length Peter, in his impulsive affection, can wait no longer. So he makes a sign to the disciple whom Jesus loved, who was lying “in the bosom of Jesus.” He was near in that place of deep affection, near enough, it would seem, to whisper the enquiry to the Lord. Leaning more closely still on the Saviour’s breast he quietly asks the solemn question, “Lord, who is it?” To him and to him alone, it would appear, the answer was given, “He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it.”

We should read “the sop” instead of “a sop,” in this place. The change is important. The sop had a particular place at the passover supper. That morsel was prepared, it was said, by the convener of the feast and delivered to the honoured guest at the suitable moment. There is testimony that “about the time of Christ, ‘the sop’ consisted of these things wrapped together: flesh of the paschal lamb, a piece of unleavened bread and bitter herbs.”

The morsel was dipped. It was handed to Judas. The **privileged position** that was his as the recipient, must have come to his mind. “Room for repentance” was still granted in the Lord’s longsuffering. But all in vain. The morsel was eaten. The decision was made and Satan entered into the betrayer’s heart. Awful moment! In silence the supper proceeded and then the words, “That thou doest do quickly,” fell from the Master’s lips. (“Having received the sop,” is referred to again in v. 30. for it was the consummation of wickedness.)

Then he “went immediately out:” and it was night. The blackest night in human history had come. “The same night in which He was betrayed,” as is recorded as being received from the glorified Lord Himself (1 Cor. 11. 23). The Lord remembers that occasion. (Let us not forget that we are in the night of His betrayal here, in this world out of which He has been cast).

“No one at the table” understood the import of the Lord’s command to Judas. He was their treasurer. He carried the bag which contained their little all. (He had abstracted from it secretly, as occasion served him, and now he was hoping to add some thirty pieces to the store). The disciples thought that Judas was to cater for the company during the feast, or (and the words let us into a secret otherwise unknown) “that he should give some-

thing to the poor." This was their custom it is evident, and affords a basis in part for a commentary on His words recorded, (not in the pages of the Gospels but in His whole life's story) "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20. 35).

What exquisite touches of grace and consideration are seen in the incidents before us!

As another has said, "The treason must be detected and the man removed: but there is neither denunciation nor expulsion. What is necessary is said: only what is necessary; and that only when it is become necessary; yet it serves its purpose. The Master shows that He is not deceived. The traitor feels himself discovered, but not exposed: he is warned, but yet left free; finally he is detached,

though not expelled. He goes out himself."

Favoured are we in having "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" brought before us thus for our admiration and adoration. Truly, "He is altogether lovely." As one has said,

"His beauty shineth far above
Our feeble power of praise;"

and we rejoice that

"We shall live and learn His love
Through everlasting days."

And another has sung,

"For ah! the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware
Can never rest on earth again.
And they who see Him risen afar
At God's right hand to welcome them,
Forgetful stand of home and land,
Desiring fair Jerusalem."

Jesus Christ the Same.

A. M. Chambers

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

Then we can bring young children to Thy feet
And claim a blessing for them in Thy name;
Once Thou didst gently take them in Thine arms,
And Thou art still the same.

Then we can tell Thee of the sick and weak,
(For never didst Thou turn from such away),
And leave them to the tenderness and love
Which are the same to-day.

Grief we may show Thee—Saviour Who didst weep!
Whose heart was broken by reproach and shame!
Thou art not changed, since long ago to Thee
The broken-hearted came.

Still drops Thy word as honey from the comb,
Sweetening for us every bitter thing;
Still through the silence of the vale of death
It doth in triumph ring.

Jesus the Changeless One! we give Thee praise
For all we gather **now** from that great Name.
What will it be to lift our eyes in Heaven
And find Thee still the same!

Satan gets an entrance in the soul when there is distrust of God.

When unbelief is in action it only produces trouble and sorrow.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. No. 1.

J. W. H. Nichols.

“Jesus, what memories thrill our hearts,
Of Thy blest footprints here,
While now to heaven we turn our eyes,
And gaze upon Thee there.”

WHAT sacred memories must ever associate with “Gethsemane”! John speaks of it (chapter 18) as “a garden”, and to reach this we read, “He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron.” And as we read these words, our thoughts are carried back to **another** garden where the “first Adam”, under testing, so signally failed and blighted God’s fair creation by his sin, becoming head of a fallen race. “Cedron”, the deep valley east of Jerusalem, giving its name to the “brook”, links our thoughts with David, when all Israel went after the usurper, and the rightful king with a few devoted followers went weeping from Jerusalem, passing over this same brook (2 Samuel 15. 23). This was the occasion of David writing Psalm 3 (see title).

Once more the rebellion and hatred of the heart of man had risen to full tide and He who would have gathered Israel’s children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings had to solemnly charge home to the nation their sin in the words: “**YE WOULD NOT**” (Luke 13. 24).

The nation knew not the day of her visitation!

While each of the four Gospels gives a record of Gethsemane, Luke dwells most on the sufferings of our blessed Lord, when anticipating in spirit what the drinking of the cup would mean. Luke alone records, “Being in an **agony**, He prayed **more earnestly**.” Here only we learn that “His sweat was as great drops of blood.”

All this is entirely in keeping with the character of Luke’s Gospel, where our blessed Lord is before us as the “Son of Man.” It is to be remarked that when the cross was actually

reached, there was no trace in Luke’s account of agony and sorrow; all this had already been passed through in spirit in communion with the Father. How divinely perfect is the Word of God!

His first utterance on the cross was, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” His last words, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit” (Luke 23. 34, 46).

Hebrews 5. 8 is Gethsemane, and this is found linked with resurrection. “Saved **out** of death” (New Trans.). Verse nine reads, “Having been perfected” (New Trans.), this is resurrection glory.

But let us reverently dwell upon the sorrows of that blessed Man, conscious however of our human limitations. The three disciples who were privileged to be with Him and witness His kingdom glory upon the mount of transfiguration and hear the Father’s voice declaring His delight in His blessed Son, are now taken aside that they may watch with Him. We read, “He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast,” but how infinite was the distance morally! Indeed who could enter into the meaning of the conflict, as Satan pressed upon His holy soul what it would mean to come in contact with that which He abhorred—sin in all its hideousness and heinousness in the sight of God?

We are told WHO had the power of death (Hebrews 2. 14) and the sting still remained untaken away. His righteous soul anticipated the load of it. Here in Luke we read: “Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly and His sweat was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

In Hebrews 5: “Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up

prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." Precious Saviour and Lord, who can tell the anguish of Thy soul, when the shadow of the cross fell athwart Thy holy pathway? It is for us to worship and adore.

Alas! what is man? We read that "When He arose and came to His disciples He found them sleeping for sorrow." They had slept in the presence of His anguish, leaving Him alone with God, alone in His sorrows:

"Hark! what sounds of bitter weeping,
From yon lonesome garden sweep;
'Tis the Lord His vigil keeping,
While His followers sink in sleep.
Ah! my soul, it was for thee,
Yes, HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME."

Strengthened by angelic ministry, He came forth as Victor and in self-forgetful love said to His disciples, "Sleep on now and take your rest; . . . behold he that betrayeth Me is at hand."

After the kiss of the betrayer when the emissaries of the priests and rulers came to seize the Lord, He, in quiet

dignity, anticipated them with the enquiry, "Whom seek ye?" and in answer to their reply, "Jesus of Nazareth," He added, "I am He" (or as the New Trans. reads, I AM). **But no hand was laid upon Him.** Those words "I AM", once spoken to Moses, awed them and before His glory they "fell to the ground."

Who could apprehend Him? Often He had "conveyed Himself away," when His hour had not come, but now the conflict of Gethsemane over, He is about to take the cup from the Father's hand and give Himself up to death.

Again He asked them, "Whom seek ye?" Again they reply, "Jesus of Nazareth." And now, His loving care for His poor failing disciples expressed itself in the words, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way." And this, we are told, "That the saying might be fulfilled, Of those whom Thou hast given Me have I lost none." The Shepherd must be smitten, and the sheep scattered (Zech. 13. 18).

The Unity of the Spirit.

WHAT is the unity of the Spirit? It begins with Jew and Gentile together before the Father in communion (Ephesians 2. 18). The three great principles of it are, The New man (verse 15), Access by one Spirit to the Father (verse 16); Built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (verse 22).

The unity of the Spirit is the power of the Spirit which keeps saints in the realisation of what their relationship is to all other saints, and this secures, when fully carried out, the realisation or manifestation of the one body on earth. The unity of the Spirit is an abstract idea and the difficulty comes from making it an absolute fact. The unity of the Spirit is when your mind and mine go on together with the mind of the Spirit. When we do not see together the unity of the Spirit is not realised, but one would not say, it is

broken. If you and I are quarrelling we are not doing it in the unity of the Spirit.

But apart from all ecclesiastical questions or ideas, I am to go on with you; and if you are naughty, I am to forbear you in love. Taking the unity of the Spirit in its completeness you cannot separate it from the "one body." The "bond of peace" is walking as Christ walked. Walking according to the Spirit can be done individually, but for unity of the Spirit there must be walking with others.

The unity of the body cannot be touched, for the Holy Ghost unites to Christ and they are members of one body. It is the unity of the Spirit we have to keep, that is to walk in the power of the Spirit which keeps us in "endeavouring."

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

T. Oliver.

No. I. Introductory.

IT has often been said that the Psalms do not give true Christian experience. If that means "true" in the sense of "complete" then we shall quite readily endorse the dictum. Until the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly line of blessing could not be opened up to human view, but collaterally with that there is the line of responsibility which undoubtedly takes character from the apprehension of the former in the power of the Spirit. Thus it is in the latter line that the teaching of the Psalms has valid application. Consequently it is of prime importance that Christians should study the prophetic bearing of the Psalms.

In the study of the Psalms it is necessary to distinguish between what is relative to the Spirit of Christ personally and to the same Spirit animating the remnant of His people. Moreover, the expression of their own exercises are freely interspersed with those prompted by the Spirit of Christ. Unlike the summaries which form prefaces to the chapters in other book of the Bible, the Psalm headings are inspired and thus demand equal attention with the subsequent subject matters.

The Psalms are divided into five books ending with the 41st, 72nd, 89th, 106th and 119th respectively. Psalms 120 to 150 form an appendix to the Psalms proper, although they are often classified as part of the fifth book.

In the first book, the prominent thought is the Lord as an object for the heart. The subject contemplates the people as still resident in Jerusalem. Thus the name of the Lord (i.e. Jehovah, the Covenant name) and covenant mercies receive abundant reference. The mass of the people are still considered as under probation, very much in the same way as the Apostles viewed con-

ditions in the first six chapters of the Acts in the New Testament.

In the second book, the conditions are viewed with relation to the remnant cast out of Zion consequent on the Lord having been rejected. Therefore, the name "God" is prominent. The people are less considered as connected by covenant. The need of a deliverer receives emphasis. The writers no longer rely on covenant relationship, but on the unconditional mercy of God.

In the third book, the subject is largely the deliverance and restoration of Israel as a nation. There is only one Psalm in the book specifically attributed to David, eleven Psalms are of Asaph and one each by Heman and Ethan, while the authorship of three others is not specially mentioned. Hence mercy is more expressed than righteousness. The outlook is wider than in those intimately connected with Jerusalem. The book ends fittingly with the 89th Psalm which speaks of the New Covenant proclaiming God's attitude to all men.

In the fourth book, the proclamation mainly celebrates the coming of the Lord and the establishment of His throne and His kingdom in display to the eye. The characteristic expression is "the Lord reigneth." That will bring Israel into blessing and the Gentile nations will come under perfect administration.

The 90th Psalm opening the book is entitled "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God." If that information had not been communicated in the heading, we would never have arrived at that conclusion. On the other hand, Psalm 91 speaks of the Lord in human circumstances, and the subject matter presents a marvellous contrast to that of the preceding Psalm. Only two Psalms in the book are stated to be of David, most of the others are without headings.

In the fifth book, emphasis is put on the Lord acting on behalf of man, promoting confidence in the heart of man as to the rectitude of His administration. Hence there is an explanation of the ways of God radiating from Himself resulting in a universe of unmixed blessing. There is also a paucity of specific headings to the Psalms of this book as occurs also in the fourth book. The subject matter is largely retrospective, indicating the end of God's ways with His earthly people. Righteousness is a characteristic expression. Thus on that line a climax is reached in Psalm 118, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." The faithful await the coming of that Man. In Psalm 119, we see the law written in man's heart involving the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, each having its due weight of importance. Each selection of eight verses gives adequate testimony to the perfection of the ways of God.

In the appendix the first fifteen psalms are "Songs of degrees", i.e. a stair of fifteen steps. They give the exercises of the faithful remnant moving towards the summit of their aspirations in Zion, which is the place of God's rest. The people are viewed on their way to that goal through an enemy's land. But the goal is full of blessing and resultant praise in the subsequent part, in which six are Hallelujah psalms concluding with "everything that has breath praising the Lord." That is no mere poetic fancy, but a sober statement of the conclusion of the ways of God surely moulding everything to His will in spite of the machinations of the Devil and the rebellion of man. These thoughts show the transition of the idea of rest to that of reconciliation!

Of the Divine Titles mentioned in the Psalms, Elohim (plural) speaking of God in creatorial power (trinity acting in unity) is the usual expression (in Book 1 used 15 times, in Book 2 it occurs 164 times).

El. (singular) is less frequent, expressing unity, power and action, the mighty origin of all!

Eloah, indicating the true God in contrast to the false, occurs still less frequently.

Jehovah, the self-existent "I am", is the name of relationship in blessing to Israel. That is the usual form translated "the Lord" and occasionally "Jehovah" (in Book 1 used 272 times, in Book 2 only 30 times).

Jah is often associated with the expression "praise ye" in the word Hallelujah. The title indicates the One who dwells in eternity, merging past, present and future in the "eternal now." The title is sublime and yet it is the simplest of the divine names, well fitted for infant lips to pronounce, "Yah." It occurs 43 times in the Psalms.

Shaddai, the Almighty in sustaining resource, occurs only twice, viz. Ps. 68. 14 and Ps. 91. 1.

Adon, the Lord as possessor in power.

Adonahy (plural) the Lord in blessing.

Jehovah-Rohi, the Lord my Shepherd.

Jehovah Heleyon, the Lord most High, occurs 22 times in the Psalms.

Messiah, "anointed", occurs 10 times in the Psalms.

There are 11 Psalms for the Sons of Korah, 13 Maschil and 4 Lily Psalms. Of these we shall write a little in detail.

All that makes heaven the home of our Lord makes it home for us. It is the Father's house, and where the Father is, there is the children's home.

Someone asked which of the two is the more important, the Word of God or prayer?

The answer was given by the asking another, Which of the two wings of a bird is the more important?

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 4. II — 6. 34)

THE temptation of Jesus by the devil makes it plain beyond all dispute that a personal devil exists. From the days of Genesis 3, he had been accustomed to seduce men by appealing to their lusts and pride. In Jesus he met One who had neither lust nor pride, and who met his every onslaught by the Word of God; defeated consequently, he had to leave Him. His conqueror was a true Man, who had fasted forty days and forty nights, and to Him angels ministered. They had never before served their God after this wonderful sort.

The casting of John into prison, as verse 12 shows us, was the event which led the Lord to enter fully upon His public ministry. Leaving Nazareth, He took up His abode in Capernaum, and Isaiah's prophecy found its fulfillment, at all events as regards His first advent. If we turn up the passage (9. 1-7) and read it, we shall notice that both advents are in view, as is so often the case. His coming shone like a star before the prophets, but they did not as yet know that it was a double star. Galilee will yet see the great light of His **glory**, just as then they saw the great light of His **grace**. The forerunners having been silenced by imprisonment, Jesus took up and enforced His message of repentance in view of the kingdom being at hand. John's Gospel shows us that the Lord was active in service before this time. He had disciples, and He visited Judaea when "John was not yet cast into prison" (3. 24).

This being so, the calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John was not the beginning of their acquaintance with Him. That came earlier, and is recorded in John I. Evidently also there were times when they or other disciples went about with Him before they were definitely called to leave their secular occupations and give all their time to Him. Following Him, He would make

these fishermen to be fishers of men. By diligence and study men may make themselves into good preachers, but fishers of men are only made by Him. He was supreme at this Himself, and walking in His company they would learn of Him and catch His spirit.

In the three verses which close chapter 4, Matthew sums up the early days of His ministry. His message was "the gospel of the kingdom." It must be distinguished from "the gospel of the grace of God," which is being preached to-day. This has the death and resurrection of Christ as its great theme, and announces forgiveness as the fruit of the expiation He made. That was the glad tidings that the kingdom predicted by the prophets was now brought to them in Him. If they would submit to the divine authority that was vested in Him, the power of the kingdom would be active on their behalf. As proof of this He showed the power of the kingdom in the healing of men's bodies. All manner of bodily sickness and disease was removed, the pledge that He could heal every spiritual ill. This display of the **power** of the kingdom, coupled with the **preaching** of the kingdom, proved very attractive, and great crowds followed Him.

The Lord then began to speak to His disciples, though in the presence of the multitude, instructing them in the **principles** of the kingdom. First of all He showed what kind of people are going to possess the kingdom and enjoy its benefits. In the kingdoms of men to-day a man needs plenty of self-confidence and pushfulness if he is to be a success, but the opposite holds good for the kingdom of heaven. This had been already indicated in the Old Testament: Psalm 37, for instance, especially verse 11, plainly states it; yet the Lord here gives us a much enlarged view of this fact. He really sketches for us a moral picture of the godly remnant who will finally enter

the kingdom. Eight things does He mention, beginning with poverty of spirit and ending with persecution, and there is a sequence in their order. Repentance produces poverty of spirit, and there all must start. Then comes the mourning and the meekness induced by a true sight of oneself, followed by a thirst for the righteousness which is only found in God. Then, filled with that, the saint comes out in God's own character — mercy, purity, peace. But the world does not want God or His character, hence persecution closes the list.

The blessing, contemplated in verses 3-10, is to be fully realized in the kingdom of heaven, when it is established on earth. In each beatitude save the last the godly are described in an impersonal way: in verses 11 and 12 the Lord speaks personally to His disciples. The "they" of verse 10 changes to the "ye" of verse 11; and now, speaking to His disciples, reward in heaven is promised. He knew that these disciples of His were to pass on into a new and heavenly order of things, and so while reaffirming old things in a clearer light, He began to intimate some of the new things that were soon to come. The change in these two verses is striking and helps to show the character of the "Sermon on the Mount," in which the Lord summarized His teaching, and related it to the old things given through Moses. In John 13-16, which we may call "The Sermon in the Upper Chamber," we find Him expanding His teaching and relating it to the full light He would give when the Holy Ghost was come.

In persecution for His sake His disciples were to be blessed, and they were to recognize this and rejoice. Naturally we shrink from persecution but history proves the truth of these words. Those who are identified with Christ fully and boldly have to suffer, but they are sustained and recompensed; whereas those, who try to avoid it by compromise, miss all the recompense, and are miserable. And

further, it is when the disciple is persecuted by the world that most definitely he is "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world." Salt preserves, and light illuminates. We cannot be like healthful salt in the earth if we are of the earth. We cannot be as a light lifted up in the world if we are of the world. Now nothing more helps to keep us distinct and separate from the earth and world than persecution from the world, no matter what form it takes. Persecuted for Christ's sake, the disciple is real salty salt, and he also emits a maximum of light. Does not this word of our Lord reveal to us the secret of much of our feebleness?

Notice too that the light is supposed to shine in things practical, not merely in things theological. It is not that men recognize it in our clear or original teachings expressed in **words**, but rather in our acts and **works**. They should certainly hear our good words, but they must see our good works, if we are to be light to them. The word for "good" here does not mean exactly **benevolent** but rather **upright** or **honest**. Such actions find their source in the Father in heaven: they shed His light and glorify Him.

From verse 17 to the end of chapter 5 we find the Lord giving the connection between what He taught and that which had been given through Moses. He had not come to annul or destroy what had previously been given but rather to give the fulness of it—for such is the meaning here of the word, "fulfil." He corroborated and enforced all that had been said, as verses 18 and 19 show, and not one word that God had spoken was to be broken. And moreover as verse 20 shows, He insisted that the righteousness which the law demanded had in it a fulness which far exceeds anything known or recognized by the superficial scribes and Pharisees of His day: They rendered a technical obedience in ceremonial matters and ignored the real spirit of the law and the object

which God had in view. Their righteousness did not lead to the kingdom.

Consequently He proceeded to show that there was a fulness of meaning in the law's demands that men had not suspected, referring to no less than six points as illustrating His theme. He spoke of the sixth and seventh commandments; then of the law as to divorce in Deuteronomy 24. 1; then as to oaths in Leviticus 19. 12; then of the law of retribution as given in Exodus 21. 24 and elsewhere; and lastly of such a sanctioning of hatred towards enemies as is found in Deuteronomy 23. 6.

As to the two commandments He quoted, His teaching evidently is that God has respect not only to the overt act but also to the inward disposition of the heart. What is prohibited is not merely the act of murder or adultery but the hatred and the lust of which the act is the expression. Judged by this standard, who is going to stand before the holy demands of Sinai? The "righteousness" of the scribe and Pharisee utterly collapses. Yet in both cases, having exposed this fact, He added some further instruction.

In verses 23-26, He showed two things of importance: first, no offering is acceptable to God if it be presented while there is unrighteousness manward. We cannot condone wrong towards man by professed piety towards God. Only when reconciliation has been effected can God be approached. Then, second, if the matter which causes estrangement is carried to law, the law must take its course apart from mercy. The Lord's words here doubtless have prophetic significance. The Jewish nation was about to prosecute their case against Him, turning Him into their "adverse party," and it will issue in their condemnation. They have not even yet paid the uttermost farthing.

So with the next instance: here He shows us that any sacrifice is worth

while, if it but leads to a deliverance from the hell that lies at the end.

In the third and fourth cases (31-37) He again shows us that what was ordained through Moses did not express the full mind of God. Both divorce and swearing were permitted, and thus the standard that men had to attain was not made too severe. Both matters are here set in a fuller light, and we see that only one thing is to be permitted to dissolve the marriage bond; and then that men's word should be so unequivocal and binding, that taking strong oaths, by this or that, is not needed. The man, who backs nearly every assertion by an oath, is a man whose simple word is not to be trusted.

Then again the law stipulated retribution of a very even kind for injury inflicted. It enjoined what we should call "tit for tat"; as also, while calling for love to one's neighbour, it permitted the hatred of an enemy. This the Lord reversed. He inculcated forbearance and the grace that gives, rather than the insistence upon one's rights; and also the love that will bless and do good to the enemy. And all this in order that His disciples may be quite distinct from the sinners of the world, and come out in the character of God Himself.

God is presented to them not as Jehovah, the Lawgiver, but as "your Father which is in heaven." That is to say, He is now presented in a new light. It is this that governs the teachings of the Lord here, for if we know Him in this new way, we discover Him to be marked by benevolence towards the unjust and the evil, and we are to be in our measure what He is. In the ministry of Jesus a new revelation of God was dawning, and it entailed a new standard of perfection. We are to come out practically as sons of our Father in heaven, for the perfection of a son is to be as the Father.

Eight times over does He say in this chapter, "I say unto you," and on six of these occasions the words are pre-

ceded by the word, "But," throwing His statement into contrast with what the law had previously said. We may well ask, "Who is this that quotes the holy law of God, and then calmly says, **"But I say unto you"**—so and so? He actually alters and enlarges the law; a thing that no prophet had ever dared to do! Does this not amount to terrible presumption, bordering on blasphemy?" Yes, indeed, and only one explanation will lift this charge from off Him. But that one explanation is true: **here we have the original Lawgiver, who once spoke from Sinai.** Now He has come forth in Manhood as Emmanuel. Emmanuel has gone up another mountain, and now speaks not to a nation but to His disciples. He has every right to enlarge or amend His own law.

Having introduced His disciples to God in this new light at the end of chapter 5, we notice that all the teaching in chapter 6 is in reference to it. The expression "your Father," in slightly varying terms, occurs no less than twelve times. The teaching falls into four sections: almsgiving (1-4), prayer (5-15), fasting (16-18), earthly possessions and the necessary things of life (19-34). All four things touched the practical life of the Jew at many points, and their tendency and habit was to take up the first three in a technical, perfunctory way, and to lay all the stress and pay all the attention to item number four. The Lord Jesus sets them all in the light which His earlier words had shed. In chapter 5 He had shown them a God who deals with the inward motions of the heart as much as with outward actions, and yet that God is to be known as a heavenly Father. Still we notice how He repeats, "I say unto you." He does not teach as did the scribes, basing their assertions on the traditions of the ancients, but we have to take what He says, just because He says it.

If tradition rules us, we may easily get into just the position in which the Jews were found in regard to their alms-givings, their prayers and their

fastings. To them it had all become a matter of outward observance, as meeting the eyes and ears of men. If we, on the other hand, lift our thoughts to the Father in heaven, who has an intimate concern as to us, all must become real and vital, and be done for His ear and eye. Three times over the Lord says of the mere formalist, "They have their reward." Their reward is the approbation and praise of their fellows. This they **have**; it is all in the present, and there is nothing more to come. He, who gives or prays or fasts unknown to men but known to God, will be rewarded openly in the day to come.

As to prayer, He teaches not only **secrecy** but **brevity**, which lies at the heart of **reality**. A man, who asks with intense reality and earnestness, inevitably goes straight to the point with the fewest words. He cannot possibly wander in a maze of circumlocutions. Verses 9-13 give us the model prayer, exactly suitable to the disciples in their then circumstances. There are six petitions. The first three have to do with God; His name, His kingdom, His will. The second three have to do with us; our bread, our debts, our deliverance. The heavenly Father and His claims must be first, and our needs second. The blessing of men on earth depends upon His will being done on earth, and that will only come to pass when His kingdom is established.

The forgiveness spoken of in verses 14 and 15 is connected with the debts of verse 12. In the heavenly Father's holy government of His children the unforgiving spirit comes under His chastisement. If someone commits an offence against us and we refuse to forgive, we shall miss God's governmental forgiveness. It is not a question here of forgiveness for eternity, since those to whom the Lord was speaking were disciples, with whom that great matter was already settled.

Very searching words as to earthly possessions are next spoken. No tendency is more deep-seated with all men

than that of pursuing, grasping at, and laying up treasures upon earth, though they waste under the action of natural forces as well as the action of violent men. If we really know the Father in heaven, we shall find our treasure in heaven, and there our heart will be; and we have only to have the single eye to see this, and to see all else clearly. Then too our bodies become full of light: that is, we become luminous ourselves. We shall either be dominated by God or by mammon, for we cannot serve two masters. God and mammon are too utterly opposed for that.

Serving God, who is indeed a heavenly Father, we come under His watchful and kindly care. He knows all our needs and concerns Himself about them. We are impotent; unable to add a cubit to our height, or to array ourselves like the grass of the field. Our Father has infinite wisdom and power, and cares for the humblest creatures of His hand: we may have absolute confidence therefore in His loving care for us. Hence we are to

be free from all anxious care. The men of the world are grasping at the treasure of this world which wastes so quickly, and they are full of care as to its preservation and use. We are to be resting in our Father's care and love, and therefore free of anxiety.

Now this is mainly negative. We are to be free of the anxious care which fills so many hearts; but this is in order that we may be free to **seek the kingdom of God**, and to seek it **first**. Instead of peering into **to-morrow** with apprehension, we are to be filling up **to-day** with the things of the kingdom, and that kingdom leads us in the ways of righteousness.

This was God's pleasure for the disciples who followed our Lord during His days upon earth: it is no less His pleasure for us who follow Him now that His work is fully accomplished and He is gone into the heavens. The spirit He thus inculcated was quite foreign to the religion of the Pharisee of His day, as also it is foreign to outward and worldly religion to-day.

A Place or a Person

“And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord I believe. And he worshipped Him” (John 9. 34-38).

HE was cast out of the place of worship and cast into the company of the Person to worship, he lost the fellowship of the Pharisees but found the fellowship of the Son of God. Is it the place or the Person that we value? The chief place in the synagogue was an empty honour, to be in the company of the Son of God was to be enriched and honoured beyond words. He had received his sight and was bold in the confession of it, but now he saw the One who had blest

him and his heart was moved, not with gratitude only but with love, for we do not worship unless we love. He found himself in the presence of the Son of God, his Divine Benefactor, and worshipped Him. What a moment that was for him, and what a moment for the Lord. And what next? “The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me.” What wonderful compensation for being cast out by men.

What a joy it must be to the Spirit when He finds a soul that responds to His ministry of Christ.

A VESSEL . . . MEET FOR THE MASTER'S USE.

L. A. Anderson.

ALL vessels are not suitable for the Master for various reasons. The vessel may be **too grand** or fine a one to do His particular service. He may be wanting, and often does, some lonely and obscure piece of work done, and the vessel considers itself far too important, far too great, for work of that description.

Do we sometimes desire, like Naaman of old, to do some **great** thing, whereas the Lord wants us to do something which is quite insignificant in the sight of others? We would rather someone else did it whilst we seek to be engaged in what is more noticeable. If this is so then we do well to take heed to the Lord's word to the disciples in somewhat analogous circumstances, when He said three times over within the compass of the first sixteen verses as recorded in Matt. 6: "Verily I say unto you, **They have their reward.**" To be of any real use at all we need to be as our Master, "meek and lowly of heart" (Matt. 11. 29).

If the vessel is too great it will just be put aside, however beautiful it may appear, for it is **not** fit for His use.

Again, the vessel may be **damaged**—very slightly perhaps—but there is that small crack of sin in the vessel which will allow the contents to leak out slowly, but very surely.

Is there some, what we call, small sin in our lives which is effectually preventing our being used by the Lord? Who is there that has not at some time or other been conscious that they have been unserviceable because of some detail in their life which spoils their service for Him? May we "take . . . the little foxes that spoil the vines" (Song of Sol. 2. 15).

It was only something slight but it just made the vessel an **unfit** one.

Again, the vessel may not be a **clean one**. How we all dislike taking our food from a vessel that is not clean. We put it aside as being distasteful, and take another, a cleaner one.

Have you ever felt that you were defiled by that which you saw or heard during the day? Instead of going to the Word for cleansing from the defilement you have omitted to do so and you remained soiled. You only needed as it were, a little cleansing, but that was not done, and you could not be used that day—the vessel was not fit.

May we pray, "Create in me a clean heart O God" (Psalm 51. 10).

Or yet again, perhaps the vessel seems to have no real fault or flaw as we survey it. It seems to be the right size, the right shape, no apparent blemish, quite clean inside as well as out; and yet what is the matter, for it is perfectly useless as it is? Why the vessel is full up; and is of **no use** in that condition. It must be emptied to be of service.

We, to be useful, must be emptied of **self** and thus be a fit vessel for whatever service the Lord may desire to use us. "A vessel . . . meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2. 21).

Oh, God, help us to be fit in Thy service whatever it may be. May we be kept humble, undamaged by sin within, undefiled by sin without, and emptied of self—"A vessel unto honour sanctified and meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2. 21)—for His Name's sake, Amen.

"Myself I cannot save,
 Myself I cannot keep;
 But strength in Thee I surely have,
 Whose eyelids never sleep."

GOD OUR REFUGE.

THERE is an old proverb, "*He that would learn to pray let him go to sea.*" The meaning is that storms will make men turn to God, and it is well when they do. Yet it is better to pray before the storm, for then a man has a sure anchor when the storm breaks upon him.

I called to see a stricken woman, for many years she had lived without any illness at all, but an accident had laid her upon her bed a helpless invalid for life. It appeared to be a sad case, and one calling for pity and sympathy, but what did I find? I found her radiant instead of depressed, giving thanks instead of murmuring. Yes, the calamity had not shaken her faith. She knew whom she had believed, and when the trouble came she had a Friend and refuge. She had walked with God in the bright days and she knew that He would not forsake her

in the day of trouble.

If you would have Bible incidents to illustrate this, enquire of Daniel, and learn how that when the decree went forth that meant death to him, he opened his windows and kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, *and gave thanks before his God* as he did aforetime (Dan. 6. 10). And then enquire of Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi, and learn how that when they were made to suffer the most outrageous injustice, they spent the hours in prayer and praise to God (Acts 16).

These things have been written for our learning, and what lessons they teach, and what a Teacher God is, and what He was to Daniel and to Paul, He will be to you and to me, even though we be the most obscure and weakest of all His children.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

Fellowship with the Gospel.

"What answer would you give to one who said one ought to have the full fellowship of the assembly before going forth to evangelise in another place?"—ENQUIRER.

WE should quote the Apostle Paul, who is our model in these matters of service. At the beginning of his service he said, "When it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; **immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood**" (Galatians 1. 16). And at the end of his life of service he recorded, "At my first answer **no man stood with me** . . . notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me; that by me the

preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear" 2 Timothy 4. 16, 17.

The fellowship of an assembly is to be greatly valued, we learn how much Paul valued it from his letter to the Philippians, but he did not stand idle until he got it, but obeyed the Lord's leading—to whom he was alone responsible, and they shewed the happy spiritual condition in which they were by giving him their fellowship.

To the spiritually intelligent mind the Word of God carries an authority beyond all cavils.

THE PRESENT SERVICE OF CHRIST FOR US.

J. T. Mawson.

“And when the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold an host compassed the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! How shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” 2 Kings 6. 13-17.

THE world of 1940 is the same world of our Lord's day, and of it He said to His disciples, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” His disciples in Germany and Russia, in Poland and other continental countries have been, and are finding how true these words of the Lord are, but it may be that some of you in these more favoured lands, and especially the younger christians, have not experienced much tribulation hitherto; but now things are different and with war upon us you are beginning to ask, “How shall we do?” It may be that some of you have been suddenly thrown into circumstances that are well illustrated by the plight in which Elisha's young man felt himself to be when he awoke in the morning to see foes everywhere and no apparent way of escape.

The fact that you have openly confessed the Lord, and that you desire to be faithful to Him seems to have increased your troubles; you must not be surprised at that, for your great Adversary, Satan, has a special spite against those who belong to Christ, and he will do his best to shake your faith and make you wonder whether it would not be easier and better to haul down your flag and go with the stream. John Bunyan knew all about this, and he tells us about it in the history of his pilgrim. At one point on the road to the Celestial city Satan confronted him and “straddled quite across the whole breadth of the way,” and said to Christian, “I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no further; here will I spill thy blood.” Certainly Christian had a hard fight for

it, but he won through in spite of the devil's oath, and all the trumpets of heaven celebrated his triumph. You need not fear; you may add to your faith courage, for the Lord not only said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation,” but added, “**be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**”

Still it is well not to underrate the subtlety and strength of the foe, or minimise the difficulties that you have to face; the question is are you able to meet the foe with the resources that are on your side? The young man of our story was greatly disturbed at the situation: to him it seemed hopeless, but he did the right thing when he ran to his master. Elisha, the man of God, shall stand as a type of our Lord in this story, for the two things he did for his terrified servant are the very things that the Lord is doing for you. “Fear not,” said Elisha. “Be of good cheer,” says the Lord Jesus. “They that be with us are more than they that be with them,” said Elisha. “I have overcome the world,” says the Lord Jesus. Only our Lord is greater than all your difficulties, and you have His word for it. But more, Elisha prayed for his servant and the Lord intercedes for you. I want you to consider His word to you and His intercession for you, for these two are prominent things in **the present service of your living Lord for you.**

He died for you: herein was His great love for you expressed. Because you were dead in trespasses and sins He laid down His life that you might live; and now you have passed from death into life through His death. But

the death of your Saviour was not the end, if it had been He would not have been a Saviour at all, for the sure Word of God says, "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15. 17).

You can rejoice in the great love that led Him to sacrifice Himself for your salvation, to be made sin for you and to bear sin's judgment in your stead, but you can also rejoice in Him the risen Saviour, who came back from the grave, triumphant over it, speaking peace. He "was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

All this fills the heart with gratitude and the mouth with praise, but it does not meet the question of our present needs as the disciples and soldiers of Jesus Christ. We must have His present service for us. Many have believed in Him and believe that He ascended into heaven, and have lost sight of Him. They look backward to the cross and are thankful, and look onward to heaven and are hopeful, but they are ignorant of this present service of the Lord, and so know very little of what the Scripture means when it says, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loves us." You need the Scripture which says, "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also maketh intercession for us**" (Romans 8. 34), and again, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him, seeing **He ever liveth to make intercession for them**" (Hebrews 7. 25).

Here is a theme well calculated to move your heart and fill you with wonder and praise. You are beset with trials; it may be that cherished hopes have crashed, some even may be treading the valley of the shadow of death; some who started out meaning to be valiant for the Lord have discovered how weak and cowardly they are when face to face with the enemy of their

soul, and may even, like Simon Peter, have denied their Lord. But what—you are precious to your Lord, you are an object of His deep unchanging love, He considers you, He knows your frailties and the forces that are against you and He **ever liveth** to make intercession for you.

Your risen from the dead and glorified Lord is your great high Priest. This is one of the titles that is His now and it describes His present service for you and all His own. For this great office He has two qualifications—love and power; His heart never grows weary and His strength will never decay. These qualifications are illustrated for us in the ephod that by God's command was made for Aaron, the high priest for Israel of old. In it were a breastplate of precious stones and shoulder plates in which were inscribed the names of the tribes of Israel. The type is a simple one but full of most blessed meaning: Upon the breast of His love and upon the shoulders of His strength the redeemed people of the Lord are ever borne, and you are one of them, your name is there.

This love and power are enshrined in His very name. Take this verse for instance, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, **JESUS the SON OF GOD, let us hold fast our profession**" (Hebrews 4. 14). Think of that Name Jesus! Precious Name!

"Jesus, it speaks a life of love,
Of sorrows meekly borne;
It tells of sympathy above
Whatever makes us mourn."

But Jesus is the Son of God, He is great, He is Almighty, He is the Heir of the universe. Jesus tells us of His love, the Son of God declares His power.

"Jesus" tells of His preciousness to us. "The Son of God" tells us of His preciousness to God. "Jesus" tells us that since He loves us so well, there is nothing that would be good for us that He will not ask for when He intercedes before God for us; and the "Son of

God" tells us that since God loves Him infinitely He will not deny Him any requests that He makes. The fact that Jesus the Son of God is our great high Priest puts us into contact with the inexhaustible grace and power of God, and infinite love sets these resources in motion for us. **"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"** (Hebrews 4. 16).

The Word has a great place in this Hebrew Epistle. You must hear His voice and not allow your heart to be hardened by unbelief. You must give earnest heed to the Word and mix it with faith, so will your feet be guided in the paths of righteousness, and in those paths the grace and mercy of your interceding Saviour will sustain you.

You are one of the "holy brethren" and "partaker of the heavenly calling," for so you are designated by the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 3. 1), which means that God has separated you from the world for Himself, and called you to share the glory of Christ in heaven. You are one of the many sons whom God is bringing to His glory, and your great high Priest is

also the Captain of your salvation—your Leader, who has qualified for this by the suffering He has endured for your sake (ch. 2. 10). He is both merciful and faithful (ch. 2. 17). He is faithful to God who has entrusted you to Him, and He will be merciful to you, never allowing a burden to fall on you that you cannot bear, and as you consider Him you will find that He is able, His grace is sufficient. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

The eyes of Elisha's servant were opened as a result of his master's prayer and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. If the eyes of your faith are open you will say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

"E'en friends may pass and perish. Thou,
God wilt not remove;
No hatred of the devil can part me from
Thy love.
No angel and no demon, no throne, nor
power, nor might,
No care, 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, nor sever
me from Thee."

The Power of God.

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me power."

With Christ the weight of a mountain is light as a feather; without Him the weight of a feather is overwhelming.

Where the Holy Ghost is working one man is as good as a hundred; where He is not working a hundred are no better than one. With Him one man can do all, endure all, sustain all. Without Him one hundred men can do nothing.

God will not force people to abide in a place of service to Him if they cannot trust Him to sustain them there.

When we think of the Father, the Incarnate Son, the ever-blessed Spirit, who shall venture to hint a limit to our trust in God? Who shall accuse us of folly for confiding in the divine Trinity?

IN THE WORLD — IN ME.

David Ross.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that **IN ME** ye might have peace. **IN THE WORLD** ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16. 33.

IN the world—in Me. How great the contrast and how stupendous the claim! The **world** with its vastness, its pomp and power, the whole range of things seen, felt and heard, so near to us, so attractive, so seductive, with so much to offer: **Me**, Jesus, the despised and rejected of men, the Man of Sorrows soon to be cut off and have nothing, soon to occupy a malefactor's cross and fill another's tomb. But the one who records these words had learned and was yet to learn more deeply that this Jesus was none other than the Son of God, the Eternal come into time, the Infinite revealed in space, the Creator tabernacling in His own world incognito. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not."

DESOLATION — PEACE

In the world — trouble. Does the truth of this need proving to-day? Desolate cities, starving peoples, devastated homes, drowning mariners, broken hearts and lives everywhere show the truth of the old saying, "Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5. 7). How happy the christian living in such a world who knows another dwelling place, another refuge in which to find peace. Amid the horrors of the battlefield, in the midst of wrecked homes, confronted with the break-up of all they valued, there are those who can speak like the Chinese pastor in the midst of the devouring fires and wreckage caused by a Japanese air raid: "It was an awesome and never-to-be-forgotten sight. Yet the peace of God continued to fill my heart. In faith, I knelt and besought God to work according to His will. Having committed all to the will of God, I had no fear and my heart was at rest with a perfect peace." Peace, peace, sweet peace, wonderful gift from above. "In Me ye shall have peace."

DARKNESS — LIGHT

In the world—darkness, a spiritual darkness, fitly symbolised by the black-out so rigorously enforced at present in the civilised and highly cultured lands of to-day. Upon Egypt, whose proud Pharaoh had challenged God, saying, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" there came a darkness, "even darkness which may be felt." So upon a so-called christian Europe which has largely become apostate and pagan, there rests just such a palpable darkness with men crying out in despair, "Who will show us any good?" And the tragedy of it is that many are blaming God Himself for the darkness which their forsaking of the God of Light has brought upon them. "But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." "I am the Light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Happy is the man whose heart dwells in Him, who is indeed the only light of men, for in His light we shall see light.

DEATH — LIFE

If the light of the sun were withdrawn from this world, it would become one vast graveyard, a scene of death, and even with the beneficent rays of this life-giving orb, the ultimate end of all in this sin-blighted world is death.

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things,
There is no armour against fate,
Death lays his icy hand on Kings.
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

But if the wages of sin is death, it is no less true that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. In Him was life and He came into the world that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. What a blessed experience to

have been transferred from the realm of sin and death, passed from death unto life through the hearing of His life-giving voice. In the world—death; in Me—life; life everlasting, life abundant.

DISAPPOINTMENT — JOY

No man had ever a better opportunity of finding joy and satisfaction in this world than the experimenter described in the Book of Ecclesiastes, who tried everything "under the sun." Mirth and laughter, wine and folly, works of architecture and horticulture, music and learning, were his to enjoy, and yet he hated life, for all proved to be but vanity of vanities and vexation of spirit. And so must it ever be, for only the Eternal God who set "eternity" in the heart of man (3. 11) can fully satisfy that heart. "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless, till they find their rest in Thee." Thus wrote Augustine, one-time profligate and philosopher, when through the knowledge of God revealed in Christ through the Scriptures he had become saint and man of God. In the world — disappointment; in Me — joy unspeakable and full of glory. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full." In His presence fulness of joy and at His right hand pleasures for evermore.

DESPAIR — GOOD CHEER

"In time past ye walked according to the course of this world . . . having no **hope** and without God in the world." This description of the desperate condition of his Gentile contemporaries supplemented with the terrible details of Rom. 1. 21-32 is confirmed by the writers of the times, but unlike Paul they had no remedy, for only in Christ is hope, hope for the uplift of the fallen and morally degraded, hope beyond the grave. In Thessalonica "the others which have no hope" could only write despairing epitaphs on their tombs, "After death no meeting, after grave no greeting," but those for whom life and immor-

tality had been brought to light through the gospel could **comfort** one another with these wonderful words, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Courage, despairing brother, be of good cheer, for He has overcome the world and gained the victory over death and the grave.

DEFEAT — VICTORY

In the world—defeat, frustration of purposes and aspirations, bafflement and humiliating failure. How often is this true of the christian as well as the man of the world, and the reason is that his faith for victory is too often, like Peter's, centred on his own strength and devotion rather than on Him who could say, I have overcome the world. This is the victory that has gotten the victory over the world, our faith. Who is he that gets the victory over the world but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God? May our lives be more lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us, so that we may be able to exclaim triumphantly in the face of death's terrors or life's temptations, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

DESERTION — THE FATHER'S NAME

How remarkable that the words of our text should follow the heart-breaking announcement to His disciples, "Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." That He felt keenly that impending desertion, and especially the betrayal by His own familiar friend is shown by the moving words, "He was troubled in spirit." And yet He speaks in the last words of the Upper Room of "My" joy, "My" peace. And the secret of this was that He ever lived in the presence of His Father, "and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." Even when His own city, Capernaum, spurned His mighty works of power and kindness and He lamented its coming doom—and who can measure the sorrow of

His loving heart at that moment?—He could retire into the presence of His Father and say, "Father, I thank Thee." And His Father is now our Father to whom our Lord committed

His own in His wonderful prayer: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. Holy Father, keep in Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me."

"To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

EVERYBODY expected that Germany would strike a swift and shattering blow at this country on the outbreak of the war. Preparations were made for hundreds of thousands of casualties, and for the shelter and security of millions; the months have passed and the blow has not been struck. Why? We may be sure that it is not compassion or friendly feeling in the heart of Hitler and his band; Fear of reprisals then? May be, yet that is not convincing. What then? We believe, and we state our belief without hesitation, that God's hand has been over us and over those whose wish was our destruction.

The Old Testament gives us many instances of how God was able to put thoughts into the minds of ruthless men and turn them from their purposes; they proposed but He disposed, and the God of those ancient days is the God and Father of all who believe.

Has this providential protection been afforded us that we might turn to God with repentance, acknowledging our forgetfulness of Him? And have we rendered thanks to Him for His mercy, for quiet nights and days free from alarms? And are we who know God fulfilling His will and giving ourselves to supplications, prayer, thanksgivings for all men; for kings and all that be in authority; that we—His children—in Poland, Finland and Germany as

well as in Britain—may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"? Let us remember that this "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

Can we expect this great mercy to continue if we ignore the source of it, and rest instead in Britain's might or Hitler's fears? "Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." War is war, and in the utter bankruptcy of mankind in their departure from God force must be met by force. Strong men are needed in Governments, but their strength may be weakness if they turn not to God, and we have noticed that powerful, fighting speeches are followed by naval disasters. God would speak to us thus and teach us to shun all boasting, and to humbly seek His mercy for those who may not pray for themselves.

It is a time for prayer and humiliation and confession; a time for a renewed and whole-hearted surrender to God and the Word of His grace; a time to shun controversy and party spirit; a time to turn from profane and vain babblings, which can only increase to more ungodliness. May God in His great mercy and pity for men in their miseries pour out upon His people the Spirit of grace and supplication.

The grace of God has two parts: one is it brings you out of your misery, and the other is it sets you up in a new condition in the spot where your misery was. Not when you go to heaven, but here and at this moment. Of course your blessing will be complete when you go to heaven, but God has given you His Spirit that your joy may be full now.

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 7. 1 — 9. 38)

THE Lord's teachings, recorded in chapter 6, were designed to lead His disciples into such relations with **their Father in heaven**, that He would fill their thoughts, whether in regard to their almsgiving, their prayers, their fastings, or their attitude to the possessions and needs of this life. Chapter 7 opens with teachings that would regulate their dealings with **their brethren**, and even with **the ungodly**.

The judging of one's brother is a very deep-seated tendency in our heart. The judging of things, or of teaching, is not forbidden, but encouraged—as we see, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 2. 15; 10. 15—but the judging of persons is forbidden. The church is called upon to judge those who are of it. In certain cases, as 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 show, but, apart from this, the judging of persons is a prerogative of the Lord. If, in spite of the Lord's forbidding, we indulge in it, two penalties are sure to follow, as He indicates here. First, we ourselves shall come under judgment, and have measured to us just what we have meted to others. Second, we shall drift into hypocrisy. Directly we start judging others we become blind to our own defects. The small defect in our brother becomes magnified to us, all unconscious that we have a big defect of a nature to impair our spiritual eyesight. The most profitable form of judgment for each of us is **self-judgment**.

Verse 6 has in view the ungodly, insensible of good and unclean in their tastes. Things that are holy and precious are not for them; and if foolishly we present them to them, they are despised and we may suffer their violence. It is right that we should be givers of God's holy things; but not to such.

But if we are to be **givers**, we must first **receive**, and of this verses 7-11 speak. To receive we must draw near to God — asking, seeking, knocking.

A response from our Father is certain. If we ask for necessary things we shall get them, for He will not give us instead something worthless like a stone, or injurious like a serpent. We may rest assured that He will give us "good things," for His Fatherhood is of heaven. His standard therefore will not fall below that of earthly fatherhood. We may apply Isaiah 55: 9 to this, and say that as the heavens are higher than the earth so are His Fatherly thoughts higher than our thoughts. We of necessity cannot come up to His standard. Hence in verse 12 the Lord did not then demand of His disciples a standard above that set by the law and the prophets.

In verses 13 and 14 the Lord evidently looked beyond His disciples to the crowd. Before them there were the alternatives of the broad way and the narrow way, of destruction and life. We cannot say that the grace of God is narrow, for it has come forth for all men; it is the way of self-judgment and repentance which is so narrow. Few find that way, and but few proclaim it. The majority of the preachers prefer to prophesy smoother things.

The warning against false prophets follows. They are to be known not by their fine words but by their fruits. Fruit is the result and crowning expression of life, and it reveals **the character** of the life that it consummates. The false prophet has a false life, which must reveal itself in false fruit.

But there are not only false prophets but false disciples—those who loudly profess allegiance to the Lord, but the vital link of faith is lacking. Vital faith, as the Apostle James tells us, must express itself in works. Everyone, who really comes under the lordship of Christ in faith, must of necessity be set to do the will of the Father in heaven, whom He presented. Judas

Iscariot furnishes us with a terrible example of verses 22 and 23. Evidently he performed works of power along with the other disciples, but it was proved at last that no link of real faith ever existed and he was but a worker of iniquity.

And therefore the Lord closed His words with the parable of the two houses. Both builders, the wise and the foolish, were hearers of the words of Jesus but only one was a doer of them—and that one was the wise man. The parable does not teach salvation by works, but salvation by **that living faith which leads to the works**. If we cast our minds back over the Sermon on the Mount we shall realize at once that nothing but genuine faith in Him could induce anyone to do the things which He taught. We shall also realize how fully His teachings verified His own word in chapter 5: 17. He has given us the fulness of the law and the prophets, while adding fresh light as to the Father in heaven; thus preparing the way for the fuller light of grace that was to dawn as the fruit of His death and resurrection. The authority with which He announced these things was what struck the people. The scribes relied upon the earlier Rabbinic teachings, while He spoke the things that He knew from and with God.

After these three chapters filled with His teachings, Matthew gives us two chapters occupied with His works of power. It was not enough for Him to enunciate the principles of the kingdom, He displayed the power of the kingdom in a variety of striking ways. There are five main illustrations of that power in chapter 8, and again five in chapter 9. In each case we may say that the miracle the Lord performed in connection with human bodies, or with visible and tangible things, was a proof of how He could deal with the deeper-seated things of the soul.

The first case is that of the leper; a picture of sin in its **defiling, corrupting** power. The poor man was convinced of the power of Jesus, but not fully

persuaded of His grace. Yet the Lord instantly delivered him by His touch and His word of power. Only five words, "I will; be thou clean," and the thing was done; a witness to the priests—if the man did as he was told—that the power of God was present amongst them.

The second case was that of the Gentile centurion and his servant; a case illustrating the **impotence** which is induced by sin. Here again is emphasized the power of His word. The centurion himself emphasized it, for he knew the power of an authoritative word as exemplified in the Roman military system. The rank of a centurion was not a high one, yet those under him at once obeyed his instructions, and his faith discovered in Jesus One whose word could accomplish the miraculous. The Lord acknowledged his faith as great, and beyond anything He had found in Israel: He spoke the needed word and the servant was healed. He also prophesied that many a Gentile from a distance would enter the kingdom with the fathers of Israel while those who had considered it theirs by prescriptive right would be cast into outer darkness.

The third case is that of Peter's mother-in-law. Here His touch instantly cured her; there is no record of His having spoken a word. It might be His touch and His word, as with the leper; or His word only, as with the centurion's servant; or His touch only: the result in each case was the same — instantaneous deliverance. There was no convalescence from the results of the fever; she at once arose and served others. Sin induces a **fevered state of mind and soul**, but His touch dispels it.

In verses 16 and 17 we have first, a summary of His many works of power and mercy at eventide; and second, the quotation from Isaiah 53, which reveals to us the way and spirit in which He did these things. The words quoted have been used erroneously by some as though they meant

that on the cross He bore our sicknesses, and thus the believer never ought to be ill. The right application is found here. He did not relieve men without feeling their sorrows and sicknesses. He bore in His spirit the weight of the very evils that He dismissed by His power.

The incidents recorded in verses 18-22 show us that not only our deliverance but our discipleship also must be at the call of His authoritative word. A certain scribe volunteered to follow without having received His call. The Lord at once showed him what would be involved in following such a One as Himself, for He was the homeless Son of Man. But conversely, His call is sufficient. It was one who was already a disciple who wished to put an earthly duty in the first place. The call and claim of the Master must be absolutely supreme. He had disciples who owned His claim and followed Him, as verse 23 shows, and they gave Him a place to lay His head in their ship. Yet, even so, following Him led them into trouble.

This brings us to the fourth of these striking cases—the storm on the lake; typical of how the power of the devil lashes into fury the unrestful sea of humanity. It was all nothing to Him and He peacefully slept. But at the cry of the disciples He arose and asserted His command of these mighty forces of nature. As a man commands his hound, and the obedient dog lies down at his feet, so did wind and sea lie down at the word of their Maker.

Arrived at the other side He was confronted by two men who were dominated by demonic servants of the devil. One of these was a special stronghold held by a whole legion of demons, as Mark and Luke show us; though evidently there were two, and thus a sufficient witness was borne to **His power over the enemy**. The demons knew Him, and also knew that they had no power to resist His word: hence they asked permission to enter the herd of unclean swine, that

would never have been there had Israel been walking according to the law. As far as the record goes, Jesus spoke but one word—"Go!" In result the men were delivered and the swine destroyed.

Thus far we have considered the power of the Lord: before leaving the chapter let us notice the response on the side of men. There is a striking contrast between the "great faith" of the centurion and the "little faith" of the disciples in the storm. Great faith was marked by two things seen in verse 8. He said, "**I am not worthy,**" condemning himself, and thus ruling himself out of the question. He also said, "**Speak the word only,**" in addressing the Lord. **He had no opinion of himself, but he had a great opinion of Him**—so great that he was prepared to accredit His word without any support from without. Some folk want to have the word of the Lord supported by feelings, or by reason, or by experience; but great faith is produced by discovering in Jesus so great a Person that His naked word is enough.

With the disciples it was just the opposite. They were thinking altogether of themselves. It was, "**Save US: WE perish.**" When Jesus calmed the storm they were astounded, saying, "What manner of man is this?" Yes, what manner indeed? Had they really known Him, they would have been surprised if He had not asserted His power. The fact was, **they had big thoughts of themselves and but little thoughts of Him**; and this is little faith. So they marvelled as He acted; whereas in the case of the centurion Jesus marvelled at his faith. In spite of their little faith, however, they loved and followed Him.

At the beginning of the chapter we see **defective faith** on the part of the leper. He clearly saw the power of Jesus, yet hardly apprehended His willingness. At the end of the chapter we see men with **no faith at all**. It did not weigh with them that demons had been dispossessed, for a spiritual

deliverance meant little to them. What mattered to them was the loss of their pigs. Jesus they did not understand, but pigs they did understand! Apt figure of men of the world who have an eye for any material gain, but no heart for Christ. They evidently got nothing, but all the others did. Do not miss the delightful fact that defective faith and little faith got the blessing just as really and fully as great faith. The blessing is not according to the quality or quantity of faith, but according to His heart of grace.

The Gergesene people not desiring His presence, He again crossed the sea, and was at once met by further cases of human need. In chapter 9 we are shown how He wrought deliverance for the man sick of the palsy, the diseased woman, the daughter of Jairus, the two blind men, and the dumb man possessed with a demon—again a five-fold exhibition of the power of the kingdom that had drawn near in His presence.

In the first of these cases the Lord plainly stated the connection that existed between the miracle He wrought for the body and the corresponding spiritual blessing; the one easily seen, the other unseen. In response to the faith of the men who brought the paralytic, the Lord went straight to the root of the mischief and pronounced forgiveness of sins. When this was challenged, He proved His power to forgive by His power to transform the man's bodily condition. His critics could neither forgive the sins nor cure the palsy. He could do both. The crowd saw it and glorified God.

In verses 9-17 we get the incident concerning Matthew himself. The transaction recorded in verse 9 may almost be called a miracle by any who are aware of the binding power exerted on the human mind by money. Matthew was actually seated in his tax office, engaged in the congenial task of receiving the cash, when he heard two words from the lips of Jesus—"Follow Me." The "ME" became so great in his eyes that the money was displaced,

and its charm broken — a wonderful thing indeed! He arose and followed Jesus.

It was in his house that Jesus sat at meat with publicans and sinners and His disciples; so now he was disbursing money instead of receiving it. The other evangelists tell us this, though Matthew, with becoming modesty, does not mention it. The whole proceeding outraged the Pharisees, but this gave occasion for the concise statement as to His mission. The Pharisees had overlooked the word of the Lord through Hosea, that He preferred the exercise of mercy to the offering of ceremonial sacrifices—a word which many a modern Pharisee overlooks—and they were ignorant of His mission to the spiritually sick, in calling sinners to repentance. Had He come to call "the righteous," the Pharisees no doubt would have come forward in crowds; only to be rejected to a man, since "the righteous" according to the Divine standard do not exist.

The question raised by John's disciples led to a declaration which supplemented this. Having called sinners to repentance He attached them to Himself as "the children of the bride-chamber," and led them into a position of liberty, as contrasted with legal observances. In the coming days of His absence there would be another kind of fasting. But there could be no real mixture between that which He newly brought and the old law system. The new wine of the kingdom must be contained in new skins. If the attempt is made to restrain the expansive grace of the kingdom within legal forms, the result is disastrous. The grace is lost and the forms are ruined.

Even while He spake these things other incidents supervened, which in some measure serve as an illustration of His words. On His way to raise the daughter of Jairus, there intervened the aggressive faith of the diseased woman. She was one of the sick ones who needed the Physician. Her action of faith held up the programme, but

what was that to the One who delights in mercy and not sacrifice? Her faith was acknowledged, and she was instantly whole. Then when the programme was resumed, and the house of Jairus reached, the prescribed, usual course of affairs was brushed aside by Jesus. The bottles of Jewish custom were quickly broken by the power of His grace. He said, "**Give place,**" and everything had indeed to give place to the power of life which He wielded: and the dead child was restored.

The cry of the two blind men (verse 27) had in it the accents of faith. They recognized Him as the promised Son of David. He recognized their faith, and challenged it. They responded and affirmed their belief in His power. Hence, in this case, He granted their prayer, **according to their faith**. He knew their faith was real; and we know it to have been so, for at once their eyes were opened. Let us each ask ourselves, If my requests are to be answered according to **my faith; what shall I get?**

Sin has reduced man to helplessness; it has rendered him spiritually diseased

and dead and blind; but it has also rendered him dumb towards God. Bound by the devil, he cannot speak. When the man, in verse 32, was brought to Jesus the demonic power which lay at the root was dealt with. The cause being reached, the effect at once disappeared. The man spoke, and the crowd marvelled. They had never before seen or heard of such deliverances as were wrought by the power of the kingdom in grace. Only the Pharisees were insensible to this; and not only insensible but wholly evil, for unable to deny the power, they wilfully evaded its force by attributing it to the devil himself.

The chapter closes with the wonderful fact that their wicked rejection of His grace did not shut up His bowels of compassion. He went on preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and showing its power in miracles of healing in all the cities and villages; and the sight of the needy multitudes only moved Him to deep compassion—the compassion of the heart of God. The crowd had no shepherd, and there was a great harvest yet to be reaped. He prepared to send forth labourers to the work.

"Unto Him that loveth us."

"Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests, unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Revelation I. 5, 6.

Thou hast lovèd us Lord Jesus
 Washed us in Thy precious blood;
 Ransomed us from sin and Satan,
 Made us kings and priests to God.
 We are Thine, belovèd Saviour,
 Thine for ever we shall be;
 We await the hour in patience
 When Thy glorious face we'll see.
 And Thou waitest, Lord, in patience
 To present Thy chosen bride
 Without spot, or stain, or wrinkle,
 Seated with Thee glorified.
 Till that hour of joy exceeding,
 Fix our hearts on things above;
 Manifest Thyself, Lord, to us,
 In the greatness of Thy love.

THE FOUR HORSES OF THE REVELATION.

J. T. Mawson.

(Chapter 6).

THE rider on the white horse of Rev. 6 is not the Lord Jesus Christ. He does not appear in that character until chapter 19, where the many glorious titles of that Rider leave us in no doubt as to who He is. In this chapter He is the "Lamb as it had been slain" opening the seals of the book that He had taken "out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." Neither is there any thought of the gospel gaining its victories in the world in this passage, for when the seals of the book are opened the church will have been raptured to heaven, the acceptable year of the Lord will have closed, and the lurid dawn of the day of judgment will redden the sky. All that we read of from the opening of chapter 4 are not "the things which are" but "the things which must be hereafter" (ch. 4. 1; see ch. 1. 19).

There are three distinct series of judgments in the Revelation: the seals, the trumpets and the vials. At the opening of the seals, it seems to me, that men are allowed to work out their own plans without restraint, God allows them to reap the harvest of their own schemes; under the trumpets Satanic influence and malice come into greater activity, and men have to feel the terror of choosing Satan for master instead of God; under the vials the judgments seem to be more directly from God.

When the Lamb opens the first seal, one of the four living creatures with a voice of thunder cries, Come (see New Trans.), and in answer to that summons the white horse and his rider appears. I suggest that it signifies a great scheme for the peace and prosperity of the world, inaugurated, it may be, by a great and powerful individual. "Self-preservation is the first law of nature" is an ancient proverb, and "safety first" is a modern slogan, and after the church has gone from the

earth, men, startled into activity by that great event will combine to secure their own safety. As they began to build the tower of Babel after the flood, so they will begin to build up some great device, something probably like the "League of Nations," that was hailed by a war-weary world as the very thing to make wars impossible from henceforth and for evermore.

Whatever it may be it will be man's effort to take care of himself without God. Hitherto God in great mercy has held mankind in check from destroying himself, but then He will cast the reins upon the necks of the swift steeds of man's desires that the universe may see what man is without God. Great will be their hopes as they take the way that seemeth right unto them; "Peace and Safety" they will say, and the noise of their rejoicing will deafen their ears to the sudden destruction that is thundering at the door.

Their way will be the way of death, and swiftly the white horse will pass and the RED HORSE and its rider appear. Peace will be driven from the earth; and power and a great sword be given to this rider. Human life will no longer be sacred; all thought of "collective security" will be abandoned; they will kill one another. Lust of blood will burn like a furnace. A frenzied "French revolution," at least Europe wide, will seize upon the nations; good-will will turn to gall and bitterness, for how can men who hate God love one another? This is the beginning of that time of which Joel the prophet spoke, when they will forge their ploughshares into swords; agriculture will give place to war. Neglected land will bring forth thorns instead of wheat and barley, and the BLACK HORSE of famine will occupy the field. Woe then to the poor of the earth; the necessities of life will be strictly rationed and hard to get, while

the luxuries of life will not be limited, for oil and wine do not require the same hard labour for their production as wheat and barley. The poor will suffer more than the rich, and strange as that may seem it is man's way. Oh that the poor of our day would hear and understand it and turn from their trusted leaders to God. He is the friend of the poor, the God of the fatherless and the widow, as we learn from His word and from the ways of the Lord Jesus on earth. But men are selfish and grasping and apart from the influence of the gospel are indifferent to the sufferings of their fellows, so long as they can secure good things for themselves. There will be no gospel influence in those awful days, and the black horse of famine will be a more terrible oppression than the red horse of war.

The PALE HORSE will follow in quick succession, and the name of his rider is DEATH, and HELL follows with him. The sword and hunger and death and the beasts of the field do their fell work on the bodies of men and Hell claims their souls. What a descent from the white horse and its rider to the depths of hell! But that is the road that men will travel when they are left to their unrestrained will.

Let no one suppose that I am throwing the colours upon the canvas with too lavish a hand; human words are feeble when it comes to portraying these scenes. And let no one think that the state of mind that causes these disasters shall arrive suddenly and only when this time shall come. Man has not changed from Adam's fall, he is now, and will be what he was then, and would have destroyed himself from the beginning but for God's restraining mercy. Think of Adam in the Garden. He was made in the image and likeness of God, and set in dominion over this lower creation, to subdue and to cultivate it. No creature more noble ever came from the hand of the Creator. In him we see a white horse and his rider, full of promise of peace and perfection, but not for long did he ride prosperously. He was soon deceived

by his own ambition, and distrust of God; and by that old serpent, which is the devil. He lost his place of supremacy, and the bright promise gave way to a sickening fear. The white horse passed off the field and the red horse took its place, for not many years had passed when the startled earth drank the blood of man for the first time. And that man was not slain by a wild beast from the forest, or by a demon from the nether hell, but by his own mother's son, his elder brother, who should have been his keeper and protector.

Many times would the race have destroyed itself since that first murder, but God has restrained men in His mercy. Yet they are unchanged in character, their tendency is always away from God and consequently downwards. The idea that the race is making progress and climbing upwards upon the right road to final righteousness is a delusion. The Word of God and the history of the world disprove the idea of progress and evolution to better things, and dispel the delusion for all who have eyes to read and ears to hear. Men have rejected God preaching peace by Jesus Christ and still reject His salvation and grace, and the world can only be purged of its evil by His judgments.

But there will be in this day that we are considering a more terrible thing, which reveals the root, the cause of man's inhumanity to man, his subservience to the Devil, and his blind self-destruction. "When He had opened the fifth seal," says John, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God." In their schemes for making the world as they would have it, they give the destruction of everything that is for God a leading place. Let a man speak for God and his life will be the price of his courage; and some will speak for God. There will be beams of light in the darkness, for the Spirit of God will begin a new work in the world, chiefly among the children of Jacob. The veil will be taken from their hearts and they will see their great Messiah in the ancient Scriptures and bear witness to His

coming glory. They will suffer for their faith and faithfulness. The word of God will not be tolerated, and those who love it will be hunted and slain. Coming events cast their shadows, and the persecution of christian and Jew in Germany and Russia foreshadow this very thing.

This is the day of God's grace and not judgment, and evil men take advantage of this and have no fear of God before their eyes, but when grace gives place to judgment they will fear, for at the opening of the sixth seal, "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bond man and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and

from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand."

How great is the contrast between the scene on earth here depicted and that shewn us in chapter five, where "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth . . . Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

No comment of mine is necessary as to this contrast, the Word speaks for itself.

The Heavenly Jerusalem.

"Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21. 9).

Jerusalem on high,
Where God Himself doth dwell;
O scene of rest and bliss so nigh,
Who can Thy glories tell?
There God in light displays
His wondrous thoughts of love;
While songs of joy and ceaseless praise
The bride's full blessing prove.

There on that street of gold,
From all defilement free;
With Christ I'll walk, His face behold
Where all is purity.
God's glories there enfold
His saints on every side,
For there shine forth in full display
The Bridegroom and the Bride.

God's glory is its light,
The Lamb Himself its lamp,
No need of sun or moon to shine;
All bears the heavenly stamp.
In it shall be the throne
Of God and of the Lamb;
Then all His love we'll fully own,
In one eternal psalm.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

T. Oliver.

The Maschil Psalms.

THE word Maschil means to be intelligent through receiving instruction, which implies nearness, intimacy and company of a guide. There are thirteen psalms of the group, viz., No. 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142 (with 43 as a small corollary to 42).

There were those like Nicodemus who hailed the Lord as a teacher sent from God, but they could not make contact with Him on that line. Nicodemus had to learn that a radical change had to take place ere he could receive teaching. An excellent lawyer wanted instruction as to inheriting eternal life, but he wilted at the implication of the first lesson on the Law of which he was a professed master! It is thus fitting that the first Maschil psalm, No. 32, should raise the necessity of forgiveness of sins. Well might the Psalmist break forth in ecstasy, "Oh! the happiness of the one whose transgression is forgiven," literally, the effect of his lawlessness is borne away. Man in misery keeping silent, sought to evade confession of sins to God. But as soon as he acknowledged his sin he found a full forgiveness. (A modern perversion is to confess sins to intimate associates. Instead of relieving the guilty conscience, the practice is apt to spread the disease in an interminable series of offences and confessions, in which the confessor will never know absolution. The ancient perversion in confessing sins to a priest had at least the merit of forgiveness pronounced by a man in authority). Scripture is perfectly clear that God alone can give eternal absolution. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1. 9). The Psalmist tested the security of God's care, finding a hiding place in the Lord, who surrounded him with songs of deliverance. He was instructed in the way he should go and was guided by the eye of the Lord. That was ample provision for the future of his pathway!

In the next group, Nos. 42-45, souls, though blessed on the basis of Psalm 32 are disquieted and feeling the oppression of the enemy are cast upon God in prayer; they have the experience in consequence of being buoyed up by the brightness of an imperishable prospect. That was prophetic of the experience of the remnant of Israel in a future day as well as that of the Christian in the present era who fills the breach sustaining remnant character in reproach. On the other hand, they thirst for the Living God, who becomes their exceeding joy, the object of their hearts and the subject of their praise. The ways of God in discipline lead them to appreciate the peerless qualities of the Man of His counsels, the fairer than the children of men, the King of God's appointment, who enthroned in Zion in the coming day of glory will associate the remnant, His earthly bride, in the highest place. Psalm 45 is God's answer in grace to the prayers of the saints in the preceding psalms. The end of the psalm speaks of the glory of the Queen, the King's daughter, because the Jewish bride as well as the heavenly bride owe their positions to the grace of God.

In the next quartet, Ps. 52-55, heavy troubles crowd in on the remnant associated with the Messiah. They are instructed as to the character of the evil around, viz. violence and deceit. Doeg, Ahitophel and the Ziphins were testimony in the life of the Psalmist. They present the elementary features of the anti-Christ. To-day we have the same characteristic evinced by men vested with overwhelming authority and power. Deceitful accusations by the wicked are directed against the people of God. But these are frustrated by the divine constitution "like a green olive tree in the house of God" and it trusts in His mercy (Ps. 52. 8). Thus the knowledge of Christ secured in the preceding quartet prepares souls for withstand-

ing the machinations of anti-Christ in the second. Man's atheistic will leads him to say secretly "there is no God"! Contact with corruption makes the heart long for the exercise of God's power in righteous judgment. The righteous have to contend with the virulence of enemies in Ps. 54, but it becomes more intimate in the concluding psalm of the sub-group. Organised opposition arises from within. The psalmist met that in Ahitophel. The Lord bore that in Judas, His intimate associate, and the remnant will meet it in the subtlety of Anti-Christ. The Christian is attacked not only from without but within the walls of profession. But the antidote is found in casting our burden on the Lord. He will never permit the righteous to be moved (Psalm 55. 22).

The third quartet. Ps. 74, 78, 88, 89, in the third book, are not Psalms of David but of his three minstrels, Asaph, Heman and Ethan. They reach a higher level in considering God's thoughts and interests as paramount, and such consideration involves the soul in contact with the depths of sorrow. Zion was in "perpetual desolations," the enemies' evil deeds were seen even in the sanctuary of God. The dwelling place of the name of God was cast down to the ground and His name was blasphemed. In spite of these circumstances the poor and needy remnant (His turtle dove) are encouraged to praise His name (Ps. 74). The dishonourable history of Israel in the wilderness and subsequently in the land is reviewed in the light of the Lord's action on their behalf in Egypt, culminating with the smiting of the first-born there and the overwhelming of their enemies in the Red Sea. Notwithstanding their sad lapse from the Lord that only formed a background for the display of His sovereign mercy. Prominent on that line was the evidence in His discarding Joseph's line and the tabernacle of Shiloh from the premier place and the choice of Judah, Mount Zion, and David His servant (Ps. 78). There was a further development of the purpose of God in His

elective grace towards David in Psalm 88. The burden of overwhelming sorrow portrayed in the Psalm does not crush the zeal for his God. The same will yet be realised in the remnant, and it was displayed perfectly in the sufferings of Christ while He was here. He was reckoned with those going down to the pit, wrath lay hard upon Him, He was afflicted with the flood-tide of God's judgment at the Cross. The magnificent psalm which concludes the quartet is the answer of God to the sorrow, perplexity and devotion of the preceding psalm. The psalmist sings of the mercies of the Lord, speaking five times of mercy and twice of lovingkindness in that Psalm (**Chased** is translated altogether 93 times as mercy, 23 times lovingkindness, 7 times goodness). The sense of that was the keynote of the psalms. Through His death the Lord secured not only for the remnant of Israel but for the saints of this era and indeed in the resplendent day to come for all men, the blessings of a Covenant which cannot be alienated through misdeeds. Hence they are justly described as the sure mercies of David. The God of Peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant. In consequence the Apostle prayed that God might make the Hebrew Christians perfect in every good work to do His will (Heb. 13. 20).

Great as these blessings undoubtedly are in the Psalms they do not reveal God as Father, nor do they confer upon us Sonship in the Spirit nor give the distinctive relationship of the church to Christ as heavenly bride of the Man rejected by earth yet accepted in heaven.

The isolated Psalm 142 in the appendix gives the end of the instruction in view in the Maschil psalms, when God becomes known as the portion of the soul. In Deuteronomy 32 we see that "the Lord's portion is His people." At the end of the process "He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied!"

OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS.

A. J. Pollock.

THE question has been raised on what ground were Old Testament saints blessed of God.

It is very evident that God was dealing with men in Old Testament times on the line of **probation**. Thus the law was given to one nation, that of the Israelites, to carry out this test. If man, however, had been left to this test alone, not one of Adam's race would have been blessed. But, thank God, we have abundant testimony in the Old Testament that this was not so.

The law was never given in its nakedness. Alongside was given elaborate instructions as to how God could dwell among His people, and the first sight the Israelites had in approaching the Tabernacle was that of the brazen altar, setting forth that there is but one way of approach to God, and that through an **acceptable sacrifice**.

Would their minds not go back to the story of Abel's offering of the lamb of his flock being accepted, whilst Cain's bloodless offering was refused? Would they not ponder over the story of Abraham being commanded to sacrifice his son, and when his obedience was tested to the point of binding Isaac upon the altar, and the uplifted knife about to slay his son was arrested, a ram caught in the thicket by its horns was provided? Would they not wonder at the words of Abraham to his son, when he said, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22. 8). Would not their minds ponder over the meaning of the blood-stained lintels and doorposts in their houses in Egypt on that never-to-be-forgotten night of the passover? This would be continually emphasised as its commemoration took place year by year.

Light gradually shone out, not in the full measure in which it shines to-day, for Christ had not come, nor had He died on the cross. Yet David's well-known Psalms, 21, 22, 23, show how brightly, comparatively speaking, the light shone. In Psalm 22 there is delineated the suffering Messiah, His res-

urrection is implied most clearly, for how could He declare Jehovah's name to the great congregation, had He not risen from the dead? Three centuries later Isaiah 53 presents the same suffering Messiah in very remarkable language. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (verse 4). So sure is the prophet that what he foretold would assuredly come to pass that he wrote his prophecy in the PAST tense, as if the event were already completed. It was so to faith.

There are two verses in Romans 3. 25, 26, which set forth in a very striking way how blessing came to Old Testament believers, and how it comes to New Testament believers. "God hath set forth [Christ] to be a propitiation [that is, a mercy seat] through faith in His blood for the remission of sins that are past [that is of sins committed before Christ died, in short, the sins of Old Testament believers], through the forbearance of God." It was much like discounting a bill, having the assurance that it would be fully met on maturity. God, who knew that full atonement for sin would be made, forgave the sins of Old Testament believers on the ground of their faith in God, who would provide the Lamb sufficient for the Sacrifice.

The passage in Romans 3 goes on to define the position of the New Testament believer in contrast to the Old Testament believer. "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (verse 26). There is no mention here of the forbearance of God in the sense in which that word is used in the previous verse. The Saviour has come. The waiting time is over. The types have been fulfilled. The prophecies have been fulfilled. The work of Calvary is finished. The veil of the temple has been rent from the top to the bottom. The Saviour has risen triumphant from

the grave in virtue of His accomplished work. He has entered heaven by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for all who trust Him.

This is the ground of the blessing of both Old Testament believer and New Testament believer: the same precious finished work of the Lord Jesus accomplished on the cross. The difference is that the Old Testament believer looked forward, through the medium of types, shadows, prophecies; the New Testament believer looks back on a grand historical fact. Both looks centre on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9. 15 puts the matter clearly as to the Old Testament believer. "For this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." This distinctly states the sins alluded to in this passage of Scripture were committed by those who were under the law in Old Testament times. That this statement should appear in an epistle written to believing Jews we can well understand, for they were converted when under that system.

Let us now listen to the testimony relating to Old Testament believers. It is Abraham, an Old Testament saint, who furnishes a pattern for all believers. Even New Testament believers are called "the children of Abraham." "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are **the children of Abraham**" (Gal. 3 7). It would take pages to enumerate all that is said of Abraham's faith and his being accounted righteous were we to refer to every Scripture where he is mentioned in this connection.

What of Job, who was not an Israelite, a chieftain of immense wealth and highest character in the land of Uz? He lived before the law was given. He suffered the most frightful stripping a man ever had, all his wealth and family swept away in a succession of lightning blows, then the jibing and tormenting of his self-righteous friends as he sat amid the potsheards, every

nerve of his body quivering with agonised torment, such was his physical condition. Hear his triumphant assertion, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13. 15). Still more explicit as to his salvation, he says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day on the earth: and though after my skin worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold" (Job. 19. 25-27). Does that not go a long way? Weigh over his statement. If he knew that his Redeemer lived, that could only be true of a Divine Person. He believed He would come to this earth. He did so and will do so again. Then again Job knew he himself would be raised in the body should he die. He had no doubt or scepticism as to resurrection. The worms might consume his flesh. He had no materialistic doubts as to the power of God to raise him, and that his eyes should really behold his Redeemer. I don't think we, New Testament believers, can surpass Job's statement in its quiet assurance and magnificent faith.

Then we come to David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel. Hear what he says. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered [**here he uses a word which signifies atonement**]" (Psalm 32. 1). Lower down in the Psalm he said, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (verse 5). Psalm 130. 4 says, "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."

Then we come to Hebrews 11, that magnificent cloud of witnesses in the Old Testament as to what faith can do. "By faith" or its equivalent "Through faith" occurs no less than twenty-one times in that wonderful chapter. We can feel the vigour of the faith that was translated into various actions—the offering of the firstlings of the flock; translation to heaven without dying; building a huge ark on dry land far inland; going out into the wilderness as a Stranger and pilgrim;

bearing a child when far past the time for nature to give such expectation; offering up a son though held back at the last moment; forsaking Egypt, not fearing the wrath of a powerful king; the falling of the walls of Jericho; subduing kingdoms; obtaining promises; stopping the mouths of lions; etc., etc.

There is no doubt of the blessing of the Old Testament saints, and when the summoning shout of our Lord is heard, Adam, Abel, Abraham — in

short all the Old Testament saints will rise with the New Testament saints to meet their Lord in the air, all gloriously covered by that expression in 1 Corinthians 15. 23, "They that are Christ's at His coming." True the Old Testament saints did not know of Christ when on earth, nor do they belong to the body, the Bride of Christ. This is alone the privilege of all saints between the Day of Pentecost and the Coming of our Lord for His own, an event we believe to be very near.

"WAR A GOOD WARFARE."

(T)

1 Timothy 1. 18.

HOW deplorable it is when soldiers of the King of kings—who should be keeping rank, and standing shoulder to shoulder in "the fight of faith"—show a mutinous spirit, and start falling out among themselves, instead of minding "the King's business," being loyal and faithful to Him, obeying His orders.

Our ever watchful enemy must be pleased at this, and must greatly hope that mutiny may spread through all the opposing ranks, so that he may "view the chosen few, in selfish strife divided."

How clever are "the wiles of the devil!" (Eph. 6. 11). "Fightings among you" (James 4. 1) is not "fighting the good fight" (1 Tim. 6. 12).

The sword of the tongue (Psa. 57. 4; Prov. 12. 18; 18. 21), is a poor substitute for "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6. 17). Evil speaking about other soldiers (the use of the wrong sword) is strongly condemned in the Bible; but James 4. 12 and Romans 14. 4 are forgotten, or entirely ignored.

The fight is against our adversary, the devil, who goes about "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5. 8). HE is the enemy we have to fight (Eph. 6. 12); but some of the soldiers seem to think that it is their fellow-soldiers they must fight—"ye devour one another" (Gal. 5. 15); and they even act as "the accuser of our brethren"—employing enemy tactics, play-

ing into the hands of the enemy (Rev. 12. 10).

May we seek to be more like those "mighty men" of old, "which could keep rank, and were not of double heart," who were "expert in war"—"men that had understanding of the times" (1 Chron. 12).

Let us "mark them which cause divisions" in the ranks, "and **AVOID THEM**" (Rom. 16. 17; 1 Cor. 1. 10; 3. 3). And "let us follow after the things which make for peace" (Rom. 14. 19), and seek "to please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"—"a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2; 3. 4). And may we "**earnestly contend**" (not for our own petty opinions as to how this or that fellow-soldier should act), but "for **THE FAITH**" (Jude 1-3).

What a privilege to engage in active service for our King. He is coming soon to take us out of the conflict, and—in view of this—we want to be "**always** abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58). That would leave no room for abounding in the work of the enemy—evil speaking, selfish strife, division among the forces, spreading sorrow and confusion all along the line; bringing dishonour on His great and Holy Name (Ezek. 36. 20-23), and "giving great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12. 14).

EPAPHRODITUS — DECORATED.

IT SEEMS as though Paul — most noble of all the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, was delegated by his sovereign Lord to distinguish and decorate Epaphroditus, his younger comrade, and with noble words he did it. Mark well how he spoke of him. "My brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and he that ministered to my wants" (Phil. 2. 25). Five great distinctions, any one of which we might earnestly covet.

MY BROTHER. Epaphroditus was a brother, of course, for he was a christian, but when Paul said, "My brother," he meant, he has been a brother to me. "A brother is born for adversity." In my adversity he came to me with a brother's outstretched hand, a brother's heart, and gave me a brother's support, a brother's love.

COMPANION IN LABOUR. The work was arduous and the labourers few, but he girded himself, and came along side me, and with no thought of his own ease put his neck into the yoke with mine, and became a partaker with me, a companion, a sharer in the sorrow and toil, the joys and the rewards of the work of the Lord.

FELLOW-SOLDIER. There can be no peace or truce with the enemies of our Lord, the christian must fight the fight of faith, and Paul was a front-line soldier who never doffed his armour, but Epaphroditus fought by his side.

As Jonathan's armour bearer was with his captain so Epaphroditus was with Paul, sharing with him the hardships and the perils of the fight. He had shewn his courage and his mettle in Paul's company and Paul was not ashamed to call him fellow-soldier.

YOUR MESSENGER. He was a faithful man, a trustworthy despatch rider; who had fulfilled his commission, which was not the carrying of a message merely; over land and seas and at a great cost to himself, he had carried the fervent love of the Philippian church to Paul and with it an evidence of their practical care for him.

MY MINISTER. "He that ministered to my wants." The qualities that the labourer and the soldier need are courage, strength, grit; he must be intrepid, fearless — Epaphroditus had these—but he had more than these, for he ministered to the wants of the aged apostle — for this he must have had thoughtfulness, tenderness, and above all, love. The love of the Philippian church for Paul found expression in Epaphroditus as he waited upon him.

These decorations will shine upon the breast of Epaphroditus in his glorified body in heaven, but not for them did he labour and strive, the love of Christ constrained him; he lived not unto himself but unto his Lord, and the love that filled his heart made him the willing servant of his brethren and the servant of Paul even to the point of the sacrifice of his own life.

The Holy Scriptures.

J.N.D.

The Scriptures are the permanent expression of the mind and will of God furnished as such with His authority. They are His expression of His own thoughts. They edify, they are profitable; but this is not all—they are inspired. It is not that the truth is given in them by inspiration. They are inspired . . . Being received as Scriptures they have the authority of divine writ-

ings, to which, as a form of communication, God has given preference above the spoken word. They are to be the permanent rule by which every spoken word is to be judged. That which the Word says silences all opposition in the heart or mind of the believer. It was thus that the Lord answered Satan, and Satan himself was reduced to silence.

GOD'S TRIUMPH.

J. T. Mawson.

Ephesians, chapter 2.

THIS is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. It begins by describing the condition of moral death in which we were in our unregenerate nature, and at the end shews us ourselves, saved by the grace of God, fitly framed together with all who are saved by that same grace, growing into a holy temple in the Lord; and even now builded together a habitation for God by the Spirit. No one will deny that an infinite distance lies between the two, or that a power of surpassing greatness must have operated to produce this miracle.

“And you, who were dead.” How inexorable is death! Human love can do great things to serve and save its object as long as life lasts, but when death has done its work it can do no more. And what is the most tragic, the most oppressive, the most heart-breaking thing in death? It is the unresponsiveness of the dead. Love might gather all its treasures and pour them out in the death chamber: they would avail nothing. It might plead and agonize for one word from the silent lips—nay, for but one flicker of the still eyelids in response to its yearnings: it would be in vain. The silence is absolute, the breach is complete, love is beaten and death is the victor. But is it thus with God's love? His love is GREAT LOVE—is it greater than death? We shall see.

We were dead! Without a pulse of life towards God; we did not recognise His claims, and were unresponsive to the appeals of His love. We were the liegemen, the faithful vassals of the prince of the power of the air, God's great adversary. He had wrapt us in darkness and bound us in the fetters of disobedience, and we were glad to have it so. There was enmity in our hearts against God, and the corrupting desires of the flesh and of the mind worked in us. We were children of disobedience and children of wrath, dead

in trespasses and sins—dead and corrupt. Could we have delivered ourselves from that condition even if we had desired it? As soon might a corpse that had lain in its clay bed for a century rise up and change itself into the form and life and purity of an angel.

“BUT GOD.” How wonderfully those two words break in upon the gloom of our death and corruption. Let us stand still and see what He will do. He is **“rich in mercy,”** an infinite wealth of pity moves Him towards us in our poverty and death, and for **“His great love wherewith He loved us”** He has undertaken our salvation. For the satisfaction of His own great love He has stooped down into the depths of death where we were and quickened us together with Christ. And not that only; He could not be satisfied with only delivering us from dark and unresponsive death but He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That is the height of His favour, the measure of His immeasurable grace; it is unsurpassable!

How poor are the aspirations of a man in the flesh, how empty his highest ambitions when compared with this; his hopes are all shattered by death, the most eloquent eulogy that can be poured out at his open grave avails him nothing; his day is done; he is gone, is buried and will soon be forgotten. But not so those whom God has quickened together with Christ; the present grace by which they are saved is to issue in glory to come; for in the ages yet to come God will shew the **“exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”** The consummation of the purpose of God in regard to us will be worthy of the great love wherewith He has loved us, and the power and rich mercy that has raised us up.

It is by grace that we are saved, and grace is more than unmerited favour;

it is what God is for us according to His own thoughts about us; it is His love in its mighty activities working to bring us into full reconciliation to Himself. Thus He has saved us, and we must not lose the sense of the greatness of this salvation through familiarity with the word as it is commonly used. God's glory is in it; it is the display of the exceeding riches of His grace, His great love wherewith He loved us is behind it, and the power that raised up Christ from the dead has accomplished it.

How great is God's salvation! He has saved us from our former **condition** of death and corruption and raised us up to have part in a holy temple in the Lord; He has saved us from our former **association** with children of disobedience and wrath to be fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; He has saved us from our past **practice** of the lusts of the flesh and the mind and created us in Christ Jesus unto good works; He has

saved us from our former **place** of "far off" from God and has made us nigh by the blood of Christ—and we shall never forget the blood—the precious blood of Christ—the price of our salvation and our title to every blessing that God has to bestow.

The great love wherewith God has loved us cannot be dissociated from the death of Christ. We see Him in the depths of death in this Epistle (ch. 1. 20) and in ch. 4. 9. "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth." Why? because we were there, He died because we were dead, He descended to where we were, identifying Himself with us in death under God's judgment that we might be raised up with Him and share His life. It is God's great love for us that gave Him and sent Him, love commended to us in the death of Christ, and now shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. "Keep yourselves in the love of God."

FORGETTING—REMEMBERING.

A. M. Chambers

"God has made me to forget all my toil" (Genesis 41. 51).

"I will call to remembrance my song" (Psalm 77. 10).

I will forget the sorrow and the toil,

Days of disheartenment and nights of tears;
Labour that seemed for naught—strength spent in vain—

All the sad tale of failure through the years.

I will forget the things that are behind;

So shall I run with lightened steps the race,
So shall my eyes look only to the goal—

The prize of my high calling through His grace.

I will remember how the Lord my God

Led me to prove me through this wilderness;

I will remember how the songs He gave

Flooded with light the night of my distress;

I will remember that at His right hand

All power abides, eternal wisdom waits,

And love, that bears me up on eagles' wings

To bring me with thanksgiving to His gates!

HE KNOWETH

J. J. Anning.

“For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103. 14).

“But the very hairs of your head are all numbered—fear ye not therefore” (Matthew 10. 30).

“I am the good Shepherd, and I know those that are Mine” (N.T.) (John 10. 14).

“These things saith the first and the last, Who became dead and lived. I know thy tribulation and thy poverty (but thou art rich) . . . fear nothing (of) what thou art about to suffer” (N.T.) (Revelation 2. 8-11).

RECENTLY I received a letter from the Editor of this magazine in which he wrote, “If you have anything for the hearts of the anxious saints, send it on.”

Just at that time I personally was down under the difficulties of present circumstances and very forcibly the Scriptures given at the head of this note came home to me.

It happened that only very lately I had briefly spoken from them at a public gathering and in fresh power they came back to my aid. They are now passed on as maybe, in them, God will speak to you, my reader. It is ancient history concerning the heavy tribulation and poverty that the Lord's people had to endure at Smyrna, but what the One who speaks to them—“the first and the last, Who became dead and lived”—is surely applicable to us at this time. Smyrna is another name for myrrh. Myrrh is a gum resin containing a fragrant volatile oil. In the mass, little of the fragrance is smelt, but as soon as the gum resin is broken small in a mortar, the characteristic aromatic perfume is given off.

The name of the place where these saints endured so great persecution is therefore more than significant.

From the scripture referred to, it is evident that there was divine purpose behind the allowed trial about to be endured and, as in the case of Job, a definite limit was put on Satan's actions.

“That ye may be tried” recalls the apostle Peter's first letter in which he reminds his readers “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious

than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be turned unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Very evidently the power of divine love was behind the happenings at Smyrna, and we note the fulness of the grace shewn in the message to those afflicted ones.

There is no mention of their failures, of the loss of their first love or of declension — He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust—but here is a revelation of His heart. He, who is the pre-eminent one, the first and the last, is presented as He who became dead and lived.

He, who was the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, writes, “I KNOW thy tribulation and thy poverty.” He understands as none other could what they were enduring.

Has He changed? Our hearts answer—“No.” We can look back, some of us, over many years, and praise Him for His past dealings with us. If the present time is an anxious one and the troubles are on every side, may you and I realise that the Good Shepherd, who knows so very intimately those who are His, is taking notice of every phase of our difficulties and of their extent. He says, “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

May you and I daily get to know Him better in view of the coming day when we shall know even as we are known. And may we ever remember that whatsoever our circumstances and trial, “HE KNOWS”.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. No. 2.

J. W. H. Nichols.

(2) GABBATHA

(I Peter I. II).

GABBATH, the Aramaic word for "The Pavement" (John 19. 13), must now be the scene of the Holy Sufferer's testing.

The Chief Priests and Pharisees, having received a band of men and officers—led by the traitor—laid hands upon Him, and led Him away to judgment. Here divine power and glory were evident, yet poor Peter, with weapons of carnal warfare, would ignorantly protect his Master. Who can question his affection? Yet how all this serves to bring out the lack of proper appreciation of this Holy Sufferer! He could have commanded twelve legions of angels for His protection (Matt. 26. 53), or annihilated His persecutors with a word; but—reproving Peter—He said: "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" In this His perfect obedience shines out.

Thus, the hardness and profanity of the heart (Judas), and the dullness and fleshly energy of man (Peter) were manifested. We see too, in His disciples, the weakness of the flesh when tested, and finally, the enmity and hatred of man and Satan against the Sinless One. Who can measure the deep sorrow of all this, or enter adequately into the sufferings of the Righteous One?

He allows Himself to be bound, "Led as a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth" (Acts 8. 32). Taken—as John alone tells us—before Annas first, in quiet dignity He referred to the testimony of His words, and when one, more open in his contempt and profanity, struck Him, the holy Sufferer bore the insult without a murmur; Peter, in his first epistle, bearing witness that when "suffering He threatened not" Oh! that we might drink more deeply into His spirit.

From Annas He is sent to Caiaphas, the man who had given counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. He would offer Him up, at the Roman altar, to ensure their peace and favour with Rome. The Holy Spirit, however, turned the words to better account, using it as prophetic of a Saviour, the result of whose work would "gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad" (John 11. 52).

Before the ecclesiastical court, the council sought **false witnesses** against the Holy Prisoner, "to put Him to death." How base and wicked men can be; and yet withal religious and apparently genuinely zealous. Here, He is charged with "**blasphemy**"—later, before Pilate the charge is "**rebellion**." The charge before Caiaphas was a real one, "He had made Himself the Son of God" (John 19. 7). They had been stung to madness by His words in the parable of the vineyard (Matt. 21), and knew the implication of the words: "This is the heir, come let us kill him and seize on his inheritance." Now they are carrying out their base purpose, and are ready to swear anything, if only He might be put to death. Under oath, He is commanded to reply if He "be the Christ, the Son of God." To this He can give but one answer, "Thou hast said." Thus He becomes His own witness, maintaining the truth of His previous testimony and adding "Henceforth shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This is characteristic of the testimony in Matthew's Gospel, and here we find the heads of the nation, lashed to fury against the Saviour, their unrestrained passion surging against Him, while they cry, "He is guilty of death." The high priest—as if in holy horror—rent

his robe and declared the trial ended.

The farcical proceedings over, the holy One condemned, the full tide of evil passion, **which had been the true incentive**, flows forth unrestrained. Every possible indignity was offered. In derision "they spit in His face, fulfilling the words of the prophet." "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to those who plucked off the hair, I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (Isa. 50. 6). No cry comes from the holy Sufferer—He is buffeted and struck, and still answers not a word. "Despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53).

Beloved, He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Not that we can ever know those depths of anguish—no CREATURE could do that—but His beautiful spirit of self-abnegation and patience under testing makes us feel what unworthy disciples we are, and must surely create a desire to be more like Him.

We next see our blessed Lord before Pilate, in perfect calm and entire submission. Their charge is laid. First, He made Himself the Son of God, for this He should die, but it was not lawful for them to put any man to death: therefore they invoke the aid of the Roman power. Secondly, He claimed to be a King. This, for the Roman governor, was the more serious, though he made it evident it created no alarm for his Imperial Master. Into the Prætorium the Jews would not enter "lest they be defiled, that they might eat

the passover"! What solemn mockery! Throughout this whole scene it is evident that Pilate sought to quiet the people, and to release Jesus, recognizing that "for envy they had delivered Him up." He is evidently conscious that the Prisoner was no ordinary one. His silence, we read, made "the Governor marvel greatly." This impression was greatly deepened by the varied happenings; his wife's dream and message, the extreme malice of the Jews, and the unwavering claim of the prisoner that He was the Son of God—all awakened in the mind of this ambitious ruler alarm and misgiving; but the world had too great a hold, and to be a "friend of Caesar" was more to him than justice and truth. However, he laboured to find a way out of the dilemma, again and again stating he found no fault in Him. But the voices of the scribes and elders prevailed, and when as a last resort, he gave the choice of "Barabbas or Jesus," there was no hesitancy on their part, such as evidently Pilate expected; their decision was made, "NOT THIS MAN BUT BARABBAS"! We read, "now Barabbas was a robber"! Thus the fatal choice was made, and the decision of the nation recorded: "WE WILL NOT HAVE THIS MAN TO REIGN OVER US," and the multitude take upon their posterity the awful responsibility by crying: "His blood be upon us and our children". Under this self-expressed judgment they remain until this day.

Confidence and Peace.

From a letter by a young soldier of twenty.

"When I read the booklet, 'Let not your heart be troubled' I was reminded of the night I left Aberdeen. I was very worried about the welfare of my mother and her future. I'm not ashamed to say it, but as I left the station the tears began to flow, but the Lord had provided me with a compartment for myself, so I immediately got down on my knees and commended her into His care and keeping. As I was talking to Him a voice in me said, 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. Look out. I put those stars there, and I hold them there. Can you trust Me?' As I looked out at the stars I turned afresh to the Lord and thanked Him for shewing Himself to me and shewing me His power in such a way, and I told Him I did trust Him; and I don't need to tell you that I rose from my knees with a sweet peace in my soul, and my tears dried."

NOTES ON PROPHETIC SUBJECTS.

J. T. Mawson.

I. The King of the North.

FOUR great armies are to meet their doom by the direct judgment of the Lord in Palestine in view of His throne being established in Jerusalem and Israel being settled in the land as the head of the nations and the centre of the whole earth. They are

1. The Northern army led by the king of the north.
2. The army of horsemen from the East led by the king of the east.
3. The armies of the revived Roman Empire led by the Beast and false prophet — the Antichrist.
4. The hordes of Gog, led by the chief prince of Meschech — Russia.

These will comprise the whole of the world's military power, and God will be behind all their movements to gather them in the land, for "the Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth" (Isa. 23. 9).

The King of the North (Daniel 11. 40) is the Assyrian of Isa. chs. 7; 8; 10 and other prophecies, and will be the great enemy of the Jews at the time of the end. He will be the rod of God's anger and God will send him against them, "an hypocritical nation" (Isa. 10. 5, 6).

He is called the "overflowing scourge" (Isa. 28. 15), and is the desolator of whom the prophet Joel speaks. It seems certain that he also appears as "the king of fierce countenance" (Daniel 8. 9 and 23). Sennacherib of Hezekiah's day was a type of him.

The great army under this ruthless king will come from the same region as that occupied by the former Assyrian—hence his name King of the North, and in Joel 2. 20 "the North-

ern army." He will be joined by the armies of other nations, but he will start his victorious march from the region north of Palestine, that now occupied by the virile Turkish nation, which is quickly becoming one of the great powers. The chief purpose of the invasion will be the recapture of Jerusalem, which for centuries was a Turkish possession. It has been thought that because it is said "that his power shall be mighty, **but not by his own power**" (Daniel 8. 24) that he will be supported by some neighbouring power, probably Russia. We do not think so. Russia will be reserved by the Lord for the last manifestation of His might and just judgment, and He will not need to strike twice against any foe. This same fact bars Russia from being the King of the North, as some have thought. May it not be that since he will be the rod of God's anger and "to him be given a charge to take the spoil, and to tread them down like the mire of the street," that God will permit and order that one of those great spiritual powers that move behind the nations shall energise and guide him until his commission is fulfilled? We read of "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" who withstood the angel that was sent from heaven to Daniel for twenty-one days, and "the prince of Grecia" (Daniel 10. 13, 20). These were spiritual entities, evil in character, and subject to Satan, and against the people of God. It seems certain that these principalities and powers will exercise increasing influence among the nations as the time of the end draws near. They are already doing it. For instance, could mere human influence and power dominate such an otherwise great and sober nation as the German, causing it to sacrifice its ideals and its religion and march proudly as one man along a road that must end in disaster? We may be sure that whenever a mass movement of that sort takes place an

unseen spiritual power is active, and especially so when God is defied, and every command in the decalogue ridiculed and broken. Antichrist will be the supreme spiritist in the last days, the chosen vessel for the manifestation of evil occult powers, a veritable vessel of Satan, but the King of the North will not be far behind him, for if he is "the King of fierce countenance" (Daniel 8) "he shall destroy **wonderfully**, and shall prosper and **practice . . . and cause craft to prosper,**" which seems to imply mysterious superhuman powers.

It has been said that this King of fierce countenance is the Beast, the head of the revived Roman Empire, but that may well be questioned, for the Beast will spring up in the midst of the ten Kings of Western Europe, and become their leader, while this king appears to arise from the ashes of the ancient Grecian Empire.

He will appear on this campaign of many prophecies at the time that Antichrist assumes the power in Jerusalem. Antichrist is the wilful king of Daniel 11. 36-40, and we read, "the King of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind" (Daniel 11. 40). But Jerusalem will not at first be troubled, it will be the time when "the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8. 23), when the "scornful men" that "rule in Jerusalem" shall have made their covenant with Antichrist, a man after their own hearts, and accepted him as their Messiah. Having rejected their true Messiah, when He came in His Father's Name, they will receive this child of the devil coming in his own name, and such will be their confidence in him that they will have no fear of "the overflowing scourge," it will be as tho' they had made a covenant with death and hell (Isa. 28. 14). God's answer is, "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge (the Northern army) shall pass through, then shall ye be trodden down by it" (verse 18).

His invasion of the land will be a brilliant progress of forced marches, described in vivid language by the prophet. "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages; they are gone over the passage; they have taken up their lodging in Geba; Rama is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee" (Isa. 10. 28-31). Thus will the news of his exploits ring over the radio to the ends of the earth.

It will be a terrible time for Palestine and the Jews in it. The prophet Joel describes it. At the time when this prophet uttered the words of God the land had been invaded by the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm and the caterpillar, until not a green thing was left in it, the whole land had been desolated. And this is taken to illustrate what the result of the invasion by the king of the North will be. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, nothing shall escape them. And Isaiah speaks of it in many vivid passages, not the least of which is, "He shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel" (ch. 8. 8). The army and its invincible prowess is described in the second chapter of the prophecy of Joel, and it is called the Lord's army. It seems certain that that part of Isa. 18 will be fulfilled at this time which says, "Afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect; and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth; and the fowls shall summer upon them and all the beasts of the field shall winter upon them." Much has been said about the marvellous

fertility of the land and of the great prosperity of those Jews who have gone there to cultivate it under the Balfour declaration; it will all come to naught; it is man's doing and not God's, He will blow upon it and the fruitful fields will become deserts. "Where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briars and thorns" (Isa. 7. 23).

The triumphant march against Jerusalem will be arrested at Nob, just north of the city, and it is said that at that point "he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem." Does this northern king turn off at this point to meet the king of the south (Egypt), who at the same time comes out against Antichrist? We read, "At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him" (Daniel 11. 40). The northern king will not tolerate this, he will have marked Jerusalem as his own spoil. The result of the conflict between these two powers is that the northern triumphs and the gold and the silver of Egypt becomes his, and the armies of the Libyans and Ethiopians join his victorious forces.

"Tidings out of the north and east shall trouble him" (Daniel 11. 44). May not these tidings be of the vast armies from the East crossing the Euphrates, and the armies of the Beast gathering in the land to the aid of Antichrist? Whatever the tidings he is filled with fury and returns to attack Jerusalem, and succeeds so far that the city is taken. It would appear that at this time he will consider himself invincible and will say, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent. I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man . . . and as one gathereth eggs, I have gathered all the earth, and there was none that moved a wing, or opened the mouth or peeped" (Isa. 10. 13, 14). The

boast will be scarcely out of his impious mouth ere he shall come to his ignominious end by the stroke of the Lord. "He shall stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand" (Daniel 8. 25). "He shall come to his end and none shall help him" (Daniel 11. 45). "Then will the Lord be jealous for His land, and pity His people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto His people . . . I will remove far off from you the northern army, and I will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part towards the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up because he hath done great things" (Joel 2. 18-20). The Lord will permit the city to be taken and destroyed; it will be His final judgment upon it, but He will make a way of escape for His own elect. They will remember His word, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand). Then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matthew 24. 15, 16). "Then shall the Lord go forth . . . and His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem in the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the west, and there shall be a great valley" (Zech. 14). To the valley shall they flee, and it shall be their way of escape from their foes. But the city shall be destroyed for nothing must remain that speaks of man's pride and boasted progress. It will have a new birth even as the people will be new born. On its ruins will arise a new Jerusalem, in which righteousness shall reign and in which the very bells on the necks of the horses will be inscribed "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD."

THE END IN VIEW OF ALL SERVICE.

EVERY servant of Christ, no matter what line his or her service takes, whether amongst young or old, saint or sinner, should serve as **THE FRIENDS OF THE LORD** who has chosen them as His servants (John 15. 14, 15). It is their high and holy privilege to know His thoughts and purposes, and to be in communion with Him as to the end of all the work that the Holy Spirit is doing through the Word in the world. We might say that that end is two-fold. First that God might be known in that love which is greater than all man's sin—"God is love," and as the Father—the Father pictured for us in the story of the prodigal, who ran to meet the repentant wanderer and kissed and forgave him and made him fit to sit in His own company at peace and merry — His love blotting out the past, and even sweeping it from the memory as the heart is filled with it by the Holy Ghost. There are depths in that that eternity will not exhaust, and the Father's joy will ever be greater than that of the children. The fulness and blessedness of this relationship can only be rightly understood as we see it revealed in Christ, the Son of God. The Apostle John devotes himself chiefly to this end of the gospel in his

writings.

The other great end that runs along with this is found chiefly in Paul's writings, it is the building up and completing of the church which is the body of Christ. It should be carefully considered by all who serve the Lord in the gospel, that the evangelist, equally with the pastor and teacher, is a gift from the victorious and ascended Christ "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying of the body of Christ**" (Eph. 4. 8-13). Is this the object you have in view, whoever you are who preach the Word? or is it the building up of a sect, a cause, a special company of your own which is less than the church of God, the body of Christ? How easy for fleshly zeal and rivalry to enter into such service, and how marred and warped the gospel will be by such a sectarian view. Or is the salvation of souls the only object you have in view? A most blessed object surely, but not **THE END** of the Holy Spirit's work. The end is the finding of the members of Christ and the gathering out of a bride for Him, for His heart's full and everlasting joy, and that unto God there might be "glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3. 21).

A Remarkable Revelation.

IN the first verse of Daniel 11 a remarkable revelation is made, which should confirm our confidence in God as the disposer of all things. The hearts of kings and rulers are in His hands and He turns them wheresoever He pleases. In chapter 6 Darius the king was most zealous in espousing Daniel's cause, which was strange in a heathen monarch. He laboured to the going down of the sun to deliver him from the evil purpose of his enemies, and spent the night in fasting. Why was this? The secret is here revealed. "Also I," said the angel to Daniel, "in the first year of Darius the

Mede, even I stood to confirm and strengthen him." Darius could not have understood what influence it was that wrought so powerfully on his mind, and led him to rejoice in Daniel's deliverance and visit just judgment on those that would have destroyed him, but we learn from this scripture that the influence was from God. It is written for our learning and it teaches us to look away from secondary causes and to rest in the assurance that God is silently working to His own purposed end and that men and devils fight against Him in vain.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

T. Oliver.

No. 3. The Sons of Korah.

THE first sub-group of Psalms under this heading comprises seven in number in the Second Book, viz. Nos. 42-49 (reckoning No. 43 as an appendix of No. 42). There are four others in the Third Book, viz. Nos. 84, 85, 87 and 88, forming a second sub-group.

The "sons of Korah" were a remnant saved through the rich mercy of God from the judgment which fell justly on those related to them by family ties. From the historical record in Numbers 26 one would not glean that any of the rebels against the authority of Moses and Aaron had escaped the consequences.

As set forth in our introduction, the first book of Psalms gives the conditions obtaining in Israel when the Lord was in Jerusalem with a feeble remnant true to Him, while the leaders and the multitude were busy in the consummation of their general attitude of refusing Christ. In the second book the Lord and His associates are viewed prophetically as in complete rejection. At the outset of the Second Book the members of the faithful remnant are reminded of the power and desire of God to help them, in His attitude of unfailing mercy when judgment would fall on the rebellious oppressors.

In order that the remnant might be blessed, the significance of death had to be learned in association with Christ. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me" (Ps. 42. 7). That is followed by God commanding His lovingkindness in the daytime, on the basis of the atoning sufferings (which they could not share) described in Psalm 22. He had gone into death and by that means had put the enemy who had the power of death out of business. He had delivered them from the clutches of the

enemy. The central feature of the exercises described was the wholehearted desire for God. The day is surely coming when they will enjoy living under the sceptre of "great David's greater Son" (Ps. 45). They will rejoice in the assurance of the unfailing refuge to be found in God (Ps. 46). The universal rule of the great King will be administered through them, subduing all nations under their feet (Ps. 47). In that day the Jew will not be a helpless suppliant trying to circumvent circumstances by his own cleverness. To-day the Jew is notorious for underhand cunning. Then he will rejoice in the transparency of walking in the light of God. Zion will be securely established as the centre of government for the whole earth (Ps. 48). Wisdom, wealth and honour are unavailing. They do not survive death, hence the true knowledge of God is a prime necessity. The redemption of the soul is precious because it continues for ever, while the actual matter in the body may undergo seven complete changes in the course of a lifetime! (Ps. 49).

Psalms 42-44 coincide with three Maschil psalms indicating that instruction is necessary for the proper appreciation of the encouragement supplied by God. The seven psalms in the first sub-group suggest perfect encouragement. In the process of application the exercised faithful are led from the depths of experience in persecution by tyrants to supremacy over every enemy, nations being crushed under their feet. No modern European dictator can succeed permanently in crushing God's earthly people, because no one can fight successfully against God!

In the second sub-group, the Psalms speak of universal blessing, the nations being brought into the joy which will mark His people. The stages leading

up to the climax are of exquisite beauty. The soul exclaims, "How lovely are the tents of the Lord!" That will be the experience of the remnant in a future day, similarly it also appertains in a higher degree through grace to the people of God now who have a heavenly calling. When the soul is imbued with such a sense of the grace of God, it is delivered from all affinity with the selfish pride of the Pharisee who despises those less favoured with Christian instruction. Moreover, it stirs up interest which extends to the utmost bounds of the work of God on the earth. At the same time being marked by the spirit of "the sons of Korah" will lead us to appreciate the administration of the House of God as set forth in Scripture. The knowledge of God will be worldwide, "He will speak peace unto His people . . . that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed, truth shall spring out of the earth" (Ps. 85. 8-10). That is a very different picture from what is exhibited at present. Egypt and Babylon, rivals in the world's military might, Philistia and Tyre, the commercial giants, Ethiopia at the zenith of its wealth, fail alike to arrest more than passing attention. The gates of Zion, the seat of God's administration, will yet eclipse all the renown of other cities, in spite of having been under the plough (Ps. 87).

The last Psalm under the heading (No. 88) describes more intensely the spiritual distress of the remnant in repentance. At the same time there is a vivid background of the abundant grace of God. The words will be for the encouragement of the people of God in the fierce tribulation of the era to which specific reference is made as the day of Jacob's trouble. In measure the Christians of the present day

have similar trials and derive comfort from the same source. The unrelieved distress expressed is unique, although hope is suggested in the initial words, "O Lord God of my salvation!" The remnant not merely confess their sins, but abhor themselves like Job did. The repentant are separated distinctly from the unbelieving nation which will go on to judgment. Consequently the repentant remnant replaces the nation before God. In verses 10-12, six questions are propounded to the Lord as a challenge. They are answered in the transcendent terms of the following Psalm, expressing the New Covenant. Mercy or lovingkindness shall be built up for ever, Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens, and so on. Some expositors have sought to adapt the language of the Psalm as describing the experience of the Lord while He was here. But the facts that He wept over Jerusalem and wept at the grave of Lazarus show that He entered into the griefs of the remnant in His own day in perfect sympathy. While the opened heavens and the salutation from the Glory proclaiming the infinite delight of God the Father in every step of His journey are sufficient evidence to show that the contention is invalid.

That Heman (meaning "faithful"), the author of Psalm 88, is in the central place when the service of song was appointed by King David is interesting. He was descended from Korah. Heman had fourteen sons and three daughters, thus they were descended also from Korah. All these were under their father's tuition for music in the House of the Lord. How marvellous will be the stage arranged in the day of Glory by the One greater than Heman, the faithful and true witness, the Amen, the beginning of the creation of God. He who spoke the first word will also have the last word!

What does your anxiety do? It does not empty to-morrow, brother, of its sorrow; but it empties to-day of its strength. It does not make you escape the evil, but it makes you unable to cope with it when it comes.

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW.

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 10. 1 — 12. 21.)

AT the close of chapter 9 the Lord told His disciples to pray for the sending forth of labourers. Chapter 10 opens with His calling the twelve and commissioning them to go forth. They themselves were to be the answer to their prayer! Not infrequently this is the case. When we pray for this or that to be done in the Lord's service, often His answer to us would be in effect, "Then you are the ones to do it." Now for any commission to be effective, there must be the people selected, the power conferred, and the right procedure indicated.

Chapter 10 is occupied with just these three things. In verses 2-4, we get the names of the twelve chosen disciples; and in verse 1 we read how Jesus conferred the necessary power upon them. This power was effective in two spheres, the spiritual and the physical. Unclean spirits had to obey them, and all kinds of bodily evils disappeared at their word. From verse 5 to the end of the chapter we have the record of the instructions He gave, so that they might proceed rightly on their mission.

The first item of instruction concerned the sphere of their service — neither Gentiles nor Samaritans, but the lost sheep of Israel only. This at once reveals decisively that the gospel to-day does not go forth under this commission. In the service of a false theory verse 6 has been wrested into meaning that they were to go to Israelites scattered amongst the nations. The word "lost" however means spiritually lost. If Jeremiah 50 be turned to, and verses 6 and 17 consulted, it will be seen that Israel is both "lost" and "scattered." They are lost because caused to go astray by their shepherds — spiritually lost. They are scattered by the action of the kings of Assyria and Babylon — geographically scattered. This distinction in the use of the two words seems to be observed through Scripture. The disciples

never went outside the land while Christ was on earth, but they did preach to the spiritually lost Jews that were around them.

In verse 7 their message is summed up in seven words. It agrees exactly with that preached by John the Baptist (3. 2), and by the Lord Himself (4. 17), save that here the word, "Repent," is omitted. It was a very simple message, hardly allowing of much amplification or variety. They could not preach things not yet accomplished; but the predicted King was present in His own land, and hence the kingdom was nigh them. That they announced. It was the glad tidings of the kingdom, and they were to support what they said by showing the power of the kingdom in bringing healing and deliverance gratuitously.

Moreover they were to discard all the ordinary provision of a prudent traveller, and so be manifestly dependent upon their Master for all their needs; and in entering any place they were to seek out the "worthy," that is, those who feared the Lord, and who manifested their reception of the Master by the reception of His servants. They were to render testimony against those who did not receive Him, and who consequently refused them and their words; and the responsibility of such would be far greater than that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Next He plainly warned them that they were going to meet with opposition, rejection and persecution, and they are instructed as to their attitude in the presence of these things. This occupies verses 16-39. In going forth amongst men they would be as sheep in the midst of wolves; that is, they would be as their Master in position, and they were to be like Him also in character—wise and harmless. When accused before rulers they were to rest in God as their Father, and not concern themselves in preparing their

défence, since in the hour of their need the Spirit of their Father would speak in and through them. Martyrdom in some cases would lie before them, and in all cases they would have to face hatred of a type that would override all natural affection. For those not martyred endurance to the end would mean salvation.

What "the end" signifies is shown in the next verse (23)—the coming of the Son of man. In chapter 24, 3, 6, 13, 14, we again have the Lord speaking of "the end," with a similar significance, for there it is "the end of the age." This mission then, which the Lord was inaugurating, is to extend to His second coming, and barely be completed even then. As verse 6 had indicated, the cities of Israel were the field to be covered while they were persecuted, and their endurance would be crowned by salvation at His coming. As we look back it looks as if there has been some failure in these predictions. How can we account for it?

The explanation evidently is that this testimony to the nearness of the kingdom has been suspended and will be resumed at the time of the end. The disciples are viewed as representative men, and what is said applied to them at that moment and will apply to others who will be in a similar position at the end of the age. The kingdom, as presented at that moment in Christ in person, was rejected, and consequently the testimony was **withdrawn**, as we see in chapter 16, 20. It will be **resumed** when the out-gathering of the church is completed; and barely carried to its finish when the Son of Man comes to receive and establish the kingdom, as had been predicted in Daniel 7.

Meanwhile the disciple must expect to be treated as his Master, and yet he need have no fear. He will be denounced and maligned and even killed by men; but in verses 26-33, the Lord mentions three sources of encouragement. First, **light** shall shine upon everything, and all the malignings of men be dispersed. The disciple's busi-

ness is to let the light shine now in his testimony. Second, there is the intimate **care** of God, descending to the minutest detail. Third, there is the **reward** of being publicly confessed by the Lord before the Father in heaven. Nothing but faith will enable any of us to appreciate and welcome the light, to rely upon the care, and to value the praise of God more than the praise of men.

Verse 28 is worthy of special note, for it very definitely teaches that the soul is not subject to death, as is the body. God can destroy both soul and body in hell; but the word for "destroy" is different from the word for "kill," and is one meaning to cause to perish, or to ruin, and has in it no thought of annihilation. The exact words, "the immortality of the soul" do not occur in Scripture, but here are words of our Lord which assert that solemn fact. The words of verse 34 may seem at first sight to clash with such statements as we have in Luke 1, 79; 2, 14; or Acts 10, 36. But there is no real discrepancy. God approached men in Christ with a message of peace, but He was rejected. At this point in Matthew's Gospel His rejection is coming into view, and hence He declares the solemn fact that the immediate effect of His approach is going to be strife and warfare. Peace on earth will be established by Him at His second advent, and this the angels foresaw and celebrated when first He came. Peace is indeed the **ultimate** thing, but the cross was the **immediate** thing; and if He was about to take up the cross then His disciples must be prepared for a sword, and for the losing of their lives for His sake. That loss however was going to mean ultimate gain.

The closing verses of this chapter show that the reception of the unpopular disciples would be in effect the reception of their unpopular Master, and even of God Himself. Any service thus rendered, even so small a thing as the giving of a cup of cold water, will not fail of a reward in the day to come.

The sending out of the twelve did not mean that the Lord suspended His personal labours, as verse 1 of chapter 11 shows; and all this activity stirred up John in his prison. We can well imagine that he expected the great Personage, whom he had announced, to do something on his behalf; yet here He was, delivering all kinds of unworthy folk from their diseases and troubles, and apparently neglecting his forerunner. Tested thus, John's faith wavered a little. The Lord's answer to John took the form of further testimony to His own gracious activities, showing that He was indeed fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 61. 1; and happy was he who was not stumbled by His humiliation and the absence of the outward glory that will characterize His second advent.

Then Jesus bore witness to John. No oscillating reed nor man of luxury was he; but more than a prophet, even the messenger predicted by Malachi, who should prepare the way of the Lord. Moreover John was the "Elijah" of the first advent, and he marked the end of an epoch. The dispensation of law and prophets ran up to him, and from his day onward the kingdom of heaven was open, if there was the "violence" or vigour of faith to gain an entrance. When the kingdom arrives visibly, there will not be the same need for such vigour of faith. All this showed how great a man John was, nevertheless the least inside the kingdom would have a position greater than this great man, who prepared the way but did not live to enter himself. John's moral greatness was unsurpassed, though many of much less moral weight would be greater as to outward position.

From speaking of John, his greatness and the position he had been given as regards his ministry, the Lord passed to deal with the indifference of the people. They had listened to the forceful preaching of John, and now had heard the Lord and seen His works of power; yet neither one nor the other had really affected them.

They were like petulant children who

would not be persuaded to join in the play. There had been a note of severity in John's ministry, but they showed no sign of lamenting in repentance: Jesus had come full of grace and of the joy of deliverance, yet they manifested no real signs of gladness. Instead they discovered ways of discrediting both.

The taunt they flung at John was a bare-faced lie, whilst their cry against the Lord had in it some element of truth, for He was in the highest sense "a Friend of publicans and sinners." They meant it however in the lowest possible sense; for when an adversary throws out accusations in order to discredit, he usually finds half a truth more serviceable than a downright falsehood. So long as we walk in obedience with a good conscience, we need not fear the mud which adversaries love to sling. John, amongst the greatest of prophets, and the Son of Man Himself had to endure it. Those who were the children of wisdom were not taken in by these slanders. They justified wisdom, and thereby condemned the adversaries. The same fact was stated in other words when Jesus said, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep . . . My sheep hear My voice" (John 10. 26, 27).

At this point we find the Lord accepting the fact that the cities of Galilee, where most of His mighty works had been done, had definitely refused Him. There had been rendered to them such a testimony as Tyre and Sidon, and the land of Sodom, had never had. Now, the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility, and the severer the judgment, when the privilege is despised and the responsibility broken. A sad fate lay in store for Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. Their inhabitants at that time have to face the day of judgment, and the very cities themselves have been so obliterated, that their sites have been a matter of argument until today. They had rejected "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (1. 1), and consequently the kingdom as vested in Him.

But at that moment of crisis Jesus reposed upon **the purpose** of the Father and upon **the perfection of His ways** — the ways by which His purpose is to be reached. The people whose indifference the Lord had been deploring were just "the wise and prudent" according to worldly standards; but then there were the "babes," and to these, not those, the Father had revealed the things of all importance at that moment. This was the way that He was pleased to take, and Jesus accepted it with thanksgiving. This ever has been God's way, and is God's way to-day, as we see in 1 Corinthians 1. 21-31. God's purpose will not fail. The kingdom as presented in Christ was about to be rejected: God will establish the kingdom in another way altogether, even while we wait for the establishment of it in manifested power and glory. There will be found those who come under the yoke of the Son, and thus they will enjoy the rest of the kingdom in their souls.

The purpose of God is that all things shall rest in the hands of the Son. To this end all things have already been delivered to Him. In the day to come we shall see Him dispose of all things in mighty, discriminating judgment: to-day He is dispensing the knowledge of the Father. The Son is so truly God, that there are in Him unfathomable depths, known only to the Father. The Father is beyond all human knowledge, but the Son knows Him, and has come forth as His great Revealer. It is as the Revealer of the Father that He says, "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest." He was at rest in the knowledge of the Father, of His love, His purpose, His ways; and into that rest He conducts those who come to Him.

His invitation was specially addressed to "all ye that labour and are heavy laden," that is, those who were sincerely and piously attempting to keep the law, which was as Peter said, "a yoke . . . which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15. 10). The more sincere, the

more heavy laden they must have been, beneath that yoke. So the Lord's words were addressed to "wisdom's children," to the "babes;" in other words, to the godly remnant in the midst of the unbelieving mass of the people. They might now exchange the burdensome yoke of the law for the light and easy yoke of Christ. They would learn of Him things that the law could never teach them.

And moreover He would teach them in a new way. He exemplified the things that He taught. Meekness and lowliness of heart is needed if the subject place is to be taken and maintained; and these things were perfectly seen in Him. He was the Son, "yet learned He obedience" and that obedience having been carried unto death, He has "become the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 5. 8, 9). In our Gospel we see the obedient One calling us into obedience to Himself, an obedience which is not burdensome and which leads into rest. "Rest for your souls" was proposed as the result of a faithful walk in the "old paths" of the law (see Jer. 6. 16), but that rest was never attained by men. The only way to reach it was that made known by the Son, who had come to reveal the Father. The Father must be known if His purpose was to be achieved.

From the heights reached at the end of chapter 11, we descend into the depths of human folly and blindness as displayed by the Pharisees. In chapter 12 we see Him very definitely rejected by the leaders of the Jews, and not merely by the cities of Galilee. In the first two instances the contention raged round the sabbath. The Lord defended the action of His disciples on at least four grounds (ver. 3-8).

When David, God's anointed king, was in rejection, his needs took precedence over a matter of tabernacle order, and his followers were associated with him in this. David's greater Son was now refused, so should not

the needs of His disciples be met, even if it infringed their sabbath regulations? But, second, the temple had taken precedence over the sabbath, for the priests had always worked on the sabbaths; and Jesus claimed to be greater than the temple. God was indeed in Christ in infinitely fuller measure than He ever had been in the temple. Third, there was that word about mercy in Hosea 6, to which previously He had referred; that applied in this case. And, fourth, Jesus claimed that as Son of Man He was Lord of the sabbath: in other words, the sabbath had no binding power over Him. He was its Master, and He could dispose of it as He saw fit.

In the second case the Lord answered their quibble by an appeal to their own practice. They had no compunction in setting to work on the sabbath in order to show mercy to a sheep. Who were they then to object to His showing mercy to a man on the sabbath? The Lord promptly showed that mercy; yet such was the obdurate hardness of their hearts, that His mercy only stirred within them thoughts of murder. They decided from that moment upon His death.

In the presence of this, Jesus began to withdraw the witness that they were

preparing to quench in death; charging those to whom He still extended mercy that they should not make Him known. Matthew quotes the beautiful prophecy from Isaiah 42, showing how it was fulfilled in Him. Some of it has yet to be fulfilled at His second advent, for He has not yet sent forth judgment unto victory. But He did meet the bitter hatred and rejection that confronted Him at His first advent without strife or cry or the crushing of His foes. Nothing is more worthless than a bruised reed, and nothing more repulsive to the nostrils than smoking flax. The Pharisees were like both these, but He will not break and quench them till the time of judgment arrives. Meanwhile in His Name the Gentiles are learning to trust.

In Isaiah 32 the advents are not distinguished, as is so often the case in Old Testament scripture, but now we can see clearly how both are involved. At this time Jesus came as the vessel of mercy, and not to exercise judgment. Rejected by the leaders of His people, He would turn to the Gentiles and let mercy flow out to them. This is plainly intimated here.

Is not this of immense interest to us, seeing we are amongst the Gentiles who have trusted in His Name?

The stronghold of the Anakim became the possession and habitation of Caleb (Joshua 15. 13). The point of peril was the place of possession. It is where special foes are encountered but met in the courage of faith that the mightiest victories are won; our foes become our food; our dread is changed to our bread.

It was meet that they should make merry and be glad: the son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found, and they began to be merry. And the Father's joy was greater than the son's. (Luke 15).

Be not of careless or of anxious mind,
 But let God's gracious peace thy spirit fill
 With quiet diligence to seek and find
 Just time to do His will.

“THE SAVIOUR IS HERE.”

“Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives delivered?”
Isaiah 49. 24.

“THE children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (Luke 16. 8); and they shew an enthusiasm and courage when opportunity affords that christians might ponder, and then pray for grace and energy to imitate it in their own sphere. Take this rescue of three hundred British captives from the German prison ship **Altmark**. We can visualise the determination of the captain of the **Cossack** as he grappled his ship to the enemy, and the enthusiasm of the boarding party, the envy of every man in the Navy, when they leapt as one man to their work.

What a moment it must have been for that crowd of men down below when the hatches were torn away and an English voice asked, “Are there any English down there?” And when they answered, “Yes,” the good news for the captives, “**The Navy is here.**”

Is it as simple as that? Yes, we have only to ask the question, “Are there any sinners here?” and if the answer is, yes, we have a great and soul-delivering answer to give. “**The Saviour is here,**” the great Deliverer who came “to preach deliverance to

the captives . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4. 18).

It was but an incident and will live for a while in British history and then be forgotten; but we have that that shall stir our souls when time has ceased to be. We have Calvary and all that our Lord suffered there to deliver the souls of men from Satanic captivity, and our souls among the rest. Love for the souls of the lawful captives of the great enemy filled Him with a holy zeal that no suffering could abate or dismay; and He paid the price; the cost was all His, and now to us has been committed this great work of rescuing souls, and winning them for Him. Where is our zeal, our love for souls? Where is our zeal for our Lord’s honour and our love for Him? Where our enthusiasm for this work, the results of which reach into eternity? “He that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11. 30). “He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death” (James 5. 20). “Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire” (Jude 23).

What and How to Preach.

A correspondent sends us the following quotation from the sayings of a departed servant of the Lord. “Brethren, answer to deepest questions of the heart and men will find you out. We hear a good deal about preaching to the times. What times? He preaches to the times who preaches to shattered lives and broken hearts. He preaches to the times who preaches hope to the hopeless and forgiveness of sins to those who groan under the darkness of despair.” To this we would add: Thus will every preacher preach who preaches Christ, the once crucified but now risen and glorified Saviour; and outside of Him there is no answer to these deepest questions of the heart, there is no bread for soul hunger, no hope for hopeless men, no forgiveness for the despairing and the lost. The word of truth declares: “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4. 12).

Give us Thy meek and lowly mind,
We would obedient be;
And all our rest and pleasure find
In fellowship with Thee.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Has every Christian a Pure Heart?

Could you find space to answer the question, Has every Christian a pure heart? I find a difference of judgment in writings on the subject?—ENQUIRER.

YES, every christian has a pure heart; without it no man is a christian. Three Scriptures will be enough to establish this. Peter, speaking of the Gentiles who had believed the gospel said, "And God which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15. 8, 9). In his Epistle he says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1. 22); and finally the Lord Himself said to His disciples, "Now are ye clean through the word that I have spoken with you" (John 15. 3). This inward cleansing is not the judicial cleansing from sins by the precious blood of Christ; it is the new birth, the inward result of the Word received by faith into the soul. It is a subjective, moral cleansing. It describes the true Christian state and shews itself in unfeigned love of the brethren who are redeemed by the same precious blood and begotten again by the same Word of God.

What then of the exhortation in ch. 2 of Peter's Epistle: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and all hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speakings"? The force of this exhortation is: "Have done with these things once and for all, as you are cleansed from your leprosy cast away also the rags." Yet there are many texts that shew that a christian may be most inconsistent with the pure heart that has been given him and every one of us knows it from experience. This is because sin is still within us. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1. 8). "Sin dwelleth in me" (Romans 7. 17). Paul speaks of this inward tendency to evil, as "the flesh," but he tells us to "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5. 16). The heart is purified by the entrance of the Word, and the Holy Spirit and is given to every one thus purified; and dwelling in the heart He becomes the power for the outflow of those affections that belong to the pure heart, and is also the power by which the evil flesh is judged and restrained. If we sin the pure heart condemns us, the Holy Spirit is grieved and we are of all men most miserable.

Shall He find faith on the Earth?

"Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18. 8). J. A. Haldeman the noted American preacher says, "The Greek form in which the question is asked requires always a negative answer and is the strongest possible declaration that faith will not exist at that moment." If this is so it is contrary to what we have generally held.—L.

IT WILL be understood that this passage refers to the coming of the Son of Man in His power and glory to establish His kingdom on the earth; there is no reference to the catching away of His church in the first three Gospels. The question is the comment of the Lord on His own parable of the

widow and the unjust judge. The widow is descriptive of the feeble remnant of Israel during the great Tribulation. They will have a resource in prayer, not to an unjust judge but to God Himself, who though He appears not to hear, will not be unmindful of their sorrows and will arise to avenge

them when the Tribulation has done its work and His time for their deliverance has come.

Faith, **the** faith, in its true character is a special grace; it gives calm confidence in God—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusted in Thee." This condition of mind and heart does not seem prominent in this persecuted remnant: "Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold." Yet faith, feeble though it may

be, must lie behind the cries of distress that go up to God, and this faith will enable some to endure to the end and to be saved, Matt. 24. 12, 13. The Antichrist will endeavour to crush all faith in God out of these people and will think he has succeeded, but as in Elijah's day hidden ones refused to bow to Baal, so in this, there will be those who will not receive the mark of the beast or worship his image. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." "Here is the patience and faith of the saints" (Rev. 13. 10).

The Servants' individual responsibility to the Lord.

Our answer on this subject in the February issue has been challenged by a correspondent, and Scripture asked for as proof that one going out with the gospel is responsible to the Lord alone as to his service.

WE should have thought that the Galatians 1. 15, 16 which we gave would have been enough. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Every passage of Scripture bearing on service proves the truth of our answer. Our readers may be interested in the following extract from a letter by the late J. N. Darby.

"If Christ has thought proper to give me a gift, I am to trade with my talent as His servant, and the assembly has nothing to do with it: I am not their servant at all. If they wish me to teach them I will teach, but I do not go as into an assembly, but to teach those who are disposed to hear. I exercise my individual gift, the assembly has nothing to do with me. I refuse peremptorily to be its servant. If I do or say anything as an individual, calling for discipline, that is another matter; but in trading with my talent, I act neither in nor for an assembly, [though would be] rejoiced to do it in fellowship with them. If —'s doctrine was right, an evangelist could never exercise his gift at all,

for he cannot do so in assembly as such. A teacher is just as much a servant of Christ as the evangelist, and bound to wait on his teaching. I believe it an effort of the enemy to deny ministry as service to the Lord.

"When I go to teach, I go individually to exercise my gift, and not into assembly at all; and if this be denied, the authority of Christ and the liberty of the Spirit are denied to substitute for them the authority of the assembly. The Lordship of Christ is denied by those who hold these ideas. They want to make the assembly or themselves lords. If I am Christ's servant, let me serve Him in the liberty of the Spirit. They want to make the servants of Christ the servants of the assembly, and deny individual service as responsible to Christ.

"There is full liberty. Paul takes Timothy; Apollos will not go where Paul wishes, and Barnabas gets Paul to come; and if they were teaching and preaching why should not those gifted now? And if Paul and Barnabas were guided of the Spirit, why may not, in their measure, teachers be guided now? Who sent Titus to Crete, or left Timothy in Ephesus? They will say it was apostolic authority. **Be it so;** but do not let them pretend it is con-

trary to the liberty of the Spirit in those who serve. Paul went into the synagogue **as his manner was**; it was an arrangement. He separated the disciples, and discoursed daily in the school of one Tyrannus. This was arranged, and a lecture.

"Did this destroy the liberty of the

Spirit? I am perfectly clear that all this is an attempt of the enemy to destroy the liberty of the Spirit, and the authority of Christ over His servants, and introduces another authority into the church of God."

—Letters of J.N.D. Vol. 2, p. 109.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF EVANGELISING. A. E. Booth

MR. Darby in his day served with great energy as a teacher and pastor, and few since the days of the Apostle Paul had such keen insight to the Holy Scriptures. Yet, while he often said he was not an evangelist, when opportunity opened, he was happy in doing evangelical work. At times he said he really envied those who had the gift of the evangelist. He ever encouraged young men to evangelize, and deplored when such work was spoken lightly of. A remarkable illustration of his whole-hearted zeal was given to us by a French brother in Council Bluffs, Iowa, some thirty years ago. In brief:

When I saw J.N.D. first in Switzerland he preached the gospel in the open-air. Many were attracted by his simple messages, but great opposition was raised against him, and I was amongst the persecutors who pelted stones and rotten eggs at him. Some years after this I came to the United States, and discovered that my cousin living in Illinois was in the same fellowship with Mr. Darby. Later Mr. Darby came to Chicago, and then came out to our district and was a guest at the home of my cousin. This was a French settlement and most spoke French. My cousin invited me to come to hear him preach (but they knew nothing of my opposition to him in Switzerland). I attended his preaching (the preaching by Mr. D—— was in French) and was impressed, and at the close was introduced to him. He enquired concerning my salvation and

read to me one passage from John's Gospel, chap. 5. 24. This gave me great light, and I confessed the Lord to Mr. Darby and went to my farm home happy.

"Next morning, on account of there being a heavy rain during the night, I could not work in the fields, so I went to the village close by to get work done at the blacksmith's shop. Mr. Darby suggested to my cousin that he would like to visit me this forenoon, so they came to my house and discovered I had gone to the village blacksmith's shop, and they followed me there. I went out and stood beside their horse and buggy; after he asked me how I was getting along, I replied that after I left him last night I had some very unhappy feelings, although I believed on the Saviour. I felt that something within me was not right. Mr. Darby opened the seventh chapter of Romans and read to me from the latter part of the chapter where Paul described such an experience. I said to him, 'This is really my experience now.' 'O wretched man that I am.' He then showed me that by the blood of Christ all my sins were removed, in Romans chap. 3, and that each believer was justified from all sins by the blood, but explained also that **the old sinful nature** still remained in the believer and showed me how we got deliverance from both the law, and the power of indwelling sin. The light dawned upon me, and my joy was similar to what I had last evening when I decided for Christ."

Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season."

REMEMBER—REPENT.

J. T. Mawson.

OUR experience confirms what the Scriptures clearly indicate, that our tendency is to drift away from the truth. It has been so from the very beginning and we are no better than our forerunners in the faith. The Hebrew Christians were warned to give earnest heed to what they had heard, "lest haply we drift away" (Hebrews 2. 1, R.V.), and the Ephesian church, said to be Paul's brightest work, was charged by the Lord with having left its first love. Look where we may we see this drift, this falling away, and every one of us has had his part in it. We need to pray earnestly and sincerely the prayer made for the sons of Korah, "Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may praise Thee?" (Psalm 85. 6). The word "revive" in that prayer is really "recover." It describes our need and reveals our drift; nothing will avail but recovery. Let us cease to talk about "the truth being recovered for US," it only fosters spiritual pride, and let us desire and pray that we may be recovered to the truth, for it is we that have drifted away from it, and not it from us.

John says, "I heard a great voice as of a trumpet" speaking to him; it was the voice of the Lord, and it said write . . . unto Ephesus." "Thou hast left thy first love. **Remember** therefore from whence thou art fallen and **repent.**" It is a word for us as much as it was for them, and it should solemnise us and humble us; and yet there is encouragement and hope in it; for the Lord would not call upon His people to repent if the door of repentance and recovery were not wide open for them. We may pray with confidence, if our pride is humbled and judged and we feel our need, "Wilt Thou not recover us again?"

There have been gracious recoveries in the past, for God will ever be true to Himself, and if He gives a revelation of Himself and that revelation becomes His testimony to His own people and theirs to the world, He must labour

to recover them when they drift away from it. This is plainly taught in the history of His people Israel in the Old Testament: it is equally true to-day.

The recoveries may have affected comparatively few, a remnant of the people and not the mass, but it has been said, and it is worth recalling, that "a remnant has the brightest features of the original." This is true. We have an instance of it when the foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid by the returned remnant of Israel from Babylon. "They set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph with cymbals; to praise the Lord, **after the order of David, king of Israel.** And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord saying, For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord" (Ezra 3). Then there reappeared the best features of Israel's brightest days. It was the same high note of praise that sounded forth when the glory of the Lord filled the temple in Solomon's day. 2 Chronicles 5. The prayer for the sons of Korah was answered; God recovered them and they praised Him for His goodness and enduring mercy.

We of this most highly favoured church period can only measure our drift from the truth and the depth of our fall by remembering the brightest days, and for this we must go back to the beginning. Paul's first epistle to the church at Thessalonica was the earliest of his writings and it was sent to a band of believers who were in the full vigour of their first love. In it he rejoices that they were ensamples to all that believed, and that the Lord's return was to them a living hope, for they were waiting for God's Son from heaven, but most striking of all is the joy that rings in his words, "From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Madeconia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need

not to speak anything." Like those who were scattered abroad from Jerusalem at the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen, they went everywhere preaching the word. No church answered more thoroughly to the Lord's mind as expressed by Paul than that at Philippi, and in the first chapter of his epistle to them he thanks God for their "fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now," (verse 5), he rejoiced that "in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, they were all partakers of His grace," (verse 7), and his desire and prayer for them was that this might continue and that their whole lives might be as becometh the gospel of Christ and that they might stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (verse 27).

It was to the saints at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus that Paul unfolded the highest of all the truth committed to him, and for them he gave thanks without ceasing for their faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints (ch. 1. 15, 16). Here then are some of the brightest features of the church's brightest days. They went every where preaching the word and their love flowed out to all the saints; the coming again of the Lord was a living hope and their lives were in accord with that sanctifying hope.

Behind all this of course, there was the love of Christ that passeth knowledge and their response to it. How do we compare with these bright features? It is a question that we must answer individually, for the word is "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," and it is a question for the assemblies. Who will say as he considers them that we do not need the solemn words, Remember, Repent?

Church history is chiefly the history of drift from the truth, yet God who has called us to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord is faithful, and there has always been some light in the darkness, and again and again He has recalled His saints to the truth

and delivered them from the enslaving traditions of men. These recoveries have always been when His Word has been given its true authority over the consciences and hearts of His own, and what is merely traditional has been refused. The Word is living and operative, it gives life and maintains it, and where earnest heed is given to it it preserves the feet from slipping. There never was a time when we needed more, "What saith the Scriptures?" than now. 2 Timothy 3. 16, 17, should teach us this.

No one is likely to deny that in the early years of last century God gave one of these gracious recoveries. An "Irish clergyman" realised as he read the Word that his Head was in heaven, and that united to that same Head and to each other by the one Spirit was every believer on earth. Then the truth of Christ and His assembly broke as new light, though it was old truth, upon many, and it was impossible for them to maintain their sectarian positions, which they saw to be a practical denial of the great truth that there is "one body and one Spirit," one Head, one body; "one flock, one Shepherd." This great truth made those who realised its meaning seek out their brethren, fellow-members of the one body, to impart to them what they had learnt. They could not keep this that was for all to themselves. And along with this, the gospel in its simplicity and fulness and power stirred them to carry it forth into a needy world. The truth of the church for all the saints, and the gospel for all the world was their outlook, certainly a God-given, scriptural outlook. These two features along with an earnest looking for the Lord's return and lives consistent with it were the brightest features of the original reappearing.

But how do we stand to-day? Where are these bright features of the original in evidence to-day? Surely we must feel, if our hearts are sensitive to the Lord's obvious desires for His own, that we need to hear afresh the words "Remember, Repent."

It is easy to become occupied with **the effect of the truth** than with the truth itself, and here the drift begins. The endeavour to perpetuate the effect of the truth instead of giving earnest heed to the truth itself is a subtle snare and leads to the imposing of forms and practices that sectarian zeal can glory in, but which cramp and hinder the activities of the divine life in and through the saints, and bring in dearth and death. Recovery to the truth does not consist in rigid rules but in such a revival of divine life and health in the members of Christ's body that will make them rally afresh to the testimony of the Lord; it will express itself in whole-hearted fidelity to Him, and in love one to another, and it will reach out in spite of barriers that have not the Divine sanction to all the members of that body for the edifying of which Christ, the glorified Head has given gifts. How wonderful is the Divine thought, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto Him in all things **which is the Head, even Christ**: from whom **the whole body** fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4. 15, 16). To have lost sight

of that and to be thinking only of a special community is to have drifted from the great truth of the mystery.

Thank God, He will never abandon His thoughts as to His saints. He is faithful and will bring all those thoughts to pass in His own time and if we desire to be experimentally and practically according to His thoughts He is able to make us so. He knows how to recall the heart and restore us to the joy of the brightest day. This may not be done in a moment for God's way is to produce heart searchings and self-judgment. He "dwells in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to **recover** the spirit of the humble, and to **recover** the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57. 15). To be brought thus face to face with God and to learn His faithfulness and grace is an experience that gives an unshakeable confidence in Him, no failure can daunt the one who has known it, for the lesson has been learnt that God's faithfulness is greater than the failure of man and that He holds and can maintain the truth in His own divine power. Our part is to turn afresh to His Word and obey it, and His word to us is "Remember, Repent." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER.

A. M. Chambers

"None of us liveth unto himself" (Rom. 14. 7).

Therefore, take care!
 You do not walk alone;
 The shadow of your influence is thrown
 Far wider than you think!
 You safely dare
 The quick-sand to draw near;—
 One following you without a thought of fear
 May stumble there and sink!

Beware no thought
 You heedlessly express
 Plant in some heart a root of bitterness
 Not easily plucked out!
 You deem it naught,
 But one may go astray
 Beyond all hope, because across his way
 You lightly cast a doubt.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

J. W. H. Nichols.

GOLGOTHA (Hebrew), Calvary (Latin),—"a skull," or "the place of a skull," outside the walls of Jerusalem, thought to be a hill two hundred and fifty yards west of Damascus gate, was the last scene of the Saviour's sufferings and sorrow.

Matthew (chapter 27. 27), depicts the Holy Sufferer delivered into the hands of the soldiers to be crucified.

Every possible indignity He suffered at their blood-stained hands. They stripped Him of His raiment, clothing Him in a scarlet robe (emblem of royalty), and pressed upon that holy brow a crown of thorns—thorns which bore solemn witness to the curse of God resting upon the earth on account of man's sin, and emblematic surely of the curse He was now taking upon Himself to remove it from man.

Into His hands they thrust a reed, in their wicked minds a rude jest, mock emblem of a kingly power; but that which expressed weakness may fittingly speak to us of the way He has reached the place of authority and power.

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

While it would seem that the Holy Sufferer was wholly in their hands, who can fail to see that behind all they did, a higher power ordered the details and caused "the wrath of men to praise Him." They bowed the knee saying, "Hail, King of the Jews," and since no retaliation came from that blessed One, their satire and mockery was turned to absolute brutality; they derisively spat upon Him and smote Him. All this but fulfilled the words of the prophet: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isa. 50. 6); and He Himself had said: "The Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they

shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again" (Mark 10. 33, 34).

"Golgotha—the place of a skull," emblematic surely of the world where death reigns on account of sin, is the place to which He in love was brought. John says, "He went forth bearing His cross," which beautifully accords with the presentation of the "burnt offering" in his Gospel, as does every detail given by this evangelist. In the other Gospels Simon, a Cyrenian, is compelled to bear the cross, but we may gather from Mark (who tells us he was the father of Alexander and Rufus), that his was no irksome service! What a privilege indeed was his to be so identified with the Holy Sufferer.

Upon that hill of Calvary they crucified the Sinless One, associating with Him in that death two whose sins were too heinous to allow them to live, but even in this the scripture was fulfilled. "He made His grave (death) with the wicked." The literal translation of Isaiah 53. 9 is better understood, viz: "And they appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death." Man would have buried that holy body in the potter's field, but the Father's loving care ordered otherwise.

Over the cross, the "superscription of His accusation"—written by Pilate—was placed: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27. 37). We are told by John that the title was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Here again the hand of omnipotence is seen, for God would bring in the whole world guilty of this foul crime. The religious world (Hebrew), the heathen world (Greek), the political world (Latin),—all had their parts in the rejection and crucifixion of the Holy Son of God. The Jews were stung by the form of the sentence, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews," and would fain have it changed, but Pilate is adamant. Indeed, it was but the truth, and written

under God's compelling power so that **it could not be altered.**

The fatal choice had been made, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Does not the very name speak their awful condition of hatred? Bar-"Abbas," "son of the father," doubtless foreshadowing the Antichrist who will "come in his own name," and be received by the apostate nation, only to reap the bitter fruit of their fatal choice. The Holy Sufferer would receive no stupefying draught, but tasted to the full the untold sufferings of that cross of shame.

Psalm 69 especially gives us to understand, in some measure, what this Blessed One suffered at the hands of men; there we see the Righteous One, the victim of unrighteous men, hated without cause, reproach and shame covering His face, broken-hearted, with naught to mitigate His grief, alone in His sorrows, man pouring out all the bitter hatred pent up in the human heart against God for four millenniums. And the Jews in their senseless rage join a malefactor in deriding and insulting their King, in their blind unbelief quoting their own prophetic Scriptures, "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him!" Could human rage do more? Scripture says, "**Sitting down they watched Him there.**" Man had done his worst and in crowning wickedness **sat down** to watch the dying agonies of the Holy Sufferer. What a spectacle!

Then hear the **one righteous Man**, who with perfect truth could say, "I do always those things which please the Father," cry at the very end, in the midst of the greatest stress, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Here He enters the last phase of His sufferings, and who shall tell the untold depths to which He went, or fathom the sorrows He endured when He was delivered as a victim unto death, enduring it as the judgment of God. Yet He gave to God glory in the words of Psalm 22, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Prophetically it was written, "The pains of hell gat hold upon

Me." How we are made to realize our own limitations as we dwell upon the depth of His sufferings! A writer has said, "One after another the waves of wickedness dashed against Him, but the depths beneath that awaited Him, who could fathom? His heart, His soul—vessel of divine love—could alone go deeper than the bottom of that abyss, which sin had opened for man, to bring up those who lay there, after He had endured its pains in His own soul. A heart that had ever been faithful **was forsaken of God.** Where sin had brought man, love brought the Lord, but with a nature and an apprehension in which there was no distance, no separation, so that it should be felt in all its fulness. No one but He who was in that place could fathom it!"

The storm is hushed, and from out of the darkness is heard the cry, "It is finished," then with a "loud voice", (no sign of exhaustion apparent) the blessed Sufferer commended His spirit to His Father, and expired. In Matthew's Gospel the **results** are before us. **First**, the veil is rent from the top to the bottom. God is no longer hidden, the Jewish system represented by that veil entirely done away, distance has been removed, God and the sinner brought together in the death of Christ.

Second, going into death, He annulled Satan's power and triumphed over it. Many bodies of the saints arose. All blessing now is associated with resurrection.

Third, blessing goes beyond Israel. The centurion on guard renders the first Gentile testimony, "Truly this the Son of God."

It is significant that it is John who tells us a soldier pierced His side, and that from a dead Saviour there flowed the **blood and water**, tokens of a blessed and perfect salvation, cleansing and pardon henceforth as the fruit of death for the one who believes.

"Lord, we joy Thy toils are ended,
Glad Thy suffering time is o'er.
To Thy Father's throne ascended
There Thou livest to die no more.
Sing, my soul, He loved thee,
Jesus gave Himself for me."

"JESUS HIMSELF."

Inglis Fleming.

Luke 24. 6, 15, 27, 36, 47: I Thess. 4. 16: Rev. 22. 16-20.

"HE . . . IS RISEN."

Such was the angel's witness. The living One was not to be looked for among the dead. The bars and bolts of the grave had been swept away. The Lord of glory could not be held in the gloom of the sepulchre.

For the glory of God His Father, and for the present and everlasting good of men, He had come into manhood. To meet all the claims of the throne of the Majesty on high He had gone to Calvary. There He had known the awfulness of the righteous judgment of God when He, the holy One, had been made a sin offering for us and was forsaken—forsaken in righteousness that in righteousness we might be received. But now God was glorified. The work which He had come to do was finished. The way of blessing was opened, according to the purpose and pleasure of God.

Now He could not be holden of death. Triumphantly He rose. Yes! it was

"JESUS HIMSELF."

Apparent defeat had been turned into absolute victory. The criminal's cross had become the conqueror's car. He had triumphed over all the forces of the foe. A glorious conquest was His.

The message of the devoted women to the disciples as to His resurrection was not believed. Their words seemed to them as idle tales.

Thus it was that two of them leave Jerusalem to return to their Emmaus' home. Sad at heart and sorrow-stricken they commune together concerning all that had taken place. As they thus walk and talk together Jesus Himself drew near and went with them" (v. 15).

JESUS HIMSELF ON THE WAY.

The company of those who loved Him had always been His delight. He had chosen "the twelve that they

might be **with** Him." With them He had accompanied throughout His ministry. Then at its close He had said, "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My tribulation." And again, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."

For us, He died that "we might live together **with** Him." For His loved ones He lives now that, removing all of earth-stains that might hinder, we may have "part **with** Him." He will come that He may receive us unto Himself so that where He is we may be also. Then will be fulfilled His desire expressed in His prayer, "Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be **with** Me where I am."

These scriptures, and they might be added to, show the value the Lord in His great grace sets upon our communion with Himself. We rightly rejoice in our union with Him in resurrection, that we are joined to the Lord and one spirit with Him. But let us not forget that our **union** is in view of **communion**.

On the Emmaus road the Lord went with the disconsolate disciples and made their hearts burn within them as He talked with them and opened to them the Scriptures.

JESUS HIMSELF IN THE SCRIPTURES.

Blessed indeed were they in being privileged to hear Him expound to them the truths relating to His sufferings and glories. And blessed are we to-day in having the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ in the Scriptures and show them unto us.

As we read the Word of God let us remember that "JESUS HIMSELF" is the theme of each section of it. We should read it to find and feed upon Himself. In type and symbol as well as in direct testimony and prophecy we should seek to discern Christ "in all the Scriptures." Some of our

Bibles are silk sewn for strength and durability. Thus the various leaves are held together. But spiritually it is Christ who binds the volume. The demand for Christ is found in the pages of the Old Testament. That demand is answered fully in the New Testament.

Just as in the gem called the brilliant every facet is formed to reflect the light, so in the 66 portions of the Scriptures every part has some glory or grace of Christ enshrined in order to reflect Himself.

In the law, in the prophets and in the psalms He is paramount, and in the gospels, in the Acts, in the Epistles and in the Revelation He is the theme.

Many of our readers will be familiar with the four-fold presentation of our Lord in the Gospels, that He is the Sovereign, the Servant, the Saviour and the Son of God. But I doubt not that if we had eyes illuminated sufficiently by the Spirit of God every one of the sixty-six books of the Bible (or as it has been suggested, every one of the sixty-six **chapters** of the **one** Book — the Bible) would be seen to bring Christ before us.

Constrained by the two disciples our Lord went unto their Emmaus home to tarry with them for a brief season.

"JESUS HIMSELF" IN THE HOME

made a revelation of Himself as He took bread and brake it. Their eyes were opened and they knew Him.

Whether it be to our hearts or to our homes the Lord delights to be **constrained** to enter. He values the love of our hearts in the midst of days when the first love of the church has been lost just as He valued it in the hour of its truest and fullest affection.

His words in John 14. 23, indicated this, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."

This promise was made in view of His leaving the world and in view of

the coming of the Holy Spirit. The palmy days of early Christianity are past. Departure and declension are marked to-day. But the Lord's pledge in Revelation 3. 20 has this in view and supplements His promise in John 14. 23. It is good for "any man" **to-day**. 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."

Even in days of general lukewarmness and indifference He will manifest Himself to the seeking believer. May it be ours to welcome Him and know His abiding with us, dwelling in our hearts by faith.

The Lord's revelation of Himself recovered the disciples who in unbelief had left Jerusalem and in their hopelessness had sought the refuge of their village home eight miles away. At once their thoughts were with their fellow-disciples in the holy city. They must at once seek them to make known what had taken place and tell of the grace of their risen Lord. Rising up the same hour they journey the eight miles again, tired physically doubtless, but with hearts aglow with divine delight. Intuitively they know their place is with "their own company." In the darkness of the night they know where the disciples will be found. Reaching them they learn that to Simon Christ had appeared.

JESUS HIMSELF IN THE MIDST OF HIS OWN.

Then as they tell the story of their Lord having companied with them on their way and in their home Jesus Himself stood in their midst with His gracious salutation, "Peace be unto you."

To establish their hearts and assure them of the reality of His resurrection He shewed them His hands and His feet and then partook of the food which they proffered to Him in answer to His request. Then from the Scriptures He unfolded that which had been

written concerning Himself, and opened their understanding that they might understand them.

In resurrection He was found in the company of His loved ones when they were assembled, thus showing His pleasure in being with them again. And His words "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" encourage us to-day.

His assembly—the church—is dear to His heart. For it He gave Himself. For it He lives and cleanses it by the washing of water by the word. For it He will come to present it to Himself a glorious assembly.

In the midst of His assembly, He sings praises to His Father, and to His own He declares His Father's name delighting to unfold to them their relationship with His Father as their Father and His God as their God.

Even in a day of outward brokenness and confusion of tongues in that which professes to know Him, two or three gathering to His holy Name may be assured that He will give His presence to them (Matt. 18. 20).

To the assembled disciples He told how repentance and remission of sins was to be preached "in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Yes!

JESUS HIMSELF IS THE GOSPEL

HE is the theme of the gospel message. The preaching of Jesus Christ the Son of God is what marked the apostles and other messengers of God in their ministry.

To the treasurer of Ethiopia's queen Philip preached, JESUS. To the Samaritans who looked for the Messiah he announced CHRIST. After his conversion Saul straightway told in the synagogues that JESUS is "the SON of GOD."

All gospel blessings radiate from Him, pardon, peace, justification, redemption, sonship, eternal life and every other Christian privilege are in the **circumference** but **He Himself is the Centre**. The gospel of God is "con-

cerning His Son." It pleased God to reveal **His Son** in Paul that he might announce **HIM** as glad tidings among the nations. "We preach not ourselves but **Christ Jesus as Lord**," Paul declared.

Yes! "JESUS HIMSELF" is to be the preacher's subject. His eternal glory, His gracious incarnation, His moral beauties, His atoning sacrifice, His triumphant resurrection and ascension, His present ministry as High Priest and Advocate, His promised return, His future kingdom. These truths and all connected with our Lord are to have the prominent place in ministry. As this is done all things connected with the blessing of sinners will have their rightful presentation. If "Jesus Himself" has **not** the pre-eminence in the proclamation, the conscience may be eased in part, but the heart will not be won. Then the world will claim the thoughts and interest of the converts, and the life will be lost as a witness for Christ.

"JESUS HIMSELF" IN THE AIR

is our hope. The Lord Himself is coming. He is not **sending** for His loved ones, He is Himself returning for them. Any moment we may hear the home-call from the air, and be caught up to meet Him there, then with Him to enter the Father's house in His likeness and to share His joys for ever.

We hear Him say, "I, Jesus . . . I am the Root and the offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star . . . Surely I come quickly!"

Responsively His saints (His Bride) cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Then He, Himself will be our joy and delight for ever. And then will be answered His request, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am."

"With ME," no more is told,
What more Lord could'st Thou tell?
Thou knewest that would satisfy
The heart that loves Thee well."

May "JESUS HIMSELF" be our object and our subject until He come.

UNLIMITED LOVE.

I sat at tea with a venerable christian couple. They had celebrated their diamond wedding and they talked to me of their family scattered all over the world. "How many children have you?" I asked the old man who had done most of the talking. "Let me see," he answered with some hesitation, "Mary, how many have we?" Her answer was prompt. "Thirteen," she said, and went on to tell of grandchildren and great grandchildren, numbering in all nearly seventy, and she knew all their names and where they lived. I admired the old lady greatly; as her family circle had increased her heart had enlarged, and she embraced them all in her love and her prayers. And my thoughts turned to the Lord and His ever increasing circle of those He calls "His own." A countless host they are, but He forgets none, no not one. His love embraces them all.

As I listened to my aged hostess I thought of that wonderful word, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands" (Isa. 49. 15). True for Israel, true for every saint of God, the youngest and weakest loved not one whit less than the strongest and most faithful. His heart is large enough to take them all in, and each is loved as though he were the only one. He calleth His own sheep by name.

And His hands upon which we are indeed graven, for His hands are wounded hands, are lifted in continual intercession for us, and all the works of His hands are for our blessing. What a heart is His! How blessed indeed are we who know Him as our Lord and Saviour, and can say, We are "His own."

"That which is Evil."

"And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us" (Mark 9. 38).

"I wrote to the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (John 3rd. Ep.).

John's 3rd Epistle shews how well he had learnt the lesson the Lord had taught him in Mark 9.

Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Romans 15).

"That which is Good."

"But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part" (ver. 39, 40).

"Beloved thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers: which have borne witness to thy charity before the church . . . 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 fellowhelpers to the truth."

GRACE ABOUNDING.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5.

GOD does not limit His grace to our need, that is, to the putting away of our sins, but He has in His heart the purpose to superabound in grace, so that not only should our sins be atoned for by the death of Christ, but the grace which covers the debt is of surpassing riches. Not only was the man who owed five hundred pence forgiven, but at the moment he was forgiven he received immensely more; "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Like the four lepers in the siege of Samaria, they not only ate and drank, not only was the famine entirely over, but "they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it" (2 Kings 7), and from the greatest dearth were greatly enriched. There is not only forgiveness of sins, but "an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in Me."

There is great natural reluctance in the heart to reach up to any true sense of the greatness of the grace which has come to us, though our need makes us appreciate the measure of it that meets the need. Hence what meets the need is always first presented to the sinner, though in the mind of God there is no break in the blessed endless stream. The woman who "had spent all her living on physicians and was nothing bettered," knew well the blessedness of grace, when she in faith touched the hem of His garment. Beautiful to a degree was her faith, and she found the grace equal to her need; but she did not want to add to it, nor to learn the extent of the stream of blessing which had healed her. When she came to Christ, she fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. She found that the grace which cured her was very much greater, she learnt the One who is the Fountain of grace; her soul was

affiliated to the Saviour. This is a pattern of the way I part company with my old self to be with Christ. The leper that returned (see Luke 17) not only lived, but was consecrated by coming to Christ.

The great fact is gradually disclosed that not only is the sinner to be forgiven, but that he is to be made MEET to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. The sense of need is the only true condition of an awakened soul; and therefore the relief of that need is the one thing desired; but there is much more in the grace of God than to relieve the need. True, there must be a full clearance of all guilt before the awakened soul could have any rest before God, and when the grace is known to this measure, there is unspeakable relief, and hence a tendency to conclude, that as grace had conferred so much no more was to come, because no more was needed for the salvation of the soul.

Now, if grace were to stop there, simply having met the measure of man's need, God's share and delight in the saved one would be overlooked. God, in His love, delights that you, once a sinner, on believing on Him, should not only be justified, but fitted to be in His own presence, for His own pleasure, which is infinitely greater than your own. The tendency is to regard grace only as it affects the sinner, and to omit the satisfaction it is to God to have us as His children with Him; "the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Blessed God! Thy love desires my company, and would share Thy joys with me. And this love is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto me. If I were not justified, it is evident that the holy God could not allow me to draw near to Him. Hence, justification is not the measure of grace. I require to be justified first; the distance between me and God is not removed till then; I am not reconciled

to Him until then; and He is not free to shew His favour to me until then. It is because of this that forgiveness of sins or salvation is so often regarded as the limit of the grace. God desires to have me for Himself, to be a companion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a member of His body. Hence, His grace superabounds over the sin.

Wherein I have lost anything by sin, which was a glory to a man, that is not restored to me in grace; **grace gives me something infinitely better, not to suit the man that was, but to suit me as brought to God.** The grace of God does not reinstate me in the paradise lost by sin, but sets me in a much greater one. I am forgiven like the prodigal, for all I have done, but nothing that I have squandered is restored to me; I get something entirely new; and I am made, as he was in figure, quite new, and fitted for the immense exaltation to which I am raised by grace. The prodigal was not restored to the land as a Jew would have expected, but he was received into the father's house, with a favour and distinction never accorded to any one before; and this was all simply of grace. True, he had to be reconciled and kissed before he could be prepared for this immense excess in grace, that is, the measure of grace beyond the need.

Thus with the thief on the cross; as

soon as grace could be declared, he finds that not only is he saved by grace through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom his heart can cling; but when he asks for the brightest hope for a Jew—to be in the kingdom which he had forfeited—he was told that a far greater height awaited him. Jesus said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Transferred from the depth of moral degradation among men, to the glorious height of association with the Lord in the greatest place. To this wondrous height grace raises the wretched sinner, and fits him for it. Nothing of the old thief remains except his identity; but entirely new he was with Christ in paradise. Thus Paul in spirit enters into that blessed place, and was there received, as one at home in the innermost circle there. He heard there the secrets of God, which he was not allowed to tell to men. Surely he was well qualified to tell us that we are made to sit in the heavenlies in Christ, and seeing that so much grace has been shewn to us, that in us might be displayed in the coming ages, "**the surpassing riches of his grace towards us in Christ Jesus.**" And thus only we arrive at the measure of the grace of which we are to be the expositors, as I might say, in the coming ages.

The Lord lead our hearts more and more into it for His name's sake.

The best thing is not to be thinking about myself at all, but to have the sense of my own nothingness, which we always have when we are near the Lord. I feel my nothingness in the presence of Christ; but if I look at my brother, I see Christ in him—not his faults. If we are close to the Lord it is natural to esteem others better than ourselves. We see the workings of Christ in our brother.

Leaving God in the glory, leaving the form of God in abeyance Christ became a servant for the blessing of others. We have got the blessing now and the glory; and the way we shew that is by serving now in the spirit of love that thinks everyone better than oneself, and serves anybody. In the presence of Christ selfishness disappears, and blessed holy affections flow forth without difficulty. I see what is blessed and good in another, and this is the energy that overcomes all difficulties.

J.N.D.

"Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee."

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 12. 22 — 14. 14.)

ON the part of the Pharisees we have seen hatred rising to the point of murder; and we have seen on the part of Jesus such meekness and lowliness of heart as led Him to suspend all action in judgment and accept their evil without strife or protest. Matthew now records the case of a man rendered both blind and dumb by a demon. Jesus gave him sight and speech by casting out the demon, and the people, greatly wondering, began to think of Him as the true Son of David. Seeing this, the Pharisees were aroused to desperate measures, and they repeated yet more boldly the blasphemous assertion that the power He wielded was Satan's. Their earlier blasphemy (see 9. 34), passed unanswered, but this time the Lord accepted their challenge.

In the first place, He met them on the ground of reason. Their accusation involved an absurdity, for if Satan cast out Satan he would destroy his own kingdom. It also involved an aspersion on their own sons, who professed to cast out demons. But secondly, He gave them the true explanation: He was here in manhood acting by the Spirit of God, and thus He had bound Satan, the strong man, and now was taking from beneath his power those who had been but his "goods." This was another plain proof that the kingdom was in their very midst.

It also brought things to a very plain issue, and not to be definitely with Christ and gathering with Him, was to be against Him and scattering. This led the Lord to unmask the real nature of their sin, which was beyond the pale of forgiveness, in spite of the fact that all manner of sin may be forgiven. In the Son of Man God was presented to them objectively: they might speak against Him, and yet be brought by the work of the Spirit to repentance, and so be forgiven. But to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, by whom alone is repentance and faith wrought in the soul, is to put one-

self in a hopeless position. It is to thrust from one both repentance and faith, to bolt and bar the only door that leads into salvation.

The sad fact was that these Pharisees were utterly corrupt trees, a generation of vipers, and their evil words had been just the expression of the evil of their hearts. In verses 33—37, the Lord unmasked their hearts in this way, and declared they would be judged by their words. If men will have to render account of even **idle** words in the day of judgment, what will **evil** words such as these merit? In that day by their words they would be utterly condemned.

By their request, recorded in verse 38, the Pharisees revealed that they were morally blind and insensible as well as corrupt and evil. Ignoring, whether ignorantly or wilfully, all the signs that had been given, they asked for a sign. We noticed five signs in chapter 8, and five in chapter 9, besides those recorded in our chapter. Being evil and adulterous they **could not perceive** the plainest sign, so no sign should be given but the greatest of all—His own death and resurrection, which had been typified in the remarkable history of Jonah. The generation which was refusing the Lord had been in the presence of signs, more than all others before them. Jonah and his preaching had been a sign to the Ninevites, and at an earlier date Solomon and his wisdom had been a sign to the queen of the south, and striking results had been achieved. Yet Jesus was rejected.

And yet Jesus stands infinitely above all of them. In our chapter He speaks of Himself as "greater than the temple," "greater than Jonas," "greater than Solomon." Also, it is to be observed that He pointed out how both Jonah and Solomon had been signs to **Gentiles**. Though servants of

God in Israel, their fame went out northward to Nineveh and southward to Sheba respectively. These Gentiles had ears to hear and hearts to appreciate, yet the Pharisaic Jews surrounding our Lord were blind and bitterly opposed, to the extent of committing this unpardonable sin.

What would be the end of that unbelieving generation? The Lord tells us in verses 43—45. The evil spirit of idolatry, which had swayed them in their earlier history, had indeed departed from them. Christ, the Revealer of the true God, should have occupied the house; but Him they were rejecting. The end of this would be the return of that evil spirit with seven others worse than himself. Under Antichrist in the last days this word of our Lord will be fulfilled. The unbelieving race of Jews will worship the image of the beast, and be enslaved by Satanic powers of awful potency. When judgment falls, the apostate Jews on whom it will fall, will be worse than all that have preceded them. We believe that the same thing will be true of Gentile races also.

The chapter closes with the significant incident concerning the mother and brethren of Jesus. As a matter of fact they came in a wrong spirit, as is seen by consulting Mark 3, 21 and 31. That, however, is not the point here. The Lord took occasion by their intervention to disclaim a merely natural relationship, and to show that what was going to count henceforth was relationship of a spiritual nature. In this figurative way He set aside for the time the old link formed by His having come as the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, and showed that the link now to be recognized was that formed by obedience to the will of God. The Jews as a people had rejected Him, and He now disowns them. He owns His disciples as being in true relation with Him, for feeble though they were, they had begun to do the will of His Father in heaven.

He proceeded to suit His actions to His words. He left the narrow confines of the house, and went forth to the open air and the sea—the sea being symbolic of the nations. There He began to teach the multitude from a boat, using the parabolic method. This chapter contains seven parables. We will begin by noticing the expression He used in verse 52, "things new and old," for this will help us as to the drift of the parables. Old things are mentioned, the kingdom of heaven for instance, which was predicted in Daniel, but new things predominate. We will point out four new things before looking at the parables in any detail. First, He adopted a **new method of teaching**—the parabolic. The new method struck the disciples, as verse 10 shows. Second, He indicated in the first parable a **new method of Divine working**. Instead of looking for fruit as the result of God's husbandry through law and prophets, He was going to sow the Word to produce fruit. Third, He makes known developments which give a **new meaning** to the term, "kingdom of heaven." Fourth, He utters **new revelations**, opening His mouth to utter things, "kept secret from the foundation of the world," as verse 35 says.

The first parable stands by itself, and except we understand it we shall not understand the others. The great work now was to be the sowing of the "word of the kingdom" in the hearts of men. This does not accord any special place to the Jew. Said Jesus, in verse 19, "When **any one** heareth," so that opened the door to each hearer of the word, whoever he might be. What was needed was to hear with understanding. Militating against that are the activities of the devil, the fickleness of the flesh, and the cares and riches of the world. But the word is received by some, and fruit produced in varying measures. This method of Divine working is still in vogue. It characterizes the day in which we live. Christianity is based not upon what it finds in man but upon what it produces by the power of God.

Chapter 13 opens with the fact that

The disciples were puzzled by the

change to a parable. Their enquiry elicited from the Lord the fact that He adopted this way of teaching so that the mysteries, or secrets, of the kingdom of heaven might be hidden from the unbelieving mass and only revealed to those who believed. Those who unbelievably had rejected the Lord had closed their eyes to the truth. Now He spoke in parables so that they might be left in their unbelief. Thus Isaiah's prophecy was to be fulfilled in them. The same prophecy is quoted by John in his Gospel—12. 40. It is quoted also by Paul for a third and last time in the closing chapter of Acts. It was just the working of the government of God. For believers the parables are very instructive, and, as verse 17 says, they helped to bring to the knowledge of the disciples things desired but never seen by prophets and righteous men in earlier days.

Even the disciples however needed the explanation which the Lord furnished, in order to understand the parable of the sower; and, this given to them, Jesus proceeded to utter three more parables in the ears of the multitude. Only when the crowd had been dismissed and He had retired into a house with His disciples did He furnish the explanation of the second parable. It is evident therefore that the first four were uttered in public, and deal with the outer manifestations of the kingdom; whereas the last three were spoken privately, and deal with its inner and more hidden reality.

The first parable, as we have indicated, gives us the key to all the rest; showing us that the kingdom is to be established as the result of the sowing of "the word of the kingdom," and not as the fruit of obedience to the existing law of Moses. This fact established, all the other parables tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like, and each of these six similitudes presents features which could not have been foreseen in the light of Old Testament scripture. There the kingdom in its glory had been foreseen, but here we find it is to assume a new character, in which it will

exist before the glory arrives.

The second parable, that of the wheat and tares, shows that while the kingdom exists through the sowing of good seed by the Son of Man, the devil will also be a sower and his children will be found amongst the children of the kingdom. It sets forth the fact that until the hour of judgment arrives, when the Son of Man shall purge all the evil out of His kingdom, there is going to be, in one word, **mixture**. In this parable, "the field is the world" (38), be it remembered; so there is no thought here of the church being a place where the children of the wicked one must needs be tolerated. "The kingdom" indicates a sphere wider than "the church," and there is no possibility of disentangling things in the world till the Lord comes. Then by angelic service at the end of the age the evil will be consigned to the burning.

The wheat is to be gathered into the barn. In His explanation the Lord goes further, and speaks of the righteous shining forth as **the sun** in their Father's kingdom. By using this figure the Lord put the saints in a heavenly position, so we are not surprised when later we find the heavenly calling fully revealed. It is interesting to notice the Lord speaking in this parable of "the kingdom of heaven," "the kingdom of the Son of Man," and "the kingdom of your Father;" showing that the kingdom is one however it may be designated. It has however different departments—if we may so speak—and hence may be viewed in different ways.

The third parable, that of the mustard seed, shows that the kingdom is to be marked by **development**. It will grow and become imposing before men's eyes, but become a shelter for agents of evil—for in the first parable, when explaining "the fowls," the Lord said, "then cometh the wicked one;" and we know how Satan works through human agents.

The fourth parable, comprised in just one verse (33), shows that, as we

might expect from what we have just seen, the kingdom will be gradually **permeated by corruption**. In Scripture leaven is used consistently as a figure of what is corrupting. This is the one place where some are wishful to make it mean what is good. But that is because they have a system of interpretation which demands such a meaning. The gospel, they think, is going to permeate the world with good. This sudden violation of the meaning of leaven should have warned them that their thoughts which demand it are wrong.

Here, then, the Lord is teaching us that the kingdom as viewed by man will be in such a form that it is marked by mixture, by development into an imposing institution in the earth, where agents of evil will find a home, and consequently there will be a process of permeation by the evil. He spoke as a prophet indeed, for just what He predicted has come to pass in that sphere on earth, where professedly the rule of Heaven is owned.

But in the privacy of the house the Lord added to His disciples three further parables. Here we have the kingdom from the Divine standpoint, and if our eyes are anointed we too shall see in it what God sees. First, we shall see that there is something of **hidden value**. The "field" here is still the world, and the Lord has bought it, with a view to securing the hidden treasure in it. This buying must be distinguished from redeeming, for evil men may go so far as "denying the Lord that **bought** them" (2 Peter 2. 1). They were bought but not redeemed, or they would not go on to "swift destruction." The kingdom is established that the hidden treasure in the world may be secured.

Again there is the parable of the one pearl of great price. In the kingdom as it exists to-day, there is to be found and purchased this object, marked in the Divine eye by **unique perfection**. Here doubtless we have in figure that which the Lord is going to speak of in chapter 16, as "My church." True He

has bought the field, but also He has bought the pearl, and in both cases He represents Himself as selling all He has to do so. He yielded up everything to achieve His object, in the spirit of 2 Corinthians 8. 9. We cannot purchase Christ by the selling of our worthless all. It is what He has done for us. It is what He will gain through the kingdom of heaven in its present mysterious form.

Lastly it is like the drag-net gathering fish out of the sea of nations. All kinds are gathered, but we see **discriminate selection** exercised. There is a similarity between this and the parable of the wheat and tares, inasmuch as in both cases there is a disentanglement accomplished by angels at the end of the age. The wicked are severed from the just and cast into the furnace of fire. But there is also a distinct difference, for in the former parable the wicked are in the world as the result of Satan's sowing; whereas here "the word of the kingdom" goes out among the nations like a net, and people of all kinds profess to receive it. At the end of the age discrimination will be made; the true elect of God will be gathered in, and the evil rejected.

How important that we should ever keep before us what the kingdom is like from the Divine standpoint. It has taken on this peculiar character as a result of the rejection of the true Son of David, and His consequent absence in the heavens. In spite of the mixture and corruption which will mark it outwardly, there is to be this inward work of God which will result in His obtaining the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, and all the good fish which the net encloses. Have we understood all these things? The disciples felt that they had; yet later when they had received the Spirit, they may have discovered how very little they had done so. We too realize doubtless how little we have done so, for the kingdom in its present form is not understood as easily as it will be when it is unveiled in public display. Things predominate which are wholly new

from an Old Testament standpoint: hence we read, "things new and old," not "old and new." The emphasis lies on "new."

This chapter closes with Jesus back in His own district, and there at that time they were quite unbelieving. They did not see in Him Emmanuel, or even the Son of Abraham, the Son of David; to them He was just the son of the carpenter, with whose relations they were so very familiar. Their unbelieving familiarity caused them to stumble at Him. His power was unabated, but their unbelief imposed a restraint upon its exercise, just as the unbelief of Joash, the king of Israel, imposed a limit upon his victories (see, 2 Kings 13. 14—19).

At that time, says the opening verse of chapter 14, Herod "heard of the fame of Jesus." Just when He had no fame at Nazareth His fame reached the ears of that godless man, and as it appears, touched his hardened conscience. It is remarkable that he should have thought it was John risen from the dead, since to a later Herod we have Paul saying, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26. 8). That which they could not believe when it had happened was con-
jured up by a guilty conscience.

This leads Matthew to tell us the story of John's martyrdom, which had happened not long before. John's faithful witness had stirred up the anger of Herod and the revenge of Herodias,

and the Lord's forerunner died as the result of a godless oath. Herod outraged the law of God in order to preserve the credit of his own word. Such was the man that ruled many of the Jews—a chastisement surely for their abounding sin.

Now John had always faithfully pointed to Jesus, and the people acknowledged that though he did no miracle, "all things that John spake of this Man were true" (John 10. 41). As the fruit of John's happy fidelity to Jesus, his disciples knew what to do, when he was so suddenly removed. They were granted his body, so having buried it, they "went and told Jesus." John was the burning and shining lamp whereas Jesus was the light, that coming into the world, shines for all men. The lamp was extinguished, so they turned to the great light, and found consolation there.

Hearing it, Jesus departed to a desert place. Mark shows us that just at this time His disciples had returned to Him from their mission. A period of solitude and quiet was suitable at this juncture for the Master, for His disciples, and for John's sad followers; if, as is likely, they accompanied Him.

The multitudes however still went after Him, and He met their needs. As ever He was moved with compassion. The indifference of Nazareth and the wickedness of Herod produced no change in Him. Let us meditate long and deeply on the unchanging compassions of the heart of Christ. Blessed be His Name!

"Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3. 17). This will settle 999 cases out of 1000. If you are questioning whether you shall do a thing or not, just ask yourself, Am I going to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus? It will settle it at once.

If a person says, What harm is there in my doing such and such a thing? I ask, Are you going to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus? Perhaps it may be something of which you will answer at once, Of course not. Then it is settled at once.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

T. Oliver.

No. 4. GITTITH.

THE title occurs in the superscriptions of three Psalms, viz., No. 8, 81 and 84. It is generally considered to be the name of a musical instrument, possibly used by the Gittites or inhabitants of Gath. Be that as it may, there is undoubtedly an element which refers to thoughts analogous to "wine-pressing," with which Scripture constantly associates the idea of judgment followed by gladness in the hearts of the people of God in consequence of the righteousness of God having been vindicated.

Psalm 8 looks forward to the worldwide rule of the Son of Man, when as the Psalm puts it the outburst of the redeemed creation from the beginning to the end will be "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" At present His Name is sadly maligned and pushed into obscurity. Nevertheless His glory is securely set above the heavens and hence is not affected by the explosions of man's day. Meanwhile out of the mouths of babes He has ordained strength. That refers to the simplicity of faith which takes God at His word and in spite of the adverse circumstances around enables the individual to participate in the gladness of heaven. The Son of Man through death has laid the basis whereby all the purpose of God will be effected in perfect consonance with His glory.

Psalm 81 is primarily occupied with the celebration of the salvation of Is-

rael from Egypt, on the ground of judgment having been executed on the enemies. The body of the Psalm is mainly a survey of the ways of God in infinite grace and mercy, in spite of the obvious waywardness of His people. Yet notwithstanding the breakdown the words have a prophetic bearing as pointing forward to the faithfulness of God in testimony. That end has been consummated in the headship of Christ in relation to all things effected on the sure foundation of redemption. He feeds those redeemed by His precious blood with the finest of the wheat and satisfies them with honey out of the rock (Psalm 81. 10).

In Psalm 84 the people of God are brought to the goal of happiness in God's dwelling place. Two extremes of human constitution described as the worthless sparrow and the restless swallow find their homes there, learning the resources of the House of God. Anna who had long been relegated to the supernumerary category of the world's usefulness as also the erstwhile restless Saul of Tarsus found their joy and subject of testimony in God's centre. The earnest desire of the soul of such tends towards where God is adored. The realisation of that will lead to the people of God being constantly praising Him. Well might the Psalmist conclude with the exclamation "Blessed or happy is the man who trusts the Lord!"

The Lord's Rights Over His Servants.

Those whom the Lord puts into service He makes responsible to Himself. This is the real secret of all true service.

The great guardian principle of all conduct in the church of God is personal responsibility to "the Lord."

No guidance of another can ever come in between an individual conscience and God. In popery this individual responsibility to God is taken away.

Individual responsibility always secures the maintenance of God's authority.

Wherever the principles of obedience is not in our hearts, all is wrong; there is nothing but sin. The principle which actuates us in our conduct should never be "I must do what I think right," but "I ought to obey God" (Acts 5. 29).

(J.N.D.)

SPIRITUAL EVACUATION.

A. J. Pollock

SINCE the present war began, evacuation is a word that has become familiar with the man in the street. We read about evacuated areas and evacuees and so forth.

There is, however, a sense in which this word is used that we wish to draw the attention of our readers to. The dictionary gives as one of the meanings of the word, evacuate, **to make void or empty.**

As Christians we have to do with divine things, and it is possible for us to possess the form of these things without any true knowledge of their power. The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy warns him of the perilous last times. Describing their characteristics as they affect men, he refers to them as having "a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3. 5). This description is terrible. Godliness is the one thing worth having. All else is corruption and evil. To have the form of what is good, and for it to be a mere form, evacuated of all the power that is inherent in true godliness; to be a mere shell without a kernel, is sad beyond words. Of what use is a shell in living nature, if there is no succulent kernel?

A striking example of evacuation is found in the following verses. We emphasize the words we wish to draw attention to as examples of evacuation.

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in **Jewry**,* because the Jews sought to kill Him.

"Now the **Jews' feast of tabernacles** was at hand" (John 7. 1, 2).

When the land of Israel was broken up into two kingdoms, the southern kingdom went by the name of Judah. It contained Jerusalem and the Temple, which was an attraction to all godly Jews.

Presently the word Jewry or Judaea came into use. Ezra 5. 8 speaks of the **province of Judaea**, showing how the land had passed under the control of a foreign power, the Temple having been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The only bit of true godliness was connected with a feeble remnant. In Daniel 5. 13 we read that Belshazzar addressed Daniel as having been brought by his father out of Jewry.

We read in Leviticus 23. 4 it "shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days **unto THE LORD [JEHOVAH]**" (verse 34). Verse 36 tells us, "Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire **unto THE LORD [JEHOVAH].**" Verse 36 again says, "Ye shall offer an offering made by fire **unto THE LORD [JEHOVAH].**" Verse 39, "Ye shall keep a feast **unto THE LORD [JEHOVAH]** seven days." Verse 40, "Ye shall rejoice **before THE LORD [JEHOVAH]** your God." Verse 41, "Ye shall keep it a feast **unto THE LORD [JEHOVAH]** seven days in a year."

Thus we see how strongly emphasized is that the feast of tabernacles was "**unto THE LORD.**"

What was the condition of things in the days of our Lord? A gorgeous temple, but no shekinah glory; elaborate ritual but no touch of spiritual power. The more gorgeous the temple, the more elaborate the ritual, the greater was the tragedy of the whole thing—an empty shell without a kernel, spiritual evacuation of the very breath of God. Deadness, deathlike spiritual gloom, reigned supreme. The flesh had driven out the spirit.

If the **JEW**s feast of tabernacles had been indeed the **feast of THE LORD [JEHOVAH]**, then would our Lord have been rapturously welcomed and acclaimed by the high priests; but instead they were plotting for His life.

History is for our learning, and it has been cynically, but alas! too truly said that history teaches us that we do not

*NOTE—Jewry is the same word commonly translated Judaea.

learn by history. What do we see to-day? Colossians 2 warns against the danger of rationalism on the one hand and ritualism on the other. Is that warning heeded to-day? Alas, no.

Rationalism, that working of the fleshly mind in the sacred things of God, in other words, Higher Criticism and Modernism, have evacuated the Scriptures of their true meaning. Instead of the Word of God being living and powerful in the minds of those affected by twentieth century rationalism, they feel themselves competent to criticize the inspired word of God, with fatal results to themselves.

Ritualism on the other hand is the going back to the shadows of Judaism; and thereby refusing the Substance, even our Lord Jesus Christ, the fulfiller of the shadows. The more elaborate the ritualism the further removed is the ritualist from the real true power of Christianity. I have seen picture post-cards of bishops in full canonical attire in the shop windows in Paternoster Row, and one has often wondered what the Apostle Paul would have thought of such ecclesiastical millinery. Their garments are more or less a copy of the garments of glory and beauty of the Jewish high priests. These garments were all typical of the great High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ. To deck oneself out in such garments is to betray one's ignorance of their true meaning and fulfillment in the great Antitype, even the Son of God.

A glaring present-day instance of spiritual evacuation is seen in the way the rite of baptism is carried out. Instead of being a burial unto the death

of our Lord, it is turned into a fashionable ceremony with christening robes, christening cakes and the like. Not only so, a virtue is ascribed to the ceremony, that in the mere carrying of it out, the baptised, or christened, becomes a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of God. It matters not how godless the baptised may be in after life, this remains true, it is falsely claimed—surely if ever there was spiritual evacuation, it is here with terrible fatal results.

But to come closer home. Is there not a danger with saints of God, warned in a general way against rationalism and ritualism, intelligent as to Scripture, being satisfied with correct doctrine, the shell, if you please, and not concerned about holding truth in power in the soul.

Does not Galatians 5. 6 put it in a nutshell, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." That is to say, the mere rite as a rite apart from its true moral import is an utterly negligible thing, but faith working by love is what matters. We come to living realities when we speak of love and faith—faith working by love—love the divine nature leading to a life framed in the light of another world with different and diametrically opposed values to the life of the flesh.

May we be found holding not in mere terms of truth, but its real force and power in our lives. It is possible to hold the terms of divine truth very correctly, and yet do so in fleshly energy, working deadness and untold mischief among the children of God. May we be preserved from this.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Wherever the power of divine life comes down and takes possession of a man, it manifests itself in his giving himself up to God.

If I am perfectly happy in God, I do not mind if a person insults me; but take it patiently. I am perfectly happy, and have got my soul in the place of these blessed affections.

GIFTS AND SERVICE.

J.N.D.

ALL gifts proceed immediately from Christ the Head, and have their existence in believers in the energy of the Holy Spirit. The Lord laid the foundation by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. There yet abide evangelists, pastors and teachers; and so long as Christ loves the church, and is the alone source of grace—so long as He desires to nourish the members of His own body—these same gifts will remain for the edification of the church.

Every one who has received a gift has thereby become servant to Him who communicated it to him. In every case we are the servants of Christ, who alone is Lord of our souls, but every Christian, in particular, is His servant, as to any gift He may have conferred upon Him. Without doubt, each christian is subject to the general discipline of the church, or assembly, both as to his whole life and as to his service. But he serves Christ, and not men. He renders service to Christians, because

he is the servant of Christ the Lord. He must also needs serve, because he is the servant of Christ, and has received, for that end, part of his Master's goods (see parables of Talents and Pounds).

We do not commit material and tools to men in order that they may do nothing. Not only is such a thought senseless, but, if the love of Christ and His love for souls energize in our hearts, idleness and inaction are altogether impossible.

The presence and the activity of Christ's love in our hearts is thus, in truth, tested. If the love of Christ is active in my heart, would it be possible for me to remain inactive in any case in which I could be of use to one soul beloved of Him? Certainly not. The power to act thus, and the wisdom needful to do it, in a way which will be agreeable to Him, comes always and directly from Himself, while the love of Christ in the heart is that which keeps the heart lively.

We are cleansed from our sins by the blood of Christ, and it is the price of our redemption, now our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, and thus we become individually **His dwelling-place**.

It is true again of the church of God, as it is said: "In whom also ye are builded together for an **habitation** of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 22). Thus the church becomes **the habitation of God**.

Let me ask you how you treat this divine Guest. I am now speaking reverentially of God's presence. How often do you think of it in the day, that your bodies are **temples** of the Holy Ghost.

The place we hold on earth by redemption is to be the **habitation** of God through the Spirit individually, and as the church of God.

The Lord give us to know by faith now that our bodies are the **temple** of the Holy Ghost; that we are not our own, but bought with a price.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3. 20). Desire may be feeble on our side, but God ever gives more than we desire or anticipate. There is this great difference between the world and God: you always get less than you anticipate from the world, but when desire turns God-ward, He surprises you by the liberality of His giving.

“COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE.”

J. T. Mawson.

“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God” (Isaiah 40).

GOD is “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort” 2 Cor. 1, and it is His will that His people should be comforted and not distracted; this is the commission He has given to His servants. This comfort is not exactly that which a mother gives her sick or tired child, soothing it to forgetful slumber; it is more than that, it is encouragement for the discouraged, strength for the weak, and restoration for the fainting, it fills the soul with the bouyancy of hope, for it flows from the knowledge of God who is “the God of hope” and “the God of patience and consolation” Romans 15.

Our chapter has Jerusalem and the Jews in view at the time when the great Tribulation through which they are yet to pass for the rejection of their Messiah is drawing to its close. The heart of that ancient city is to hear the comforting news that her great iniquity is pardoned, and that God, even her God, who had never forgotten her during all the years that the Gentiles had trodden her underfoot, is about to deliver her from their power and right every wrong and make every crooked thing straight.

The Christian church is not Israel, and we shall not pass through “the great Tribulation” which is “Jacob’s trouble” Jer. 30. 7. We shall be in the glory with Christ when that hour comes upon them that dwell on the earth, yet we shall not escape tribulation. “In the world ye shall have tribulation” were among the last words of the Lord to His disciples before He suffered for us; but they were not to be cast down because of that, for He added, “But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” John 16. 33. Thus He comforted them and us.

All true comfort flows from the true knowledge of God. He has revealed Himself to us in Christ in the New

Testament in the fulness of His love. This was not possible in the days of the prophets, yet the fuller revelation does not cancel what went before; what He was then abides, He is the same, and “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” Romans 15. 4.

The first view we have of God in our chapter is as **the pardoning God**—“her iniquity is pardoned” (v. 2), and in the knowledge of God in this character lies the basis of all comfort; apart from this sinful men would have neither hope nor comfort in time or eternity; but “David describeth the blessedness of the man . . . whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered” Romans 4. 6, 7. This blessedness is ours who have believed. Our God is greater than our sins; and where sin abounded His grace has much more abounded. He is a just God and yet a Saviour. Eternal praise be to our Lord Jesus Christ “in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” Eph. 1. 7.

Our sins being pardoned we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—yes, peace with God in a world of strife; peace though beset on every hand with war and rumours of war! And not only peace in the present but the future is also bound up with this priceless boon, we are forgiven that we might have inheritance among them that are sanctified (Acts 26. 18). And in this we have God’s giving, which is exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

This first of all our blessings binds us to God with an eternal gratitude, but it also gives us a deep interest in His interests and in the inheritance that is ours. We are heirs of God and

joint heirs with Christ and we cannot be indifferent to the condition in which the inheritance is. This world is part of it and it seems to be hopelessly wrecked by sin, and Satan seems to be in full possession though it belongs to the Lord. The counsels of evil men seem to prevail; they carry out their infamous plans without regard to God or man; violence, oppression and treachery wax bolder and appear to be triumphant, and the children of God, who are the heirs of the inheritance, are the first to suffer. The whole creation groaneth, and we ourselves groan within ourselves as we view the scene. Moreover for nearly two thousand years the cry has been going up to God "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and has received no answer as yet. Is there comfort and hope for God's people in view of all this? Is there any rest for troubled and anxious hearts?

Yes, verily, there is; our chapter tells us that **"the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together"** (verse 5). Then the crooked place shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, the high mountains of man's pride shall be brought low, and those who have been as the lowly valleys shall be exalted. But how do we know this and what guarantee have we that it shall come to pass? **"The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."** We rest in the immutable word of God. Herein is our comfort and hope. **"The word of the Lord shall stand for ever."** Not one jot or tittle of His word shall fail. God will be faithful to His spoken word and we who believe wait with patience for its fulfilment. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God." How shall we do that? By turning them afresh to the word of God in its absolute reliability.

But who will bring to pass the will of God on earth? That is the question involved in the cry **"All flesh is grass, and all the godliness thereof as the flower of the grass"** (v. 6). Men cannot

do it; the best of men will fail. There have been great men in the past in whom the people trusted; they were but the flower of the summer cornfield, their influence was short-lived; they came and went and left the world no better than they found it. The great men of our day are no better than their forerunners, they may talk of building a better world when this war has been won by the Democracies. It is vain talk. **"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,"** (v. 8). There is no permanence in the achievements of men, because God is left out of their schemes. They will not surrender the kingdoms of the world to God and His Christ. The man who proposed to do it would be in a hopeless minority, so the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon their endeavours, **"Surely the people is grass."**

To whom then shall we look? The answer is given in verse 9. There shall be good tidings for Jerusalem in the day of her great trouble, and there is comfort for us in these sad days. It lies in the cry, **"Behold your God,"** (v. 9). Turn away from all flesh, which is grass; abandon all confidence in men who fade like the flower of the field and look to God. "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him" (v. 10). Every evil power shall be swept from His path in the day of His vengeance against wicked men. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

"Behold your God." He is the mighty God, the Creator, supreme over all. He "hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." "Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." **"All nations, [totalitarian and democratic alike] before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him as less than**

nothing, and vanity." How great He is. He never wearies or faints. But herein lies our comfort, His heart is as tender toward His own people as His arm is strong in creation. Behold your God, ye fearful saints, and take fresh courage. **"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom,"** (v. 11). His arm upholds creation, but His bosom is the resting place for His lambs.

And now we have no difficulty in identifying our God. It is Jesus. "All things were made by Him," John 1. 3, and He "upholds all things by the word of His power," Hebrews 1. 2, and He is the good Shepherd that gave His life for the sheep. His love is as great as His power; and He has said, **"I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand,"** John 10. The hand that upholds creation and smashed the power of death holds His sheep in everlasting security. How safe are all those who are gathered with His arm, and what comfort there is for them in His bosom!

Let not one of those whom God calls "My people" say "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God" (verse 27). The everlasting God does not change, He careth for all His own and fainteth

not. Even the very hairs of their heads are all numbered by Him. No detail of their lives is too small for His notice. He bears with their waywardness and frailty and wearies not. If you feel your weakness and are brought to your wits' end it is that you might prove what His power is. **"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."** Every resource that man has apart from God will fail. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall." **"But they that wait on 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."** They shall rise on the strong wings of faith above the gloom of this world with its false hopes and sure disappointments and glory in the love of God which has given them a hope of which they shall never be ashamed, (Romans 5. 5), they shall run the errands of the Lord, carrying messages of comfort to tried and troubled hearts, and not be weary, (1 Thess. 1. 8), and they shall walk worthy of God who hath called them unto His Kingdom and glory, and not faint (1 Thess. 2. 12).

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say on the Lord" (Psalm 27. 14).

Waiting on God.

Waiting on God implies dependence, confidence; and both in such sort that we abide God's time: dependence, because we cannot do anything without Him, and ought not, because what He does is what the soul alone desires, because action without Him, even in self-defence, is only the action of our own will, and so our being without God so far.

It implies confidence too; for why should we wait if God would not come in? The soul is thus sustained meanwhile. And this confidence is such we tarry the Lord's pleasure. Patience has its perfect work, so that we should be perfect and complete in all the will of God.

This leaves the soul absolutely and exclusively waiting on Him. It is not active for itself; it waits only upon God.

"NATURE IS STRONGER THAN MAN." A. J. Pollock

SO acknowledged Field-Marshal Goering in a recent speech he made to the German nation. Why not admit that GOD is stronger than man, for who is responsible for nature? Where does nature come from, it does not come of itself, and who endowed it with powers before which arrogant man is puny and powerless?

At the beginning of the year we beheld Europe gripped in the cold embrace of Arctic weather, the severity of which had not been known for a century. When the civilized world was aghast to see that great ungodly colossus of 163,000,000 millions—Russia—attack little Finland, with a population of under 4 millions, no more than that of the county of Yorkshire, we believe Christians all over the country betook themselves to prayer.

Just when resistance seemed impossible down fell the thermometer below zero, snowflakes by the million fell silently and persistently. The very elements fought against the godless Soviet armies. Was this a mere coincidence? We firmly believe the weather was God's answer to prayer that went up from thousands of His people for little Finland. Incidentally it imprisoned Germany's icebreakers in her harbours and paralysed her river transport so much so that General Goering was forced to admit that "nature is stronger than man."

This led to my attention being drawn to Psalm 147. 16—18. It was particularly striking to notice how the words, "HE" and "HIS" are prominent.

"HE giveth snow like wool: HE scattereth HIS ice like morsels: who can stand before HIS cold?"

"HE sendeth out His word, and melteth them: HE causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow."

All this is attributed to GOD and not to nature. "HE giveth snow." "HE scattereth HIS ice." It is "HIS cold." "HE sendeth out HIS word." "HE causeth HIS wind to blow."

It is sad when we reduce everything to an impersonal nature, that these things **must** happen without any reference to anything particular. But these verses show that **God** is actively and intelligently behind what men call **nature**.

In 1815 the fate of Europe depended on the state of the ground on the eve of the battle of Waterloo. The ground was too sodden to employ the cavalry by the French army. Napoleon with his arrogant and proud will had to wait impatiently a day for the ground to dry. That delay gave time for the German army under Marshal Blucher to reach within striking distance, and materially to alter things.

During the last war the Austrians were about to cross the little quiet river Piave, and overrun Italy, when a cloud burst, and soon the little river was a roaring torrent, which made it impossible for the Austrians to cross, and so gave time for the successful holding up of the threatened invasion.

We find similar instances in Old Testament times.

We read, "And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines" (1 Samuel 7. 8). Did God answer prayer? "And as Samuel offered 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; and they were smitten before Israel."

Prayer was answered in the case of Gideon when the Midianite army threatened little Israel. Gideon blew a trumpet to gather Israel to battle. Thirty-two thousand men responded to the call. This was too many. They might have boasted, "Mine own hand hath saved me" (Judges 7. 2). A test was proposed, and twenty-two thousand departed, leaving ten thousand. This was still too many and a further

test was imposed, and three hundred warriors were left.

The battle came. Gideon's three hundred blew their trumpets and broke their pitchers, and their lamps were disclosed. Then they beheld the strange sight of the Midianites in their panic fighting each other, finally fleeing from the field of battle. The three hundred had not cried in vain, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" (Judges 7. 18).

In the days of King Hezekiah the King of Assyria sent a mighty army against Jerusalem. With braggart language his generals threatened the children of Israel. In his weakness King Hezekiah rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and sent messengers to Isaiah, the prophet. Moreover he earnestly prayed about the matter.

What was the result? Isaiah, the

prophet, assured Hezekiah that his prayer should be answered. God said, "I will defend this city, to save it for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake" (2 Kings 19. 34).

How solemn and yet encouraging was the answer. "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (2 Kings 19. 35).

Do not these instances, which could be multiplied, prove that God does answer prayer, especially when presented in humility and earnestness? Should we not take courage, and betake ourselves afresh to our knees? Could not prayer open the prison doors and liberate Pastor Niemoller and the thousand pastors imprisoned for Christ's sake? Shall we limit our God?

THY KINGDOM COME.

A. M. Chambers

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth" (Matthew 6. 10).

"Thy will be done on earth." A day of peace
 Shall dawn for this blood-stained, war-weary world;
 A day when man's aggressiveness shall cease,
 And all the banners of his hate be furled.

When He shall come Whose right it is alone
 To be World-Ruler; Who with equity
 Shall govern for the meek; Whose righteous throne
 In truth and mercy shall established be.

The problems unresolved since time began
 Shall vanish in His wisdom's shining ray;
 The heavy burdens man has heaped on man
 All shall be lifted in that coming day.

Ah! then no more the voice of the oppressed
 Shall rise to Heaven in a tragic cry!
 In sweet security the poor shall rest,
 No fears disturbing their tranquility.

"Thy will be done on earth." Lord, thus we pray.
 Now as we wait to see the word fulfilled
 Over each heart that loves Thee have FULL sway,
 And THERE let every doubting thought be stilled!

THE OLD PATHS.

James McBroom

"Thus saith Jehovah: stand in the ways and see, and ask for the ancient paths, which is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6. 16, N. Trans.).

THE above passage should be read along with Matthew 2. 29 and Rev. 2. 4. To get its bearing on Israel it is needful to know not only the immediate context but to be acquainted with the moral condition as described both in these chapters and in the closing chapters of second Kings. It was a time of dark apostasy and morals were low. The degradation during the reign of Manasseh followed by the short time of Amon had brought the people of Judah and Jerusalem to a state of rebellion, corruption and God-defiance that eventually brought upon them that judgment from God known as the seventy years' captivity.

It was one of the most important moments in the history of the world for then the times of the Gentiles began. God makes the evil of the men to serve Him. This was the time when the sword of government was put into the hands of the Gentile in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, the time when the glory cloud, symbol of Jehovah's presence, departed from Israel to heaven. Ephraim, the ten tribes, had been taken captive by the Assyrian and Judah instead of taking heed fell into the same practices and got lower and lower till they became steeped in the abominable rites of the Gentiles around them and hope of general recovery there was none.

Josiah came to the throne a child of eight years and under the care of Hilkiah and the godly remnant grew up in the fear of God. A revival began which led to the cleansing of the Temple. In the midst of this work the book of the law was found which gave great impetus to the work of recovery and outwardly the work of the Lord seemed to prosper. In spite of all this the general condition was so bad that judgment had to fall.

It was at this time that Jeremiah was called and through whom the voice of the Lord was heard and the veil lifted which gives a glimpse of the frightful condition of the people. Ecclesiastically, socially, morally the case was hopeless. Every kind of shameful moral impurity marked the people, priests, prophets and elders. Men were offering to false gods and their women baking cakes to the Queen of heaven. They are foolish (5. 21), deceitful (5. 27), sottish (4. 22), hopeless (3. 25), rebellious (4. 17), treacherous (3. 7), and impudent (Ezek. 2. 4). This was the state of things that Jeremiah and the remnant had to meet and these were some of the words he had to say to them. Remember too, that they had their religion. How like christendom to-day. They boasted of the ark of the covenant. They had done so in Samuel's day and lost it to the Philistines, a circumstance of which they are reminded in chap. 7; they were now to lose it for ever (see 3. 16). The temple too was their lying boast but they had made it a den of thieves. In spite of their wicked and licentious ways they boasted in the law, saying: "We are wise and the law of the Lord is with us" (8. 8), and in spite of their descent to the awful corruption of the Phallic cults they still boasted in the Burnt Offering.

What a transcript of all this is seen in christendom with her much greater light and responsibility to-day! Have we not defiance in the godless cults of the day in their blasphemous opposition to God, and the lying pen of the scribe (Jer. 8. 8, margin), in the modernist; the awful descent to mental reservation in the pulpit; the godless trampling upon holy things by the people where the very name of Jeremiah is made a by-word for pessimism. It is needless to dwell on this, but see

2 Timothy 3. 1—5. It remained for the times of the Gentiles to produce in christendom the darkest state of things that God ever permitted upon the earth. Infatuation always precedes judgment and it is at the door; yea, what if it is already active in the ravages of war begun?

It was during this time that Jeremiah in his second address to the people uses the text at the head of this paper. "Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths." Has the gravity of the situation dawned upon us? Are we not in danger of taking this gracious appeal out of its place and apply it to what is merely external? Is there not distinct evidence on our part of seeking a correct ecclesiastical position without the inner moral condition which Jehovah pleads with His people about? But still more solemn, is there not a danger of missing the whole force of the Divine plaint and confining it to a mere detail, however solemn that detail may be? The old paths are clearly before us in Jer. 2. 2, 3. "**I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness.**"

What a tremendous moral difference in these words from the condition of the people detailed in these chapters. What of the true hearted remnant at this time? There were Jeremiah, Hilkiah, Huldah the prophetess, Shaphan the scribe, Ahikam and Baruch. These were not divided. Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were all busy in the prophet's office at this time. It was no part of these to exhort each other to return to the old paths. What then? They were weeping (13. 17), and saying, "Seek not great things for thyself" (45. 5). But what of Jehovah God? His heart is laid bare in its pleadings here as nowhere else in Scripture. Like a husband deserted by a faithless wife He pleads for them to return, and as a father frantic with grief at the lawlessness of his children He calls upon them to obey.

What then is the bearing of Jer. 6.

16 by analogy on saints to-day? The passage is so constantly used for mere ecclesiastical purposes that we are in danger of not only losing its force but of perverting the solemn language of God to christendom at this moment. Is it not clear that to us such a passage for external order is to lose the whole plaint of Jehovah, miss the pathos of the message and shew ourselves incapable of that holy refinement that springs from the true knowledge of God? Let us then get beyond the ecclesiastical failure to the cause. The old paths and the good way mean much more than talking of divine principles or of assuming to be standing for the truth. **The men standing for the truth in the book of Jeremiah were living it.**

What then are the ancient paths? **Holiness to the Lord** (Jer. 2. 3). "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness unto Jehovah, the first-fruits of His increase." Have we not an echo of this for saints of to-day in the words of Revelation 2. 4, "I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love." Instead then of attempting to form a testimony for the Lord by artificial means let us like the brethren of the early part of last century listen to the voice of the Lord. "To him that overcomes, I will give to him to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2. 7). Both this passage and Jer. 2. 2, 3 should be read along with Matt. 2. 30. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is simple and easy to see that without all controversy the way to overcome is to imbibe the spirit of Christ.

God's principles never change and by putting these texts together we can see how the individual can overcome in an evil day and be in all the light of the dispensation and walking quietly in the fear of God with those like-minded (2 Tim. 2. 22), in the absence of all pretension to judicial administration may be well-pleasing to the Lord.

OUR STANDARD AND OUR HOPE.

C.H.M.

Written 60 years ago, a much-needed word for the present time.

THERE are two very important principles presented in **Revelation 3**, which are profoundly interesting, but clear, simple, easily grasped, and full of power, when understood—two distinct things which characterise the overcomer. The first is the truth that has been communicated; and the second, the hope that is set before us.

We find these two things illustrated in Israel's history, and in the history of the church of God—what He has given us, and what is held out before us. These two things are to form your character and mine. We are not to be influenced by the character of things around, or the present condition of the people of God; but we are to be influenced by what God **has** given, and what He **will** give. We are apt to be discouraged and disheartened by the state of things around, and to surrender everything because of the ruin, and thus get paralysed; but if we get hold of these two things, or rather if they get hold of us, they will enable us to be overcomers. We are to remember what we have received and heard, and cherish the hope of glory.

We have Protestantism before us in Sardis. I distinguish Protestantism from the Reformation; you must always distinguish between a work of the Spirit of God and the state of things resulting from it. The Reformation was a distinct work of the Spirit of God, a wave of spiritual power. Protestantism is the permanent result flowing out of that. It is not the thing itself, but man's use of it.

Fifty years ago there was a very distinct movement of the Spirit of God, which drew many out of the enclosures of Christendom. But what use has been made of it? **When the energy, freshness, and bloom of the Spirit had departed, men got dropping down into dead brethernism**, and there is nothing worse than that, because the corruption

of the best thing is the worst corruption. What is our moral safeguard? Simply to hold fast what we have received, and to live in the blessed hope of Christ's coming.

We find illustrations of this in Old Testament times. All the great reformatory movements in Israel were characterised by this very thing. It was so in Jehoshaphat's time, and in Hezekiah's time. The Lord calls back His people to the original standard, to what they had received at the first. Hezekiah goes back to Moses as his authority to maintain the divine standard in the celebration of the passover. Many might have said, Oh, it is all hopeless; your national unity is gone. Even Solomon had left abominations behind him. The devil suggests to lower the standard because of the ruin, but Hezekiah did not listen to that, he was an overcomer. A tide of blessing rolled in, such as had not been known since the days of Solomon (2 Chron. 30).

So, again in the days of Josiah; a child was on the throne, a woman filling the prophetic office; Nebuchadnezzar almost at the gates. What did Josiah do? The book of the law was read. Instead of lowering the standard on account of the state of things, he looked up to God's standard, floating over his head, and said, "That must be my standard;" and he kept the passover in the first month. The result was, there was not such a passover kept since the days of Samuel. Jeroboam had introduced a feast in the eighth month, to suit his own ends. Josiah was lower down in the national history, and came to the throne under most depressing circumstances. The lower down you get in man's history, the brighter the testimony:

Thus it was with Hezekiah and Josiah; and we have a still more beautiful example of it in Ezra and Nehemiah. In those days a feast was kept which

had not been observed since the days of Joshua the son of Nun. It was reserved for that poor, contemptible remnant to keep that feast. They were overcomers; they went back to God, and to what He had given at the beginning.

Again, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego gained a magnificent victory when they refused to eat the king's meat. They would not yield one hair's breadth. Were not they overcomers? They might have said, God in His governmental dealings has sent us into captivity; why should we refuse to eat? But no! they were enabled to hold up the standard of God in the midst of the ruin around.

It was the same with Daniel. He took the loftiest ground, and gained a splendid victory. It was not to make a show that he opened his windows, and prayed towards Jerusalem, but to maintain the truth of God; he prayed towards God's centre, and he was called the servant of the living God. If these had surrendered, they would have lost their victories, and God would have been dishonoured.

All this bears upon us in a very distinct way, in the midst of Protestantism. It makes the word of God of unspeakable value to us. It is not a question of setting up our own opinion or authority, but we are called on to maintain the truth of God, and nothing else; and if you do not get hold of that, you do not know where you are. It might have been said to Josiah, when he broke down the high places built by Solomon (2 Kings 23. 13), Who are you, to set yourself up against Solomon, and an institution set up by a great man like him? But it was not a question of Josiah versus Solomon, but of God versus error.

The other point is, that our character is also to be formed by what is before us—the coming of the Lord. But mark here, the church of Sardis, instead of being cheered by it, is warned. "If,

therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." That is how He will come upon the world, as a thief. We belong to the region of light; our proper hope is the Morning Star, which is only seen by those who are watching during the night. The reason why Sardis is warned, instead of cheered, by the hope of His coming, is, that it has sunk down to the world's level; low, lifeless, sapless Christianity; and it will overtake them as a thief. This is what Protestantism is threatened with, and you too if you let yourself go down with the stream, like a dead fish. The Lord is awakening the hearts of His people to a deeper sense of this.

He is coming for me, and I have to watch for the bright and Morning Star. Now let my heart rise up, and overcome the conditions of things around. If I find saints in that condition, I seek to rouse them out of it. If you want to instruct saints, you must bring them back to the truth you have received, what God gave at the beginning. Build on what God has given you, and on the hope that is set before you. I find it a great thing to say to anyone, Are you prepared to abandon everything that will not bear the test of the word of God—to take your stand on that? Hold fast the standard of the truth of God, and do not accept anything less; even though you may be alone in it. If a regiment were cut to pieces, and only one man left, if he holds the colours the dignity of the regiment is maintained. It is not a question of results, but of being true to Christ, to be really alive in a scene which is characterised by having "a name to live, while dead." We want something more than mere profession. Even the breaking of bread may become an empty formality. We want more power and freshness, more living devotedness to the Person of Christ. We are called to overcome. The hearing ear is found only with the overcomer. May our hearts be stirred up to desire it increasingly!

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 14. 15 — 16. 17.)

IT was not the Lord but His disciples, who suggested that the crowds should be dismissed to fend for themselves. It was His compassion that detained them and bade His disciples give them to eat. This tested the disciples, and brought to light how little they realized the power of their Master. They had to discover that His way was to use the tiny resources that were already in their hands, and multiply them until they were more than sufficient. The prophet indicated that Jehovah would find His rest in Zion, and that then His word would be, "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread" (Psa. 132. 15). Jehovah was now amongst His people in the person of Jesus, and though there was no rest for Him in Zion at that time, yet He proved what He could do with these five thousand men, beside women and children. He was dispensing the bounty of heaven, hence He looked up to heaven as He blessed.

At this point let us recall the situation, as presented in this Gospel. He had been definitely rejected by the nation, their leaders going so far as to commit the unpardonable sin in attributing His works of power to the devil. Consequently He had symbolically broken His links with them. This we saw in chapters 11 and 12. Then in chapter 13 He spoke the parables which reveal new developments as to the kingdom of heaven; and at the end of that chapter we find that the people of His own country saw nothing in Him beyond the son of the carpenter. We open chapter 14 to find Herod slaying His forerunner, so that His refusal on all hands could hardly be more complete. Yet before we close the chapter we see a display of two great facts: first, He is **more than sufficient** when in the presence of human need, whether the wants of the multitude or the weakness of the disciples. Second, He is **more than supreme** when confronted

with powers wielded by the adversary. He not only walked Himself upon the stormy waters, but He enabled a feeble disciple to do the same.

During the night He had been in prayer upon the mountain, and the disciples had been toiling against contrary circumstances. Towards morning He drew near to them, walking upon the waves. In the earlier episode on the lake (chap. 8) He had shown Himself able to quell the storm, since His power was above all the power of the devil. Now He shows Himself in absolute supremacy. The storm was simply nothing to Him. It was distressing to the disciples, but here was the One of whom it had been said, "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known" (Psa. 77. 19). His presence brought good cheer to them even while the storm still raged; and when He joined the boat the wind ceased.

But the Lord brought with Him more than good cheer, and Peter it was who discovered it: He can conform others to Himself. It involved for Peter stepping "out of the ship," and this could only be done when he had the authoritative word, "Come," which authenticated the fact that it was the Lord Himself who drew near. Assured that it was Himself, on the strength of His word, Peter stepped forth and walked on the sea. We may see here an allegory of what was shortly to come to pass. The Jewish system, which consisted so largely of "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," (Eph. 2. 15), was like a ship, quite suited to men who are "after the flesh." As the result of His coming, the disciples were to step out of that "ship" into a path of pure faith. Hence when Paul bade farewell to the Ephesian elders, he did not commend them to a code of laws nor to an institution or organization, but to "God and

the word of His grace." Hence too the call to go "outside the camp" in Hebrews 13. Peter was "out of the ship," with Christ as his Object and His word as his authority. The Christian position is outside the camp with God and the word of His grace.

Yet Peter's faith was small, and, his mind turning from his Master to the violent wind, he was afraid and he began to sink. But still, he had faith, for in the emergency he at once called upon his Lord, and so was sustained, and by both together the ship was reached, when at once the wind ceased, and the land was reached, as John's Gospel shows us. Peter was quite illogical in his fears, for it is no more possible for us to walk on smooth water than on rough, but we are all like him when little faith possesses our hearts. Faith which is fully centred in Christ is strong, whilst that which is occupied with circumstances is weak.

We sometimes hear rather too much of Peter's failure, and not enough of what the power of Christ enabled him to do, though his faith was small. After all, he did not sink. He only **began** to sink and then, sustained by a power not his own, he reached his Lord and returned with Him to the boat. No other man has done a thing like that, and his momentary failure only made it so manifest that the power that sustained him was that of his Lord that all the rest worshipped Him as the Son of God. They got a great glimpse of His glory, and when arrived at the land of Gennesaret tribute was paid by the people to His grace as well as His power. The diseased flocked to His presence, and their faith was not misplaced, for **as many as touched Him were made perfectly whole**. True Divine healing means 100 per cent. cure in 100 per cent. of the cases! A perfectly wonderful state of things!

Into this lovely scene intruded scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem with their complaint and question as to the non-compliance of the disciples with the tradition of the elders as to the

washing of hands. Just imagine the scene. The Son of God dispensing healing on every hand in the fulness of Divine grace, and these men, utterly blind to all that was happening, breaking in with their point of order. Blinded by legal technicalities, they could not perceive Divine grace working in power. Such a frame of mind might seem incredible did we not see the same feature displayed to-day by the Pharisaic mind, which still occupies itself with points of this kind, based upon tradition and common usage and not on the plain and definite word of God.

The Lord's reply to these men emphasizes the difference between "the commandment of God," and "your tradition" (15. 3). These traditions of the elders were explanations, amplifications and inferences drawn from the law by venerated teachers of old time. They dominated the minds of the Pharisees and quite beclouded the law of God; so much so that they transgressed the law to keep their tradition. The Lord charged them with this, and gave an illustration of it as regards the fifth commandment. Their tradition as regards gifts, professedly devoted to God, completely nullified that commandment. The "pious" and "orthodox" Jew of to-day has his mind filled with the Talmud, which is built up from these traditions, and it is like a veil, shrouding from his mind the true word of God.

Let us take care lest we fall into a similar snare. We may thankfully avail ourselves of the teachings of God's servants, but using them rightly we shall be led back to the fountain-head, even Scripture itself. It would not be difficult to turn the teachings of the best of God's servants into a kind of Talmud. Then we should have them as a sort of smoke screen, hiding from us the pure Word of God, just as the Talmud blinds the Jewish mind to the real force of the Old Testament.

This kind of thing, pushed as it was by the Pharisees to its extreme limits, stirred our Lord to a strong exposure of its evil. They were hypocrites, and

He told them so plainly. They came under Isaiah's scathing denunciation, for this type of religious wickedness is always to be found with men who have hearts far from God and yet honour Him with their lips, whilst putting their own precepts and commandments in the place of His word. All such nominal worship is empty and in vain, yet it is not difficult for a true believer to get entangled in such things to-day.

Having exposed the Pharisees to their faces, the Lord turned to the people to warn them as to the error which lay at the root of this hypocrisy—the assumption that defilement is imposed upon men from without, rather than generated within: that it is physical rather than spiritual. The defiling thing is what comes out of a man's mouth, expressing what is in his heart. The heart of man is the fountain-head of defilement. Solemn fact! The Pharisees of course were offended at such teaching, which cut at the root of all their ceremonial observances, but that only showed that they were no plants of God's planting. Their end was to be rooted up. They were blind themselves and misleading others who were blind also. God would deal with them in His government, and the disciples were to leave them alone and not retaliate.

But what the Lord had just said sounded strange even to the disciples; so Peter asked for an explanation, treating it as a parable. This called forth a rebuke—though a gentle one—from the Lord. The fact was that none, not even the best of them, saw much beyond the letter of the law with its offerings and ceremonial regulations, and hence they had very little sense of its convicting power. They were concerned as to what went into their mouths, in order that they might be ceremonially clean. The law, if spiritually understood, concerns itself with the state of the heart, as the Lord had showed in His sermon on the mount. The evil things of verse 19 proceed out of the heart, and it is significant that evil thoughts head the list, for that is

where they all begin. Thus the Lord exposed the evil which is in the heart of man.

He proceeded, in the case of the woman of Canaan, to reveal the goodness which is in the heart of God. Divine grace was ready to flow out freely without respect of persons, so that Gentile as well as Jew might receive it; one thing only was needful on the part of the recipient—honesty of heart. Now the woman addressed Jesus as the Son of David in presenting her plea for mercy. She came as though she were one of the people of Israel, thinking perhaps that by so doing she stood a better chance of being heard. There was a measure of insincerity in this, and hence "He answered her not a word."

But though there was insincerity there was also such earnest persistence of faith that the disciples intervened because of her cries, and this led to the Lord's words in verse 24, which cast some light on her mistake. She now presented her plea simply on the ground of her need, saying, "Lord help me;" and this led to yet more searching words from the Lord. His mission was to the house of Israel, who were spiritually lost, yet after all they were in the place of children, whereas the Gentiles were in the place of the dogs, unclean and outside the realm of God's dealings. Here was a test indeed! Would she throw away the last shred of pretence and humbly take her true place?

She did so in very striking fashion. Her reply, in verse 27, was saying in effect, "I am indeed but a Gentile, yet amongst men there is a sufficient surplus for the dogs to feed, and I am sure the heart of God is not more straitened than the heart of man." In this reply Jesus instantly detected great faith, and acknowledged it, giving her all her desire. Thus for the second time did He discover great faith and point it out. In both cases—the centurion in chapter 8, and here—it was a Gentile that displayed it; and in both cases it was allied with the condemna-

tion of self. "I am not worthy," said the centurion: "I am but a dog," in effect said the woman here. It is ever thus: high thoughts of self go with little faith, and low thoughts of self with great faith. Let us search and see if the explanation of the smallness of our faith lies just here.

The heart of God was indeed larger than the woman imagined. She, though a dog, obtained a large crumb from the table; but presently the whole feast would be sent to the dogs, for this is the force of Paul's announcement in Acts 28. 28. Still, much had to transpire before that announcement could be made, and in our Gospel we see the beginnings of the wonderful transition. In the remainder of our chapter we see further striking manifestations of the heart of God. The mercy that blessed a Gentile woman was equally at the disposal of the afflicted multitudes of Israel. The multitude had but to bring their needy ones and "cast them down at Jesus' feet" for them to be healed in such a way that their minds were directed to the God of Israel, and they glorified Him.

This display of power, exercised in Divine mercy, was so attractive that the multitudes long outstayed their available food supplies, and in their need Jesus again manifested the compassion of the heart of God. There was a recurrence of the situation recorded in only the previous chapter, and yet apparently the disciples had no expectation that the Lord would act just as He had done before. In them we can see our own lack of faith exemplified. It is comparatively easy to remember how the Lord has acted in days that are past; it is another thing to count on His acting to-day, in the assurance that He is ever the same. Still, lack of faith on our side is no insuperable barrier to action on His side. He again took their small resources and multiplied them into more than a sufficiency. Again there was food for all, and an overplus. Such is the compassion of the heart of God.

The Pharisees now renewed their at-

tack, combining with their ancient foes, the Sadducees, for this purpose. The "sign from heaven" was merely a catch, being just the kind of thing that the Sadducees, with their materialistic notions, would never accept. In reply the Lord pointed out that they were quite good judges of material things seen in the face of the sky, but quite blind to the "signs of the times," which need spiritual discernment for their apprehension. Being "wicked and adulterous" they had no spiritual perception, and hence such signs as God gives were no use to them. As He had said before (12. 39), there remained "the sign of the Prophet Jonas," namely, His own death and resurrection. With that word He left them. When that great sign took place they used all their craft and their money in an effort to nullify it; as we see in the last chapter of this Gospel.

From these men the Lord turned to His disciples with words of warning. They were to beware of their "leaven." This warning the disciples took in a material sense at first, their misunderstanding being helped on by their omission to take bread. Yet they should not have had any thought on that score in the light of the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand. At last they understood that by "leaven" the Lord meant "doctrine." It is evident therefore that though the true disciple could never be either Pharisee or Sadducee, he may be leavened by their doctrines—by either or by both.

The leaven of the Pharisee was that type of religious hypocrisy that lays all the stress on things outward and ceremonial. The leaven of the Sadducee was pride of intellect which elevates human reason into the place of sole judge, and waves aside God's revelation and faith. How much Christendom is leavened by both these things is sadly apparent to-day. Ritualism is rampant on the one hand, and rationalism, or "modernism," on the other, and not infrequently both are blended and the rationalistic ritualist is the product. The Lord's warning against them is supple-

mented by the Apostle Paul in Colossians 2. In verse 8 of that chapter we find his warning against rationalism, and in verses 16, 18, 20—22, against ritualism in various forms, and we are shown how these things divert us from Christ and prevent us from "holding the Head."

It is significant that in our chapter the Lord's warning against both comes just before the record of His visit to Caesarea Philippi, and of the question He raised with His disciples there. In this place He was at the extreme northward limit of the land, and as far away from the haunts of these men as possible. Who was He? That was the supreme question. The answers given by the people were various and confused, and they were not sufficiently interested to make sober enquiry. But appealing more directly to His disciples Peter was able, as taught of God, to give a clear reply, which brought to light the Rock on which the church was to be built. Colossians 2 shows us how destructive is the leaven, both of the Pharisee and the Sadducee, upon the church's position and faith. In Matthew 16 we see how the Lord warned

His disciples against both, before making the first announcement of the church that He was going to build.

Simon Peter was a blessed man. From God Himself in heaven, whom Jesus spoke of as "My Father," there had reached him a revelation which never could have come to him from man. His eyes had been opened to see in Jesus the Christ. That was His official position as God's Anointed One. But who was this Anointed One? Peter discerned that He was "the Son of the living God." This was truly a striking confession. God is the living God, infinitely above the power of death. Jesus is the Son in the eternal Godhead, equally above all the power of death. This thing had evidently come to Peter as in a flash by Divine revelation. He was not yet established in the full understanding of it, as we see half a dozen verses lower down. Yet he saw it was so, and he confessed it.

Do we confess this too? And do we really understand its significance? If we do, we have indeed found an impregnable Rock, and like Peter we are blessed indeed.

He Cometh.

"I come quickly." Blest assurance!
 Lord! to meet Thee I arise,
 'Tis Thine own—Thy special promise;
 "Even so," my heart replies.
 In this scene where all disown Thee,
 I, a part of Thee, still roam;
 Left to serve Thee here while list'ning,
 For the "shout" to call me home.

Come, Lord Jesus, claim Thy people,
 Here we wait and watch for Thee;
 Thy blest voice shall be the key-note
 Of eternal jubilee.
 Gath'ring us—Thine own creation
 To Thyself in Thine abode;
 Like Thee—with Thee—and for ever
 Near Thy Father and Thy God.

"And He said unto me . . . My strength is made perfect in weakness"
 (2 Corinthians 12. 9).

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

Precious lessons of dependence
 To my soul are now made known,
 And I learn Thy love's deep meaning
 While I lean on Thee alone.

THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD.

J. A. Trench

(Ephesians 4. 1—7: 2 Timothy 2. 19—22: Revelation 3. 7—14)

IT is of deep importance for our souls that we should be in the intelligence of what God is doing. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. That surely involves the intelligence of His mind. Twice, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle is arrested to betake himself to prayer; first, for intelligence to show us the path, and secondly for power to take the path; and this preparatory to the exhortations of the three last chapters. Do we know, indeed, that our path is set in the light of the glory of God. Our failing walk does not alter it. We find two things that are traceable all through God's Word, His unchangeable principles, and His grace that always keeps a feeble remnant true to Himself to the end of a dispensation.

First, as to His principles; in Ephesians 4. 1 to 7, we find the path set before us; lowliness and meekness are to characterize it. Was there ever a day that such a spirit was more called for? If at the beginning, when all was at its brightest, there was the greatest need for this, how much more now. "Endeavouring" (verse 3) has not the sense that it has acquired; it does not convey the thought of the possibility of failure, but is more "using diligence"—throwing all our energies into seeking to realize that wonderful unity formed with all those that are Christ's. Are we really walking in the sense of being united by the Holy Ghost to a risen Man in glory, even our risen Saviour? Are we living in the fresh sense of this, so as to have the consciousness of the relationship through Christ with all those belonging to Him? It is one thing to assent to the truth, and another thing to realize it in our own souls.

But, it may be said, It is difficult to act upon the truth; things are changed since this Epistle was written. Yes,

but the principles of God do not change; we are not left to modify Scripture to suit the changed state of things. All the elements of failure were already at work in the Apostle's times. They have received a terrible development since, but we have the Word of God still to guide. Blessed be God, no ruin has touched His principles. Look at the verses in the second chapter of the second Epistle to Timothy. There we read, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Blessed word, He knoweth them that are His. You and I may not be able to pick them out—this is His responsibility, I say it reverently; but then comes our responsibility in the verses that follow. These verses apply to the state of a ruined church. First a man is to **purge** himself from vessels to dishonour; a very full word in the original, implying separating himself.

The second step in the path is, "Flee also youthful lusts." Watch your own heart lest the enemy get in and mock the so-called path of separation. Then, thirdly, we are to seek out those that are similarly separated. Here, again, we are met by another of God's unchanging principles. From Matthew 11 to 14, the Lord was educating and training His disciples for the path in which He was about to leave them. He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20). There the church was to be found, and it abides in a day of ruin, although not in view of it. It was the richest resource of God from the beginning, and it remains to the end.

I want now to look at another thing—the ways of God in His grace in keeping a few cleaving to His Name in the end of the dispensation. Look at

Ezra 3. A day of ruin, but a day of God's grace that opens the way for those who had been in captivity to return to Jerusalem. A very broken company, indeed, but they were there in faith, and set up the altar of the God of Israel, with the most scrupulous adherence to the Word of God, no innovations, no altering to suit altered circumstances. Then, in Nehemiah, when the people wept, they were told, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8. 9, 10). What a moment for that principle to be first enunciated in Scripture! The Lord comes in to encourage faith, though sad days were before that remnant during the lapse of centuries.

We have nothing to look forward to but the Lord. We must remember, in referring to these types, that we have nothing to reconstruct, the Holy Ghost having formed the unity of the body or Christ at Pentecost, maintains it in that unity ever since.

Now I refer to the Book of Malachi when there existed a deplorable state of things, for while the Lord can say to Israel, "I have loved you," they reply, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" and everything that the Lord says is met in the same way, with scoffing. Yet we find a remnant in the midst of this appalling state of things. There were those who, in the face of everything, "feared the Lord" and "spake often one to another" (3. 16). The fear of the Lord became a bond to those that loved Him in the midst of the darkest conceivable state of things. It was so sweet to the Lord that He kept a book of remembrance, even when they did not say anything, but only "thought upon His Name." The Lord says, they shall be my peculiar treasure.

Again, in Luke 2, after the lapse of centuries we still find the remnant. Look at Anna, in verses 36 to 38, what cleaving to the Lord was there, even in her great age! Her heart was in the centre of God's interests on earth; and so we find the grace of the Lord still

preserving a remnant, for bad as was the state of things in Malachi it was worse here. Pass on to Luke 21, and in verses 1 to 5 we see a beloved woman in all her desolation adhering to the centre of God's interests on earth, even at the last moments of the dispensation, for in the next verse we find that the days were coming when not one stone would be left upon another. Here was faith, lovely faith, adhering to God's unchangeable principles to the end.

Now comes the earnest question for us, Is there anything to answer to this in Christendom? This is where the Address to Philadelphia, in Revelation 3 comes in prophetically. As we come near to the close we find the Lord indicating what suits Him in the last state of things on earth. He presents Himself, not now in His official glory, but in His own essential nature, "The holy" and "The true". There are two words used for "true"; it is not here, he that speaks the truth, but he that is true, genuine. Holiness must be the first thing, and then genuineness, reality, unfeigned reality. He uses His power to open the door, and we have the assurance that this open door will continue to the end. Then we have the character of those who are to occupy the open door, "Thou . . . hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." They are not characterized by strength, but by keeping His word. Oh, for obedience that having got a word from the Lord acts upon it! Those that do so will find an open door before them. In the presence of the ruin of these last days, nothing but uncompromising obedience will do, holding fast the precious revelation of Christ in a day when the enemy with all his power will seek to get it from us. He gives us His attitude, and His path, and He looks for the reflection of that attitude. He says, "I come quickly." It is not "Behold" here. He is only addressing Himself to those who are awake. He adds, "Hold that fast, which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Then the Lord addresses the overcomer—the one true and faithful to this position upon whom He puts His seal, as with the remnant in Malachi 3. We cannot fail to observe in this verse (12) the constant repetition of the little word "My", the sweet association with Him. There can be no addition to that "Hold that fast", and there will be the richest reward in the glory. I feel that the question is unsolved as

to who the persons are. Once in the path does not ensure our being there always, even as the remnant lapse back. It does not need centuries for us to do so. What need of girding up of the loins. Out of the brightest state for Christ we may fail, but He will raise up others to the end. He will find what answers to Him until He comes. May we not be satisfied with anything short of this.

Why We Should Sing.

"I have walked up and down my house many a time and wept because I do not belong to Jesus." I rejoiced as I heard those words from the lips of one who had many earthly things to make her happy. I rejoiced because I knew that her tears proved that she longed to know the Saviour, and He always satisfies the longing soul. He did it for her that very day. But I reasoned about it afterwards in this way: If one wept because she did not belong to Jesus, how much those ought to rejoice who do; if one sorrowed because she did not know His saving grace, what songs of thanksgiving should ring through the homes of those who do. No wonder that we are exhorted to speak to ourselves "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Unalterable Love.

"He shewed unto them His hands and His side" (John 20).

The question may naturally arise in the mind as to whether the unfaithfulness of the church has not affected the Lord's feelings towards His assembly, even as the disciples might have questioned whether their unbelief and cowardice would not lead Him to cast them off for ever. But how gentle was His way with them, and how significant His action. "He shewed unto them His hands and His side." Those wounds were the visible evidence of a love that had carried Him into death for them, and that love is as unalterable as those wounds are indelible. It is upon that love that all depends, and if it is unchanging in its character we have nothing to fear.

In Christ omnipotence combines with love eternal; they can never fail, and their boundless resources are at the disposal of all and each who are of His assembly.

Don't worry about your feelings about God: what you need to know is His feelings about you. The prodigal in the parable turned to his father because he would have perished if he had stayed away, and what did he discover? When he was a great way off his father saw him and he ran and fell on his neck and covered him with kisses. I defy anyone to describe it. There the prodigal learned his father's feelings towards him. It is a picture of God's love, of God's interest in sinners who have ruined themselves, of the way He greets them. It is the gospel.

NOTES ON PROPHETIC SUBJECTS.

J. T. Mawson

2. The Beast and the False Prophet

THE two Beasts of Revelation 13 will be the most powerful personages to appear on earth after the catching away of the church to heaven, and they will meet their doom by the word of the Lord at Armageddon. They will be supermen, energised by Satanic power. It is said of the first, "The dragon (Satan) gave him his power and throne and authority" and of the second "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." The first three verses of Rev. 13 describe the resuscitated Roman Empire over which the Beast will exercise authority, from then onwards it is the man who is described. In these two vessels of Satan's will there will be brought into full development the mystery of iniquity that is already working, and the climax of his deception of mankind which began in Eden will be reached. He will receive at last that which he has craved from the beginning—the worship of men as though he were God (verse 4); and he will incite his worshippers to fight against the Lamb whom he knows is the Heir to the earth by a twofold right.

The first Beast is termed the Beast always in the Revelation, in Daniel 7. 8 he is called "the little horn," and in the first part of 2 Thess. 2 "that man of sin, the son of perdition" verse 3. It would appear that the second Beast is described in verse 8—12 of that chapter, where he is called "that wicked", a careful study of the whole passage will confirm this, we think.

The second Beast is called "the false prophet" in Rev. 16 and 19, and Antichrist elsewhere; he is also the wilful king of Daniel 2. 36—39. With the dragon (the devil) they will form a trinity of evil in imitation of the Divine Trinity. From this evil trinity there will go out an influence and seducing words that will gather the kings of the earth to Armageddon for "the battle of

the great day of Almighty God" (Rev. 16. 12—14). It is a striking and melancholy consideration that it is among the most favoured of mankind that these men will exercise their authority—the Beast in Christendom and the false prophet or Antichrist in Judaism. These are they that will make war on the Lamb (Rev. 17. 12—14) but He shall overcome them for "He is Lord of lords and King of kings." Where there has been the greatest light there shall be the greatest darkness, and this is the **great apostacy**.

These two men will be anti-God and Antichrist in the full and complete sense of the words. Nothing can be gained by the attempt to identify them in men active in world affairs to-day. Such men as Stalin and Hitler may be faint foreshadowings of them, as Napoleon was in his day; but the daring and iniquity and power that they will display will be beyond all our present conception of things. In our day the Holy Ghost is here, dwelling in the church, and His presence holds back the full development of evil. It is when He shall be taken out of the way at the catching up of the church "that the wicked shall be revealed" (2 Thess. 2. 7, 8). Then an indescribable darkness shall cover Christendom, for since men would not receive the truth in the love of it, that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusion and they will believe the lie, "that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (verses 11, 12). Instead of the light and love and liberty that the gospel gives there will be the awful darkness and bondage that the unrestrained power of Satan will impose upon his dupes.

The Beast will arise out of the sea; the sea being a symbol of the nations in tumult, a state of things easily understood after the opening of the seals

(Rev. 6), (see **Scripture Truth, March issue**). He will know no law but his own will, and will tread down all opposition, so that the nations will say, "Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?" He will unify ten kingdoms within the bounds of the old Roman Empire into one mighty kingdom. Three of these kingdoms will resist him for a while, but he will subdue them, He will pluck them up by the roots, Daniel tells us. We cannot say which of the present kingdoms of Europe these ten kingdoms will be, for the Scripture says, "The ten horns which thou sawest are **ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet**, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Revelation 17. 12). It is probable that all present dynasties will be swept away in the tumultuous condition of things out of which the Beast arises. Then there will emerge a league of nations in which there will be no dissentient voice, after the beast has shewn his ruthless power: "They have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the Beast" (Rev. 17).

The Beast will rule from Rome, the Antichrist—the false prophet, will exercise his authority at Jerusalem. There will be a Rome-Jerusalem axis, and complete collaboration between the two. The Beast will arise out of one of the ten kingdoms that will make up the Roman Empire, we gather from the fact that he "will be diverse from the first" that he will not be of royal blood, but a Napoleon or a man probably of the Mussolini type, and he will be the last of the dictators. The Antichrist will be a Jew, for the Jews would certainly acknowledge no leader but one of their own race. Three things are said of him in Daniel II. 37: "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god." He will sweep away all regard for God; will abolish all those natural relationships that are ordained of God for the well-being of mankind and fill his kingdom with unrelieved evil, and sweep away all religion except that which will centre in the Beast

himself. There is more said about him than of the Beast, and if it is possible where all alike is evil, worse traits will come out in him than in the Beast. The Beast will be ruthless, daring, powerful, fearing neither God nor man; the Antichrist will be the arch-deceiver, having no military power of his own he will seduce the Jews and the nations of Europe that shall make up the Roman Empire, according to the working of Satan with all "power and signs and wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2. 9, 10). He will call down fire from heaven and give speech to an image of the Beast and command all men to worship the image. He will proclaim the Beast to be God and himself his coadjutor and prophet.

But God has set a bound to their evil, for they shall continue "forty and two months" only. The end of their career is given in graphic language in Revelation 18. Gathered at Armageddon for "the battle of the great day of God Almighty." Not to meet the armies of Gog (Ezekiel 38. 39) as some have supposed, for they will come down on the land at a later date, but to meet the King of kings and Lord of lords, who shall come forth from heaven upon a white horse, His name being Faithful and True. And John was given a vision of this clash between apostate men and the righteous Judge of all. He says, "I saw the Beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army. And the Beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Revelation 19).

As we consider the utter madness of

men in their efforts to cast off God and defy His power how thankful we should be for that grace that has saved us, and that we can take up the words of Scripture, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from

the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 13. 14).

Christ Enthroned.

It is a red letter day in a christian's spiritual history when Christ is enthroned in the heart—His coronation day. Then He not only has a place in the life but His sway is fully recognised. It is illustrated in Genesis 21, when Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast for him. Everyone in the house did homage to him, they celebrated his right and title, and Ishmael—the envious mocker and would-be rival—type of self, or the flesh, had to go. It was a great day. The great day in the soul's history is when the heart rejoices in Christ's enthronement within it, when it yields to Him His rights and rejoices to do it; when Christ alone is heard to speak; when Jesus reigns alone.

This makes the merry heart a continual feast, you rejoice in the Lord always and whatever need arises there is no anxiety, it is like the whole year that Elijah spent with the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17), every care, every need was foreseen and provided for by the great guest in the house.

"The Lord sitteth upon the flood." He is above the tumultuous movings of the nations. **"The Lord sitteth King for ever."** He is supreme over all evil. **"The Lord will give strength to His people"** and makes them more than conquerors though beset with a thousand difficulties. **"He will bless His people with peace."** Though war rages He will keep those whose minds are stayed on Him in perfect peace (Psalm 29. 10, 11).

The more we get at the facts of the Lord's life on earth, the more power there will be. We do not sufficiently present facts, but we reason upon the value of facts. I am persuaded the more the facts of the gospel are presented to peoples' souls, the more power there will be.

"It is an HONOUR for a man to cease from strife" says the Word of God. And in the same sentence the man who will by his continual meddling keep the fires of contention from being quenched is dubbed a FOOL (Proverbs 20. 3).

It is when a soul comes to the knowledge of its own littleness that it reaches the greatness of God.

If you look to the world, you set your heart upon what you cannot obtain; you will ever be unsatisfied and disappointed. But if you set your heart upon the knowledge of God you will attain what you seek, and you will find infinite comfort and joy in it. **"He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."**

THE LORD IN THE BOAT.

J. T. Mawson.

AT the bidding of their Master, His fishermen-disciples launched forth upon as calm a sea as ever the sun shone upon. They had sent away the multitude and taken Him "even as He was in the ship," and put Him in the hinder part of it—which was the helmsman's seat. It did not call for much confidence in His skill to entrust the steering of their boat to Him on that fair evening, but they had scarcely settled down to their oars when there roared upon them a great tempest, such as the Galilean sea is famous for. But never in all their experience had those well-seasoned boatmen seen anything like this one, it looked like a battle for life, and only by skilful steering could they hope to outride that storm, and lo, the helmsman was asleep! Perfect peace in the storm!

But what now? If the helm had been in the capable hands of one of the sons of Zebedee, or if wide-awake Simon had had control they might have had hope of reaching a safe anchorage, but what hope could there be for them while the helmsman slept? As the tempest grew in violence their terror increased, until at last they awoke Him with that cry of anguished unbelief. "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" And in that cry their Master's power over the storm and His love for them were alike questioned.

At the cry of His disciples the Lord rose up from His sleep, and there shone forth a gleam of His Godhead glory. With tender compassion in His heart for their weakness, and with the quiet of an eternal calm in His wondrous eyes, and with omnipotence in the words of His mouth, He spoke to the storm and the great billows fell at His feet in mute submission as a spaniel cowers at the feet of its master.

It is not the Lord's power over the storm that I want to stress but His peace in it. "His head was on a pillow laid and He was fast asleep." His peace was as wonderful as His power. Why had those men who followed Him no faith? How outrageous their

doubts of Him were! They might have stretched themselves beside Him and shared His rest. They might have known the wonder of untroubled peace in the greatest tempest they had ever experienced, and made that night memorable by their confidence in Him.

Those disciples were safe when that great calm spread itself out upon the sea, but they were just as safe when the billows thundered down upon them, for **the Lord was with them in the boat, and His presence was the pledge of their safety.** And what of us? We have spoken of safety in Him in fair weather; we have professed to trust Him in pleasant circumstances, but what now in the raging of the storm? Verily, we are sailing on a tempestuous sea and our confidence in Him is being tested. Is He with us? Have we taken Him "even as He is" into our boats and committed the steering of our lives to Him? If so, shall we fail as these men failed?

Suppose He allows the trial to deepen in its intensity, and is apparently asleep as to it, can we still trust in Him? When Paul was in the great storm at sea, he said "I believe God," and later when in prison and facing martyrdom he wrote "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." We are not to seek for trouble, for the Lord taught His disciples to pray "Deliver us from evil" and it is right that we should desire that conditions should be such that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all honesty and godliness. And with this in view we are invited to let our requests be made known unto God with thanksgiving, and the result shall be that the peace of God shall garrison our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

But suppose the storm continues, and it is the will of God that we should be greatly tested. What then?

The Lord slept in the storm, and that sleep was the evidence that He was indeed a man, knowing weariness

through labour and the rest that sleep gives, and it is remarkable that the only time that we read of Him sleeping was in the storm. What was the secret of that wonderful repose? Upon what pillow did He put down His head? The secret was His perfect confidence in God, and His pillow was His Father's changeless love. We know that He was more than man, His command of the elements proved that; and He guided and controlled the boat even while He slept; but He was man, and never used His divine power for His own advantage or comfort. He lived in absolute dependence upon His Father whose word He obeyed day by day. His Father's will was His will, and He knew that His Father's will for Him was always right; He laid Him down to sleep in the knowledge that

God would keep His beloved in all His ways; the ever-blessed and absolutely dependent Jesus rested there.

Christian, He gives that pillow to us, and we may find sweet repose in the midst of trouble. He says, "My peace I give unto you . . . not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14. 27), and He also said, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God" (John 20. 17). Knowing this we may say, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety" (Psalm 4. 8). And if fear arises in the heart and the cry breaks forth, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" the answer is "**Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you**" (1 Peter 5. 7).

Cheer in Tribulation.

THE church at Smyrna (Rev. 2. 8—11) was passing through great tribulation. The storm raged fiercely about it and some within it might have thought themselves forgotten by the Lord. What a cheer it must have been to them when His message through the aged John reached them. Said He to them, "I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich) . . . fear none of those things that thou shalt suffer." They were but following in His footsteps and He knew the full force of their trial. The tribulation through which they were passing was permitted of God and was used of Him to arrest the spiritual declension that had begun in the church, as seen at Ephesus. It is often so; times of trouble are times of spiritual revival for they turn us to God, who is often forgotten

when things are prosperous, and the gain is worth the price paid for it; may it be so in this hour of trial.

But how did the Lord reveal Himself to these saints in their poverty and distress? As the "**First and the Last.**" He was there before the powers of evil raised the storm, He would be there when it has blown its last blast, as has been said "He is the sun, bright before the storm and bright after it." Other things may be swept away—ease, comfort, earthly mercies all may go. He abides. We have the unchanging One to lean upon and in Him is everlasting strength. Moreover "He was dead and is alive." He has met the greatest foe—him that had the power of death—but He lives and the living Lord knows us thoroughly and loves us with an everlasting love.

Have you tried God in the little things of life? Do you know Him as the Father who numbers the very hairs of your head and notes the fall of the sparrows? If not, you do not know Him. He meets the little needs, the every day needs; do you recognise His goodness in these? How will you trust Him in the great affairs of life if you do not know Him in its little things?

But He is faithful even if you have failed, He has not forgotten you even if you have forgotten Him. He is your refuge in the hour of your fear; He draws near to you when the storm rages, and if God is for you, who against you?

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

T. Oliver.

No. 4. Aijeleth Shahar.

To the chief musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, (the hind of the morning). A Psalm of David.

THE above inscription of Psalm 22 suggests a new day introduced for God's eternal pleasure as full of blessing for His whole creation (Rom. 8. 21—22). In the beautiful Oriental thought of a deer silhouetted on the horizon at dawn with the background of the sun rising in all its splendour, we have presented the glorious prospect portrayed unmistakably in the second part of the Psalm commencing with verse 22. That is the consequence of the momentous transaction in the first part of the Psalm in which two eternities meet in rapturous wonder. As the consequence of the question of human sin being completely solved by the One of Whom the Psalm speaks prophetically, God would engage His people, redeemed at such infinite cost, with the results in resurrection of what has brought eternal glory to His name. Every attribute of God was completely vindicated at the Cross!

The results are presented in the form of praise in the three concentric spheres of blessing, viz:—(1) "the Church," (2) "the Seed of Israel," (3) "all the ends of the world."

A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. That is the answer to the question in Isaiah 53, "Who shall declare His generation?" His life taken from the earth has resulted in superabundant fruit. They shall come and declare His

righteousness unto a people that shall be born what He has done (Ps. 22. 30—31). In its application the statement includes the proclamation of the gospel in all the dispensations.

The character of the praise, founded on the work done, gives the blessed certainty of His having come out of death and judgment into the light. Although necessarily alone in the work, He brings others into association with Himself in the glory. They claim His first thought after glorifying God on the cross, and His rising again. He declared His Father's name unto them!

Perfect obedience was manifested: God's ways were not called in question. "Thou hast heard Me" of verse 21 manifested the same righteousness as "Thou hearest not" of verse 2. His inexpressible suffering, as forsaken of God, gave the result of unsurpassable grace and glory to man. Although the Psalm presents prominently the sufferings with relation to God, man's hand is also evident in "the strong bulls of Bashan" besetting him round, representing the Jewish leaders. "The dogs" represent the Gentiles and riff-raff of the populace in their unseemly conduct. "The lion" would indicate Satan's power acting indirectly through his agents as well as directly in spiritual attacks!

Let us stand by the cross, and consider the meaning of it. Not with the mocking multitude will we stand, but with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with John, the beloved disciple, for we are loved even as they were, and it is the heart that knows the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. We will enquire as to the why of those sufferings and that great sacrifice. Here is our answer, Holy Ghost given through the one who was a witness of that scene, "**Jesus should die . . . that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.**"

“STANDING UPON THE ALTAR.”

A. J. Pollock.

WE are all familiar with the story of the trial of Abraham's faith which made him ready to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on the altar of sacrifice at God's bidding. We read, "Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar upon the wood" (Gen. 22. 9). There we see the most extraordinary sight of a father binding his "only son" whom he loved to the altar, and taking his knife in hand he would have carried out in a moment that great sacrifice, had God not in mercy withheld his hand. A substitute was found, a ram caught in the thicket by its horns.

Abraham himself grasped the typical meaning of this harrowing scene. There had been altars before, there had been bleeding sacrifices consumed on those altars. But this solitary case was that of a **human** victim, and it gathered up the thought that the fulfilment of this typical scene would be seen in a Sacrifice offered up that would fulfil all the shadows, would satisfy all the types. So Abraham lifted up his eyes, and "called the name of the place JEHOVAH-JIREH: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." JEHOVAH-JIREH, the Lord will provide, that is its meaning.

The centuries roll on, and we see a wondrous sight. Within view of brave Abraham's faith we see three crosses on the mount called Calvary. On the two outer crosses hang two miscreants, men condemned to die justly by their fellow-sinners. On the centre cross there hangs a **Man**. Who is He? Isaac was Abraham's "**only** son." "God so loved the world that He gave His **only** begotten Son." There was the answer to JEHOVAH-JIREH. But what the type could not fully indicate, we have One who was the eternal Son, "God manifest in the flesh", the eternal Word that "was made flesh"—God and Man, one blessed Person, thus bearing all the wrath of God against sin. Nothing answering to the ram caught in the

thicket by its horns was available to save Him from the judgment of death, so that righteousness being vindicated, divine love could flow to guilty man.

That was the most wonderful shining forth of Divine love, irradiating with its moral splendour this dark world of man's sin and rebellion.

But what is meant by "standing upon the altar"? The prophet Amos wrote, "I saw the Lord standing upon the altar" (Amos 9. 1). As we read down the chapter we are left in no doubt as to its terrible meaning. It speaks of dire judgment and no escape. The expression is symbolic, and sets forth the thought that if sacrifice is rejected judgment must flow. There are two sides to the cross. One, of infinite blessing and grace, if the sacrifice is accepted. The other, of judgment, if the sacrifice is refused. It reminds us of God's question to Cain, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground" (Gen. 4. 10).

Amos tells us that though sinners should dig into hell, Jehovah's hand of judgment would surely reach them. Though they should climb up to heaven, they would be brought down. Though they should be hidden at the bottom of the sea, the serpent would be instructed to bite them. Though they should be taken into captivity, yet the sword would destroy them. Terrible in its justice is the wrath of the Lord!

The altar, the place of sacrifice, the place where God can bless the guilty sinner, had nothing in it in the mind of God but happiness for man. From Calvary for centuries there has flowed healing tides of untold blessing. This is presented in symbolic language when in the future day the golden age of which the world has dreamed, and which has receded further and further from his grasp, shall have come with the second coming of our Lord bringing peace and rest to this blood-stained tear-soaked earth. According to Ezekiel's vision a stream will flow

from the altar, its healing waters flowing first up to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, then waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over, boundless and tideless for the blessing of the whole earth (Ezekiel 47). That is the meaning of the altar in God's intention. That is the meaning of the incarnation of the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. That is

the thrice-blessed meaning of the atonement.

But let men refuse this magnificent gesture of the mighty love of the blessed God, offered at such a tremendous cost, what remains? If Divine love is spurned, refused, slighted, what remains? "A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation" (Heb. 10: 27).

ALL THAT DEBT.

A. M. Chambers

"I forgave thee all that debt" (Matthew 18. 32).

Do you 'neath injustice smart?
Do wrongs rankle in your heart?
Ponder this, and cease to fret,
"I forgave **thee** all that debt!"

If your injuries should rise
Till they reach the very skies,
O'er them all could this be set—
"I forgave thee all that debt!"

Your great liability
Nailed your Saviour to the tree.
Knowing this, do you forget
He forgave you all that debt?

Can it be you still forbear
Swift forgiveness to declare
To your fellow-servant?—Yet
You were pardoned all that debt!

"I forgave thee!"—Blessed Lord
Write upon my heart this word!
Cause me never to forget
"I forgave **THEE** all that debt!"

The Lord's Rights.

It is right that you should acknowledge that Christ has a right to your whole being—spirit, soul and body—for He has bought you with a price, but having acknowledged this you will lose a good conscience if you do not walk accordingly. If you give way to the flesh you will lose the liberty and power of the Spirit of God, for though He will not leave you, He will be grieved and hindered within you. You will be like a bird with a broken wing, you will be depressed with a sense of your loss—having sowed to the flesh you will reap corruption. You will not be happy or in power until you have judged and confessed that which has led you astray and made you a captive. But as you turn afresh to the Lord you will gain a deeper sense of His love, for when Christ gains again His true place in your heart you will have more confidence in Him and less in yourself, and you will be delivered, and filled with thankfulness at the completeness of your deliverance.

THE LORD'S TREASURE.

J. T. Mawson.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth the field" (Matthew 13. 44).

THE Lord of glory has a treasure on earth, nothing can exceed its value in His eyes, for He sold all that He had to secure it; it is His most precious possession; He will never give it up, and no evil power that was or shall be can snatch it from Him. The world belongs to Him by a two-fold right, He created it and He has purchased it, as His parable tells us, but He has nothing in it to-day but His treasure. The world does not acknowledge His rights. "He was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not." He came to Jerusalem, to the Temple, to Israel, and they were His own, but His own received Him not. Seven centuries before He came the prophet cried, "Who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living;" and again, "He was cut off and had nothing." So it seemed, but that cutting off was the price that He paid for the world; and now though cast out of it, He has something in it—His treasure is here.

This is the first hint of it in the New Testament, but as the truth develops in it we discover that this treasure is His church. "My church," He calls it in Matthew 16, and we must lay the emphasis on the possessive pronoun; it is His. I am not speaking of the great outward profession that passes by that name—the mustard seed of Matthew 13. 31, 32—which is so prominent in this world, and which is moving on to certain judgment because of its unfaithfulness to Christ, but of the true church that the world does not know, even as it does not know the true children of God that are in it. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (1 John 3). Every genuine believer in Jesus, redeemed by His precious blood and sealed by the Holy Spirit, is a part of His church, and every one of them should be interested in their Saviour's treasure;

since it is precious to Him, it should be precious to them.

I was asked to address a company of young christians who were gathered together in a holiday resort for happy service to the Lord. One of them said to me, "I hope you will speak about the church." "Why?" I asked. "Well, Mr. ——— came to our town some time ago and spoke on the preciousness of the church to Christ; it was like a new conversion to me, and I have wanted to hear all I could about it since." That is it, this great truth opens up a new world to the soul, a world of divine and eternal love. When it is known truly and by the Holy Spirit it is like a second conversion.

The parable came from the Lord's own mouth; it is He who tells us of the joy of finding the treasure, the value of which was so great that He sold all that He had to possess it. Consider this, "He was rich," He came from Godhead's fullest glory, and He became poor; so poor that He had no resting place, no home on earth. Yet He might have taken all the kingdoms of the earth as His own, He had only to have spoken the word, to have asked of His Father, and the uttermost parts of the earth would have been His, but He did not ask, He went to the Cross and endured its unspeakable suffering instead. Why? "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12).

Every believer can take up Paul's words, "The Son of God, loved me and gave Himself for me," we must all start there, and each one is loved by Him as though there was not another to be loved, and we are never to lose this personal knowledge of the Lord's love, but in the greatest of Paul's Epistles he says, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." This is His supreme love, a love

that is stronger than death; many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it, and it is as changeless as it is strong, it is the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

We rejoice in the knowledge that His love will be fully satisfied, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." That will be when He presents His church 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. 27). Then He will say the prize is worth the price, and never will there be a shade of disappointment on His joy, for His church—the Lamb's wife—"adorned as a bride for her husband," shall receive into her heart His love without measure and respond to it without reserve, for ever and ever.

That is the future, and the point in this paper is the present—**now** in this tumultuous world, where the powers of darkness are urging men on to their final rebellion against God, Christ has His treasure, His chief interest, His church. Can we be indifferent to it? Not if we love Him. But how shall we show our interest in it? Surely not by breaking it up into fragments and dividing it into parties, and boasting, "I am of Paul and I of Cephas and I of Christ." The treasure is one, it embraces all the saints and abides in its indivisible oneness and value to Christ. So in Paul's Epistle already quoted, we read of "love unto **all the saints**" (ch. 1. 15), "able to comprehend with **all saints**" (ch. 3. 18), "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (ch. 6. 18). The Spirit of God is gathering them out of every nation and tribe and people and tongue, and they are one. In some lands they are being sorely persecuted, for the devil hates them because they are Christ's treasure, and in some other lands he divides them into self-complacent parties. And the latter is worse than the former. We should be awake to his wiles.

In this connection I will give an im-

portant quotation, "If the view that has been taken of the church be correct, we may adjudge that he is an enemy of the work of the Spirit of God who seeks the interest of any particular denomination, and that those who believe in the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ ought carefully to keep from such a spirit. This is a most subtle and prevailing mental disease, "he followeth not with us," even when men are really Christians . . . its tendency is manifestly hostile to the spiritual interests of the people of God, and the manifestation of the glory of Christ. Christians are little aware how this prevails in their minds, how they seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ; and how it dries up the springs of grace and spiritual communion; how it precludes that order to which blessing is attached—the gathering together in the Lord's name. No meeting which is not framed to embrace all the children of God in the full basis of the kingdom of the Son, can find the fullness of blessing, because it does not contemplate it—because its faith does not embrace it." (J.N.D.'s Collected Writings, vol. 1, pages 37, 38). Are these words too strong in their condemnation of party work and spirit? I pass them on without comment.

Those who are in concert with the mind of Christ will look upon all the saints with interest and love. Their affections will flow out to all whom He loves, and they will desire and labour to see them watching for the coming of the Lord; and they will desire that all may be saying in the communion of the Spirit, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

How precious is Christ's treasure to Him. We see this on the Resurrection day. On that day of His great triumph over death He did not go to the Temple and convince the leaders of Israel that He was indeed the Christ, nor vindicate His name before the Roman judge, nor claim the crowns and kingdoms of the world which were His right. No, in an upper room in an out-of-the-way street in the city there crowded together a band of men; frail, fickle, fear-

ful, and of no account in the world, but they were more to Him than crowns and kingdoms, they were the beginning of His treasure, His Father's gift to Him, for whom He had suffered and paid for with a great price, and to them He went, and spoke words of peace and made them glad by His presence, proof of His unchangeable

love. His treasure is still here, and being here it is something worth living and suffering for, yes, and even dying for, as Paul knew well when he said, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church" (Col. 1. 24).

1 Timothy 1. 15.

The fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners gives the impulse to all true service, and it must be the basis of all sound and effectual preaching. Paul did not want Timothy to forget it; he could not forget it himself; no preacher should forget it. The man who does not rejoice in it and preach it, has very little to say that is worth listening to, even though he rival Socrates in learning, and be as eloquent as Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed.

"A Little While."

Not yet the dawn—the things around
 No human eye sees as they are,
 But still on earth are watchers found,
 Absorbed with Christ, the Morning Star.

There's nothing left to fix the gaze
 But this one blessed orb of light;
 And oh, how purely beam its rays
 Athwart the dark and wintry night.

What though the darkness reign below?
 God and the Lamb to us are light;
 Thyself, **O God of Hope**, we know,
 The day is Thine, and Thine the night.

A little while! and ere the day
 In all its splendours shall be shewn,
 Thy vigil keepers, caught away,
 Shall find Thy glory, Lord, their own.

"Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us . . . and He will deliver us"
 (Daniel 3. 17).

The joys of victory are not greater than the joys of faith—a faith that rests and delights itself in the living God, and glories in Him as much before the conflict has begun as it rejoices in Him when the victory is achieved.—J. Hudson Taylor.

In these days when the Word of God is called in question, it is blessed to think how a single verse of Scripture was sufficient for Christ for authority, and sufficient for the devil, who had not a word to say in reply.

Beware of novel interpretations of Scripture: cream lies on the surface.

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 16. 18 — 19. 9).

IN His word to Peter, recorded in verse 18, the Lord confirmed to him the name that He had given him at their first meeting, as recorded in John 1. 42, and also disclosed something more of its significance. The **meaning** of "Peter" is "stone," but what is its **significance**? This—that it connected him with the church which Christ, the Son of the living God, was about to build. Thus in Christ Himself lay the "Rock," on which the church is founded. Peter was no rock. Indeed he seems to have been the most impulsive and easily moved of the disciples—see Galatians 2. 11—13. He was only a stone, and there is no excuse for the error of confounding him and the Rock, for in His use of words the Lord signalized the distinction, saying, "Thou art **Petros**, and upon this **petra** I will build My church."

The building of the church was still in the future, for the Rock was not fully disclosed until the Son of the living God had proved His triumph through death and resurrection, and gone up on high. Then began Christ's **ecclesia**, or, "called-out company;" and here was found one of the stones that was then to be built up upon the Rock. In his First Epistle Peter shows us that this is not something confined exclusively to himself, for all who come to the Living Stone are living stones to be built also on that foundation.

In this great pronouncement the Lord spoke of His church as being His own handiwork, against which all adverse wisdom and power could not prevail. What is done in the power of Divine life nothing can touch. Other scriptures speak of the church as the community professing allegiance to Christ, brought into being through the labours of those who take the place of servants of God. On that community failure was stamped from the outset, and it merges into the kingdom of heaven, of which we learned so much in chapter 13, and which the Lord men-

tions in verse 19 of our chapter. The keys of that kingdom were given to Peter—not the keys of the church.

All who profess allegiance to the King are in the kingdom of heaven, and Peter was given a special administrative place in connection with that. We see him in the act of "loosing" as regards Jews in Acts 2. 37—40, and as regards Gentiles in Acts 10. 44—48; and in the act of "binding" in Acts 8. 20—23. And in these cases clearly his acts were ratified in heaven. But Simon the sorcerer, though he had been baptized as a professed subject of the kingdom, had never been built by the Lord into His church.

The kingdom of heaven had been revealed in Old Testament scripture, though its present mysterious form had not. On the other hand nothing had been said as to the church, and this word of Jesus was a preliminary disclosure of it. Having made the announcement He at once withdrew the testimony which His disciples had been giving as to His being the Christ, come on earth to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Rom. 15. 8). His rejection was certain and His death impending. Only thus would there be laid the proper basis for the fulfilment of the promises to Israel, or the blessing of Gentiles so that they might glorify God for His mercy in bringing them into the church. Hence from this point Jesus turned the minds of His disciples to His death and resurrection—the grand climax of His earthly story. Christ in resurrection glory, rather than Christ in earthly glory, was the goal before them.

Here Peter displays his frailty and un-rock-like character, and comes under rebuke. It is striking how in these few verses we see him Divinely illuminated, then administratively privileged and then speaking in a way which reminded our Lord of Satan and fallen men. Such was Peter, and we are no better than he. His mind and the

minds of the other disciples were set upon blessings to be realized upon earth. The Lord knew this and proceeded to tell them how all would be altered for them by His death: they too would have death borne in upon them and lose their lives in this world.

This saying of our Lord (verse 25) occurs no less than six times in the four Gospels, allowing for slight variations in the wording: twice in this Gospel, twice in Luke, and once in both Mark and John. The six occurrences cover, we believe, four different occasions. So it was evidently a saying often upon the lips of Jesus; and this testifies to its great importance. It cuts across the grain with every one of us, and yet it puts in a nutshell a great principle of spiritual life which persists all through the period of His rejection and absence from the world. Only when He comes again will saints enjoy life on earth in any full and proper sense. To go in for gaining the world now is to lose the soul.

Having shown His disciples what lay before Himself, and before them in the more immediate future, He went on to speak of His coming in glory. He will then take the kingdom from His Father and the time of reward will have arrived, and some of them were to have the privilege of seeing the kingdom in miniature as a sample of what was coming. This was an expression of His thoughtful grace towards them, lest they should be utterly discouraged by what He had just been telling them.

The transfiguration, with which chapter 17 opens, furnished a view of the kingdom, inasmuch as Jesus Himself, shining as the sun, was the central figure, and with Him in heavenly conditions were Moses and Elias, whilst three disciples in earthly conditions had a share in it. The "bright cloud" which overshadowed them was evidently the reappearance of that which once dwelt on the tabernacle, and out of it spoke the voice of God the Father, declaring Jesus to be the Son, the beloved Object and delight of His heart. Peter had been speaking in his impetuous way, showing that he had as yet no

adequate sense of the exclusive and supreme glory of his Master. Not Peter but Christ is the One to whom we are to listen. Our ears are to be filled with His voice, and our eyes with His presence, so that, like the disciples when the vision faded, we too see "no man, save Jesus only."

Though Peter at the moment had but small understanding of what it all signified he apprehended it later when the Spirit was given, as we see when we turn to his Second Epistle. He realized then that it was the confirmation of the prophetic word as to "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," for they were "eyewitnesses of His majesty" (1. 16—19). Not until the Son of Man was risen from the dead, and consequently the Holy Ghost was given, would the full significance of the transfiguration be understood. Hence the Lord's charge to the three disciples recorded in verse 9 of our chapter. The vision did however awaken questions in the minds of the disciples as to the prophecy concerning the coming of Elias; and the Lord's answer showed that as regards His first coming, that prophecy had found its fulfilment in John the Baptist who had been slain, and He took the opportunity of again predicting His own death.

On the top of the high mountain the disciples had been in the place of heavenly peace and communion; they descended with Jesus to the foot where all was distress and failure—distress on the part of the afflicted boy and his father; failure to meet the situation on the part of the disciples. The advent of Jesus altered everything in a moment, just as His approaching advent in glory will completely retrieve the situation which will then exist, meeting not only the power of the devil in the world but also all the failures of His saints.

The situation retrieved, the disciples invited the Lord to explain their failure, and thus they stood before His judgment seat, as we all shall in the day of His advent. His explanation of their failure in a general way was, "Because of your unbelief," but He

added that the demon involved in this case was of a special "kind" which could only be dealt with if there was "prayer and fasting." As is so often the case with our failures the reason was not simple but compound. Three things were involved. First, absence of faith—little or no **confidence in God**. Second, absence of prayer—**dependence upon God**. Third, absence of fasting—**separation to God**, even from things quite right in themselves under ordinary circumstances. In these words we believe the Lord exposed the roots of all our failures in seeking to serve Him. We are defective in one or another or all of these three things. Let us enquire, searching our hearts and lives, and see if it be not so.

For the third time while in Galilee Jesus forewarned His disciples as to His death, adding the fact of His resurrection. Matthew's comment is, "They were exceeding sorry," which shows that they were more impressed by the tidings of His death than His resurrection. That is something which lies outside man's natural experience and they failed to apprehend it. The incident which closes this chapter shows that Peter only thought of his Master as a good Jew, who paid all His dues, and was anxious that all others should see Him in this light. When he would have spoken of it, Jesus anticipated him with a question which showed that such as Peter were children of the kingdom, and hence in due course they would be free from this tribute for the service of the temple. Still the moment had not quite come for this, and no occasion of stumbling was to be given, so by a remarkable miracle the Lord provided the exact sum needed for two payments, and in wonderful grace He associated Peter with Himself. The coin was to be handed over "for Me and thee." This was surely a token of the way in which saints as children of the kingdom were presently to be associated with Himself.

The disciples' question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (18. 1), showed that the kingdom was filling their thoughts just at that mo-

ment. The answer made it abundantly clear that the only way of entrance into the kingdom was by becoming small, not great. As the result of conversion a person humbles himself and becomes like a little child. Apart from this one is not in the kingdom at all. Then as we enter, so we progress; consequently the humblest is the greatest in the kingdom. The disciples needed to have their ideas on this matter revolutionized, and so all too frequently do we. It is evident that here the Lord speaks of the kingdom not as the sphere of profession out of which evil will have to be cast, as in chapter 13, but as a sphere marked by vital reality.

To answer the question Jesus had called a little child and set him in the midst as an object lesson. He proceeds to show that one such little child, if presented in His name, becomes a person of great importance. To receive him is equivalent to receiving the Lord Himself. In verses 2—5 the "little child" is in question; in verse 6 it is "one of these little ones **which believe in Me.**" To offend one of these merits the severest judgment, and this leads the Lord to set His disciples in the light of eternal things. There is such a thing as "everlasting fire," and any sacrifice is better than incurring that.

Down to verse 14 we are still occupied with the little child. They are not to be despised for three reasons. First, they are the continual objects of angelic ministry, and are represented before the face of the Father in heaven. Second, they are objects of the Saviour's saving grace. Third, the Father's will is toward them in blessing; He does not desire that one should perish. Sweet words of comfort these for those who have lost their little ones in early life, giving ample assurance of their blessing. The comparison of verse 11 with Luke 19. 10 is instructive. There a grown-up man was in question, who had had plenty of time to go astray; so the word "seek" is found. Here, where the little child is in question, it is omitted. The tendency to go astray is there in each, as verses 12 and 13 indicate, but the wan-

dering is not put to account in the same way till years of responsibility are reached.

Verses 1—14, then, deal with the "little child" and the **kingdom**: verses 15—20 with the "brother" and the **church**. In chapter 16, 18, 19, we had the church and the kingdom, and both reappear here. If it be a question of the little child our tendency is to ignore and despise him. If our brother be in question there is a sad tendency for disagreements and occasions of trespass to occur, and these are now contemplated in the Lord's teaching. We have definite instructions as to the procedure to be followed, the ignoring of which has produced untold mischief. If a brother has injured me, my first step is to see him **alone**, and point out his wrongdoing. If I do this in the right spirit, I shall very likely gain him and get things rectified. Alternately, of course, I may find that my thoughts needed rectifying, for things were not as they seemed.

But he may not hear me, and then I am to approach him again with one or two brethren as witnesses, so that his wrong may be brought home to him in a more definite and impartial way. Only if he still remain obdurate is the church to be informed so that the voice of all may be heard by him. If he go so far as to disregard the voice of the church, then I am to treat him as one with whom all fellowship is impossible.

It will be noticed that the Lord does not go on to say what the church should do; doubtless because trespasses are of many kinds and varying degrees of gravity, so that no instruction would apply to all cases. Verse 18 does however imply that there would be cases where the church would have to "bind" the wrongdoer, and again others where their action would have to be in the nature of "loosing." Here we find that what had previously been said to Peter alone is now said to the church. To carry this out rightly would mean much dependence on God and prayer to God. Moreover even in the earliest days and under most

favourable circumstances it would hardly ever be possible to get the whole church together in one place. Hence in verses 19 and 20 the Lord brings things down to the smallest possible plurality, showing that the potency of prayer and of church action does not depend upon **numbers** but upon **His Name**. In the case of the little child and the kingdom the important point was "in My Name." In the case of the brother and the church again "in [or, to] My Name" is the decisive thing. The whole weight of authority lies there.

Verse 20 is sometimes quoted as though it described a certain basis of fellowship, true at all times for those in the fellowship. But the Lord spoke not of being gathered simply, but of being "gathered **together**;" that is, He spoke of an actual meeting. His Name is of such value that, if only two or three are gathered together to it, He is there in the midst, and this gives power to their requests and authority to their acts. He is spiritually present, not visibly: a wonderful and gracious provision this for days when the church cannot be got together as a whole, owing to its broken and divided state. We may be very thankful for it, but let us beware how we use it.

There has been such a tendency to make this gathering together to His Name just a matter of a certain church position, eliminating from it all thought of moral condition. Then we may be tempted to argue this or that must be ratified in heaven, or granted by heaven, because we acted or asked in His Name. We should be much wiser if we trod more softly, and when we saw no signs of heaven either ratifying or granting, we humbled ourselves and searched our hearts and ways to discover wherein we had missed a true gathering together in His Name; whether all the time we really had ourselves before us, and our moral state was wrong.

In verse 21, we find Peter raising the other side of the matter. What about the offended rather than the offending party? The reply of Jesus came to

this—the spirit of forgiveness towards my brother is to be practically unlimited.

Thereupon He spoke the parable as to the king and his servants, with which the chapter closes. The general bearing of this parable is very plain; the only point we notice is that it refers to God's **governmental** dealings with those who take the place of being His servants, as is made plain when we reach verse 35, which gives the Lord's own application of it. There is entirely another basis for eternal forgiveness, but governmental forgiveness does very often hinge upon the believer manifesting a forgiving spirit. If we treat our brethren ill, we shall find ourselves sooner or later in the hands of the "tormentors" and have a sorrowful time. And if any of us are witnesses of one brother ill-treating another we shall be wise if, instead of taking the law into our own hands and attacking the wrongdoer, we imitate the servants of the parable and tell our Lord all that was done, leaving Him to deal with the offender in His holy government.

Jesus now approached Judaea again and the Pharisees returned to the attack. They raised a question regarding marriage and divorce, hoping to entrap Him. This they utterly failed to do for they were pitting themselves against Divine wisdom. A complete answer lay in referring them to what God had ordained at the beginning. Man was not to undo what God had done. This raised in their minds a question as to why divorce had been permitted in the law given through Moses. The answer was that it had been permitted because of the hardness of men's hearts. God knew that well, and hence He did not set the standard too high. The law set forth God's minimum requirement for life in this world. Hence to fail only once at any time was to incur the sentence of death. Only one thing can dissolve the tie according to God, and that is the virtual breaking of the bond by either of the parties.

It is only when we come to Christ that we get the full thoughts of God—God's maximum in every respect.

"As for God, His way is perfect" (Psalm 18. 30).

Mere common sense ought to tell us that He whose "way is perfect" can make no mistakes; that He who has promised to "perfect that which concerneth" us, must know better than we the way to forward our truest interests and to glorify His own name"—J. Hudson Taylor.

Nearness to Christ would keep us from sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart. Sectarianism is getting an interest in a little circle round ourselves. Christ can love nothing less than the whole church.

The best time to converse with God is before worldly occasions stand knocking at the door to be let in: the morning is, as it were, the cream of the day; let the cream be taken off, and let God have it. David was with God before the break of day (Ps. 119. 147). "I prevented the dawning of the day." . . .

Wind up thy heart towards heaven in the beginning of the day, and it will go the better all the day. . . .

He that loseth his heart in the morning in the world, will hardly find it again all the day . . .

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Truth held in terms only.

"Would you kindly give an explanation on a sentence in A. J. Pollock's article, 'Spiritual Evacuation' in your May issue: 'It is possible to hold the terms of divine truth very correctly and yet do so in fleshly energy, working deadness and untold mischief among the children of God.' We will be very thankful for your answer."—CHRISTIAN READERS.

YOU may have noticed how in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians he insists on the truth in love. "For-bearing one another in love" (ch. 4. 2); "Speaking the truth in love" (ch. 4. 15); "Edifying itself in love" (verse 16); "Walk in love" (ch. 5. 2). It is possible to know the truth in the terms of it and yet miss the whole power of it because it is not held in love. The knowledge of it in terms only puffs up the fleshly mind. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifies" (I Cor. 9. 1), and when the fleshly mind is puffed up it can do incalculable harm among the children of God. The one way to escape this which is a subtle snare is to allow the truth to have its right place in the conscience and heart. You will remember the words of the Lord to His

disciples, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." The pharisees taught the truth in their day, but instead of bringing their own conduct into accord with it, they pressed it upon others in a hard, legal way and made it to be burdens grievous to be borne (Matthew 23. 1-4). It is possible to misuse the truth in the same way to-day. I Cor. 13 tells us that one may have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge—have a perfect mental knowledge of truth and yet be without love and hence nothing—and a "nothing" amongst the children of God may be a great burden and a continual menace to their peace. This we believe is the explanation of Mr. Pollock's statement.

Preaching to spirits in Prison.

"In a recent issue of 'The Advent Testimony Witness' there appeared a paper on I Peter 3: 18, 19, in which it is stated that Christ heralded Himself to the spirits in prison, i.e., He proclaimed Himself Victor and Lord over those that rejected Him, and that those who had not heard the Gospel in this life would have a chance of receiving it in the next. Should be glad if you could give a simple interpretation of this much misunderstood passage"—BRADFORD.

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. They had their chance of salvation while they lived, why should it be supposed that they had another? 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." The doom

of those who resisted the Spirit's striving in that day is fixed, as it will also be fixed for all who resist His strivings in this day. 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 (see I Peter 1. 2).

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 (ch. 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 a chance of salvation will be given the dead who have died in their sins.

Dependence on God.

CHRISTIANS often depend on God while leaning on some mercy of His hand to them, as children walk by the assistance of go-carts. To walk without any **seen thing** to lean on, is a new and peculiar path; and as a child pauses and shudders, ere he attempts it, though desiring it, and glad when he has succeeded in ever so small a way; so with us. We see we ought—we feel we may—we pause—we fear—we attempt—we succeed—we are glad. God's sufficiency is known to our souls, and this must be a never-to-be-forgotten moment.

When a child first walks by himself, it is an act, the nature of which is known to him all his life long; and if it be interrupted either by accident or infirmity, how bitterly he feels it! Thus, when we have learned to walk in simple dependence on God, we never can substitute anything else for it; and if failure or infirmity (loss of communion) deprive us of it for a season, there must always be an effort of the new

nature to return to an order of strength so normal and natural to us as of God.

The Lord comfort your heart, and teach you daily how to practise walking in dependence on Himself, without any subsidy or aid. **Accustom yourself to look for it.** Try to walk, with ever so small steps, in simple rest in Him, making known to Him **all your heart.** You may rest assured that the reason why our machinery is so often or ever out of working order, or dragging heavily, is because there is some pressure on our hearts which we have not disposed of to Him. The finer the machinery, the more easily is its action impeded; a hair will interrupt the wheels of a watch. Every pressure on the soul must be disposed of to God, or its action will be clogged and interrupted, and the whole be out of gear. **Unburden everything to Him.** Dispose of every pressure to His keeping, and the peace of God through Christ Jesus shall keep your heart and mind.

"The Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim. 2).

Timothy was not only charged with communications by Paul but he had the amazing comfort that the Lord would give him understanding in all things. Many servants of the Lord are diligent students of the Word but are not effective in their ministry, because they trust more to their knowledge of the Word than the present help of the Lord in giving them this understanding in all things. They often depend more on their knowledge of the Word than seek the mind of the Lord for the time. They are satisfied with the knowledge of the Word and without intending it, make it a substitute for the direction of the Head of the body, who alone knows the needs of His members. The study of the word is necessary, and he is a slothful servant who neglects this, but to be a true help to the flock, there must be this understanding from the Lord, and **this involves personal contact with the Lord and waiting upon Him.**

THE WORLD.

J.N.D.

WHAT is the position of the world as it now stands? What is its natural positive position? It is in a state, not merely of hostility against God—not merely in its standing chargeable with alienation from all holiness, or open rebellion and outrage—but in a state of absolute exclusion from the presence of God, absolutely and definitely excluded from God's presence.

The word of God says, "**He drove out the man**" (Genesis 3). He had lost his innocence and purity, and was no longer fit to live in an innocent world. A plain precept had been given, and wilfully, and in defiance of God, broken. The matter of fact as to eating the fruit was simple, but involved momentous consequences.

Even the fact of its abstract littleness heightened the culpability of the offence; the action, looked at in itself, was trivial, and yet it was the extent of every possible indignity which under the existing circumstances, could be offered to the majesty of heaven. The less the motive and inducement to sin, the greater is the guilt of it. Such, however, was man's depravity; and the world, as we now see it, is the result of such sin.

In this excluded state is the world with which we are cognisant—full of toil, sorrow, sin, and misery. But this

evil was not of God, it did not originate in Him, this was not God's doing. But after this delinquency and exclusion was there no reaction—no return to purity?

No! the world was never again to be an innocent world; what had once become radically guilty could never again become radically pure; the very source of innocence, being once defiled, could not by any possibility become again holy. Innocence, once lost, is lost for ever. Man could do nothing. God would indeed come to put away sin; but how? By the sacrifice of His own dear Son.

The world had sinned, but was not left there. God sent His Son.

The world's feeling now is, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." And when was this foul principle exhibited? When the Lord came in sympathetic mercy to meet the wants and bear away the sins of His people. It was **then** they declared they would not have Him.

How important the exhortation "love not the world." With what purpose of heart we should cleave to "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" (Gal. i. 4).

Would that we knew our own weakness more truly than we do; we should then be driven to use more fully the grace with which Christ is waiting to supply our need. "To Him our weakness clings, through tribulation sore." He never disappointed a trusting heart.

If we are in the place of testimony—of testimony to God—it is needful that this testimony should be in accordance with the heart and principles of God—that it should not falsify His character—that our walk should agree with our position. And the more immediate this testimony is, the more jealous will God be in respect to His glory and our faithfulness. Judgment begins at His house.

J.N.D.

GOD AND HIS WORD.

J. T. Mawson.

WE have heard of an old christian who used to pray, "O God, send large and rough billows to dash us upon Thy promises." It may be that not many of us are made of such stern stuff as that; perhaps we would rather ask, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." and truly the less confidence we have in our own powers of endurance the better; yet if God permits large and rough billows to roll upon us we know that His promises will sustain us. In God and in His word we have not a refuge from fear only, but a source of strength also that can make us more than conquerors through Him that loves us. "I commend you to God," said Paul the Apostle, as he foresaw the perilous times that lay ahead, "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace."

The large rough billows are rolling upon us now. "The floods have lifted up their waves, but the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea, and His testimonies are very sure" (Psalm 93. 3) and He will "watch over His word to perform it" (Jeremiah I. 12, N.T.). When the test comes God does not fail those that put their trust in Him. "Our fathers trusted in Thee, and were delivered: they trusted and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee and were delivered; they trusted in Thee and were not confounded" (Ps. 22), and the God of the fathers is our God. Our faith may not be as strong as theirs was, but their God and ours has not weakened; He is just the same to-day. "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. 40: 28). And "if God be for us, who against us?"

Here is an encouraging quotation from a letter from a Christian officer. "I am glad to be back in this peaceful country after the inferno of Dunkirk, where I spent three days and two nights on the beach. It was brought home to me in a special way the grace and comfort which we have in the knowledge of

God, and the courage which such a word as Psalm 46 gives. This psalm was continually coming to my mind. I realised that all day and every day at all hours one ought to be dependent on God and not only in such times of stress."

Psalm 46 is one of the best-known of the psalms and has been a channel of comfort and courage to the suffering saints of God in every age since it was first written. In days of peril when the enemies of the truth seemed triumphant and Melanthon trembled with fear, Martin Luther used to say, "Come, Philip, let us sing psalm forty-six." So they encouraged themselves in God, and girded themselves afresh for the conflict for the faith.

The title of the psalm is remarkable: "A song upon Alamoth." A note in the Scofield References says, "Some have thought the Alamoth, virgins, were a temple choir singing antiphonally to the Sheminith, or male choir." And it has been said that "the singing of this virgin choir shews that even the feeble virgins may sing in a day of peril without fear because "the mighty One is on their side." It is the consciously weak that can sing this song of faith for their whole strength is in the Lord. "To them that have no might He increaseth strength" (Isaiah 40. 29).

We commend the psalm specially to the christian women; their stedfast faith and hope is a great help to the church of God and to His servants. The wife of George Whitefield used to stand behind him when the mob threatened him and say, "Play the man for God, George." The psalm does not celebrate natural courage, nor even faith, but the greatness and absolute reliability of God—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear." It is what God is that drives away the fear—God greater and nearer than all circumstances, God greater than all foes, "God for us." We may dwell too much on faith and lose sight of God, we may even put our trust in prayer instead of

in the God to whom we pray. If we know God our faith will be active, if we know His care, His love, His wisdom, His power, we shall pray and shall believe while we pray, but it will be God Himself and not our faith or our prayers that will be important to us.

Twice in the psalm we read "The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge." Innumerable hosts of angels own His supremacy and serve His will, sustained by His power, yet unspeakable grace! He is also "the God of Jacob." He bends down to the individual, even to the most wayward and fickle, to the fearful and the needy,

to you and me. His strength is against every foe that would hurt His people, His grace is their support in trial and drives away their fears. He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He said that to Jacob and the words are quoted and applied to us, so that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13. 5, 6). "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46. 10). "Some trust in chariots and some in horses: but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20. 7). "Have faith in God" (Mark 11. 22).

Grace and Peace.

"Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied" 1 Peter 1. 2.

Grace upon us and peace within us; grace because of our weaknesses and peace because of the present tumultuous conditions; grace, which is the favour of God to cheer our hearts like the bright sunshine when clouds lower about us, and peace that can make us more than conquerors through Him that loves us. Grace by day because of our continual need, and peace by night because of alarms and raids. And both may be ours—not given to us grudgingly, but multiplied. The world, the flesh and the devil subtract and divide; God adds and multiplies. So Peter tells us, and he was inspired by the Holy Ghost to tell us this.

Both grace and peace lie in the knowledge of God, not in theology, but in God. The theological professor may have neither grace nor peace, and the poor old saint who scrubs floors for a living may have both in abundance. Grace is what God in His wealth is for us in our poverty, and the knowledge that God is for us garrisons the heart with His own peace, for He is more than all that can be against us. Grace means that God is our resource, peace that He is our refuge. There is grace that meets all our failure and peace for us in the presence of all our foes. Peace in the presence of death for "the Lord is risen indeed," and grace even though we have sinned as deeply as Simon, for "He hath appeared unto Simon" (Luke 24. 34), and it is this same Simon who has written to us, "Grace unto you and peace be multiplied."

For Thee we wait, O Lord, until the dawning
Of the eternal day, and for the hour
In which the advent of the Star of morning
Shall shake death's stronghold with life-giving power;
And dead and living, round Thee clothed with glory,
With songs shall celebrate redemption's story.

"Waiting and watching may we be
As those who long their Lord to see."

Waiting implies I am ready, and watching I am expectant. To wait calls for patience, to watch unabated enthusiasm.

ALL PRAYER AT ALL SEASONS.

F. B. Hole.

THE rendering of Ephesians 6. 18 in Darby's New Translation is rather striking—"Praying at all seasons, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching unto this very thing with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." It throws up into relief the fourfold repetition of the little word, "all."

As one result of the fearful calamities which have smitten Europe during the past months there has sprung up some revival in the practice of prayer, for which we may well be thankful. It is to our shame however, in the light of the above scripture, that any revival should have been necessary. To the neglect of prayer much of our spiritual weakness and inefficiency is to be traced. In 2 Corinthians 10. 4, 5, Paul makes it plain that our warfare and its weapons are not carnal but spiritual: in Ephesians 6 he also shows this, but adds the fact that in the struggle there are involved against us evil powers of a spiritual nature who have access to heavenly places—the world-rulers of this darkness. Against these we can only stand if clothed with the whole armour of God, and if maintained in that continual dependence on God which expresses itself in prayer.

The degree in which we are conscious of this conflict depends upon the measure in which we enter into our heavenly position, as unfolded in the Epistle, and the measure of our identification with the work of setting forward the gospel, and also the "Mystery of the gospel." Paul was filled with ardent zeal for both and hence he was engaged in this conflict continually.

In all ordinary times of war among the nations Christians have been driven to their knees in prayer, but it would be hardly possible to treat such prayer conflicts as belonging to the kind contemplated in Ephesians 6. We believe however that the present war is an exception; and for this reason: that Hitler evidently acts under the direction of a familiar spirit. The British Ambassador in his book giving an account of

his work in Germany up to September last, bears repeated witness to this, speaking of "the Voice" that guides all his decisions. This at once accounts for the demonic craft, and skill that marks all his actions, and for the way in which all are directed against true saints of God, against the true gospel, and against the Jews. There is therefore a very definite spiritual side to the present terrible war, and saints do well to recognize it, and call very fervently upon God for the sustainment of His tried and oppressed saints, and the maintenance of the open door for the gospel, and for His hand to restrain the aggressor to this end. The demonic power in control can only be countered by the power of God. We recognize of course that it may not please God to act in restraint but to translate the church to heaven, thereby closing the gospel door, withdrawing His ambassadors, and declaring war on the rebellious earth.

But now look at our verse. The character of the prayer contemplated is this—"in the Spirit." It is to spring not from the flesh and its desires but from the Spirit and His desires. Now the Spirit indwells the saints in order that He may not only teach them but also control their thoughts and desires, moulding them in mind and heart after Christ. The flesh is still in us of course, and very easily we may be governed by it, so that our prayers become but a crying out for just the things which an ordinary unconverted person would cry out for under similar circumstances. Let us search our hearts as to this first point, lest our prayers become powerless by reason of their being but fleshly desires. If our minds are **well furnished** with the Word of God, which unfolds to us His purposes and ways, and **well governed** by the Spirit of God, so that the flesh in us is judged, we shall be able to pray in the Spirit. Our prayers then will bear the right character.

But this spiritual prayer may take varying forms; so the word is, "**all** prayer and supplication." God is our

Father and we may freely approach Him with our requests. There are times when our feebleness and insufficiency is specially borne in upon us, and then we draw near with a special sense of abasement and peculiarly urgent desires—we become **suppliants** in our prayers. Then, this may mark us in our private prayers, or on public occasions when we assemble together. Even in private prayer differences may occur. Sometimes we may have a season of quiet, even a long one and sometimes our cry may be shot up to God like a flash of lightning, as was the case with Nehemiah, recorded in his book, chapter 2: 4. We are not to be satisfied with prayer of one special kind. We are to practice prayer in all its wide variety.

Having done so we are to watch unto the very things we have requested with **all** perseverance. Here are two tests and we shall find it spiritually very wholesome to apply them to ourselves carefully. When prayer is thoroughly real and fervent our souls are all alive on the matter, and we are bound to be in a **watchful** spirit so that we do not miss the answer, and while waiting for the answer we **persevere** with our request. If each brother in Christ who reads this paper would sit down and ask himself how many times he has been guilty of going to a prayer meeting and opening his mouth to ask for things of a general and indefinite nature—often at such great length as to weary all the others in the meeting—so indefinite that half an hour afterwards he would be unable to remember himself what he had really been asking for, he might reach the conviction that he knew very little of what real prayer is. When a real burden is on our hearts it moves us, like Habakkuk, not only to cry out to the Lord but also to stand upon our watch to see what the answer is going to be.

Very often the answer does not come immediately. By delay God tests our sincerity. The more earnest and sincere and instructed our requests the more we shall persevere. A **full** measure of these excellent qualities will

mean **all** perseverance. On this point we have the Lord's own teachings in Luke 11. 5—10; 18. 1—8. The latter passage is specially to the point for us as it contemplates His second Advent and the trials of His saints just before He comes. God's elect, chosen for earthly blessing, will have a time of unparalleled tribulation, and He will bear long as to them, being slow to strike in final judgment. They will persist in their cries and eventually He will avenge them. All perseverance will mark them as it is to mark us; but in our case it is not a cry for vengeance, but supplication for all saints.

Nothing less than **all** saints is the scope indicated. The epistle has instructed us as to the place of privilege into which we, whether Jews or Gentiles, have been introduced. Both have been reconciled "unto God in one body by the cross" (2. 16), and therefore a vital link exists between all saints, producing vital and mutual interest in one another. The fact that the scope includes **all** does not militate against prayer for **each** or **any**, as the next verse shows, where Paul desires their prayers for himself and his service. We pray of course more particularly for those that we know, while never allowing our thoughts to be narrowed below the limits of the whole church of God. This also is of much importance to us to-day, when over vast parts of the earth the saints are oppressed by tyrants, scattered, and often persecuted.

Lastly there is the time factor. So long as we are here we are to pray at **all** seasons. We are certain to pass through a variety of seasons. In the earliest days of the church there were times of persecution, but after a few years the record runs, "Then had the churches rest" (Acts 9. 31). So it seems to have been throughout, but there is far more danger of growing slack in prayer during times of rest than in times of trouble. In this favoured land we have now had an almost unprecedentedly long period of rest; and have we not grown slack? A season of dire stress is now upon us. Had we not grown so slack in times of outward

prosperity, we should be more practised in prayer in these days of adversity.

There is no season which is not a season for prayer, since it is to be in all seasons. In seasons of sorrow, and seasons of joy; in seasons of spiritual revival, and seasons of spiritual deadness; in seasons of gain, and seasons of loss; in seasons when the cause of one's country seems to be crashing about one's ears, in seasons when its

cause is prospering; in seasons of gathering into the church, in seasons when the saints are being scattered and oppressed, and doors for the gospel are closing. All seasons should call us to our knees in prayer. To prayer of this sort the Apostle Paul calls us in this verse.

This is a season of dire need. Let us heed his exhortation, and give ourselves to prayer.

Let us not sleep.

"Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5. 6).

The saint's sleeping time is the devil's tempting time. No temptation is so weak but it is strong enough to overcome the Christian who has been lulled into a false security. Samson slept and lost his strength. We are not long off our watch before the devil hears of it; he watches if we don't.

The watching is for *Christ*, and it is the *heart* that watches; and we are to watch because we know not the hour when He will come. How foolish are those who fixed dates for this great event. If the date were known then might we go to sleep and awake in time for it, but that would not suit the saint that loves the Lord: his heart is awake and longing for his Lord's return.

We need the armour of light; the breastplate of faith and love must be buckled on to protect the heart from the snares and assaults of the darkness, and the helmet, the hope of salvation, to preserve our minds from numbing influences of the world, and from the depression that these days of alarms and war produce. The passage shows us the Christian—alert, energetic, wholehearted, triumphant!

Samuel came after the Judges. After every kind of human expedient, a knife, a hammer, an ox-goat, a jawbone of an ass in the hand of the strongest of men had proved only temporarily effectual, he by prayer gained the desired end. God answered his prayers in a remarkable way. "The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them and they were smitten before Israel." Then it was that Samuel was able to set up his Ebenezer between Mizpeh and Shen, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

"I am the Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22. 16).

Christ is that to those who are watching for Him in the night. He is to them the harbinger of the coming day.

THE FATHER AND THE CHILDREN.

David Ross.

John's Epistles: Notes of an Address

WE have sung Doddridge's sweet hymn:

"Comfort through all this vale of tears
In blest profusion flows:
And glory of unnumbered years,
Eternity bestows."

We have no doubts as to the eternal glory, that has been secured for us by the precious blood of our great Saviour, but from whence shall comfort come to us in this vale of tears? We ought to be able to comfort them that are in trouble and we desire to, but first we must be comforted ourselves and where shall we find it? Ten days ago I was asked by a former Sunday School pupil to hold a service at the burial of her babe of eight months. It had been a delicate child and would not have had a happy life. The mother loved her babe and had tended it day and night. How could I comfort her? The words came into my mind, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." I said to the mother, "You cared for your bairn, day and night, as you saw its suffering your mother-heart went out in pity to it, and as you pitied your child so the Lord pitieth His own."

There was comfort for her in that. But that was Old Testament comfort, and most blessed it was and is, but we have more; we live in the noon-tide revelation of God as Father made known to us in the Person of His Son. Not now "like as a father," but we can look up to Him and call Him "our Father." How much more should we be comforted. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus on the resurrection day, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God."

In the Old Testament God spoke of Israel, the nation, as His son, His first-born, and He cared for them and delivered them out of the hand of the tyrant Pharaoh. And God has not forgotten His son, Israel, fallen into the hands of a worse than Pharaoh. He hears their cries and will yet redeem and deliver them. But that relationship

was a national one, when we come to the full revelation of God in the New Testament it is different. Here the revelation of God as Father is intimate, personal, spiritual, vital. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," and that revelation is eternal life. That eternal life which was with the Father has been manifested in time and space and in a body and John could say, "We have seen it." "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." And he declared this that he had seen and heard "that your joy may be full." And this fulness of joy is more than comfort. Wherein lies this joy? In the fact that this eternal life is now our life; we have been brought into a vital and eternal relationship with God our Father. The knowledge of God as Father yields "fulness of joy."

John's Gospel shews the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son—the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. But if He is spoken of as the Son of God about thirty times in the Gospel, the Father's name appears about one hundred and twenty times. The Son is the Word, the full, absolute and final expression of all that God is. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" and John says "We beheld His glory, the glory as of an only-begotten Son with the Father, full of grace and truth." No one could be in Christ's company without being conscious that He was in the company of Another. The Father was with Him. He dwelt in His Father's love, and it was His chief delight to declare the Father's Name to those who would listen to Him. And it is thus that we have in John's writings particularly the great truth that those who believe are the family of God; they are His children.

John never uses the word "sons" as in our A.V. His word is children. The

thought in "children of God" is that they are born of God. There are two thoughts in this new and divine relationship: first life and nature derived from God and then the response in the children to the Father's love. "We love Him, because He first loved us." And here think of the Lord's own words to His Father, "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.**" Does not that love lift our hearts above this weary world, and could any comfort be more blessed than the knowledge of that love gives?

We have the Father with the co-relative term children, then the children in relation to each other. And that brings us to another characteristic word in John's writings, the brethren—Christ's brethren, all in whom there is this eternal life that has come from God, and is His gift. And what is to characterize the brethren? Love one for another. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Love is of God and the opposite to love comes from the devil. John says, "He that hates his brother is a murderer, as was Cain who was of that wicked one." Love delights in service and sacrifice. "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" (ch. 3. 16). The love of the Father flows down to the children and spreads out to all the brethren, and through them flows on in beneficence, in goodness and blessing to the poor, sorrowing, sinful children of men. Brethren, the world is needing the children of God to-day. What a world it is, blighted and blasted under the devil's heel. Are we moving about in it as those who belong to God's family, and are we shewing forth His character in goodness and beneficence in it?

It is said that when John was old and drawing near to the end of his service on earth he used to visit the assemblies and say to his children in the faith, "Little children, love one another." It was his one theme. They

may have got tired of hearing it and have asked for something new and novel as we do; if so, it was because they did not understand the supreme importance of the exhortation. Listen to this, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." That is the Gospel, and the declaration of the Father was perfect there. But now turn to the Epistle. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us" (ch. 4. 12). There is a manifestation of God. The world may gain some knowledge of God when His love shines out in the practical lives of His children. The world sneers when it sees the children of God biting and devouring one another, as the Galatians did; it is silenced and some may even be won as they see the love of God actively and practically manifested.

There is another expression which often occurs in John's writings. The apostle speaks of being born of God, or begotten of God. This is not national, it is individual and is the result of the sovereign work of God in the soul. It is effected by the word of God applied in power to the soul. The first characteristic of those who are born of God is faith. What says the word? "He came to His own"—His own nation, temple, people,—and His own received Him not, but to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name." That describes the wonderful thing that has happened to you who have believed. You were born "not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Whole nations are being deceived into believing that their blood is better than other blood. The worship of blood and race is of the devil and devilish are the results of it. But it is not of blood, God is no respecter of persons, you were born of God, or you are dead in sins.

Faith is the first great characteristic of those who are born of God, and faith is always triumphant. "Whatsoever is

born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (ch. 5. 4, 5). Faith is not a light-hearted optimism that urges you to pack up your troubles and smile. There are those who are doing that and others who are overwhelmed and in despair. The Christian has something better than that, he may look the world in the face and take full account of the desperate character of the times, and rise superior to all the difficulties, not because, like M. Reynaud, he believes in France, poor France! or in Britain, but because he believes in God. "I believe God," said Paul in the storm. That is faith—God known to be greater than every threatening danger, and our Father who will never cease to care for His children. Faith grows as God is better known and where faith is there is no room for worry.

There is another thing. "He that doeth righteousness is born of God." Divine love is not a mere sentimentality. It is a righteous love—God is love, but God is also light, and He is righteous in all His ways. If we are guilty

of some tricky deed, if there is with us a lack of straightness, a carelessness about the truth, we are misrepresenting God, and bringing disgrace on the family to which we belong. The Christian character must be seen in all our ways. It is to be manifested in practical righteousness, in straight dealing and in love not in word but in deed and in truth. Then we must not have divers weights and measures; they are an abomination to the Lord. What do I mean by that? Well, when I come to weigh my own conduct I am inclined to be very lenient about it, but when I weigh yours, how harsh I can be! That must not be. Let none of us think lightly of our own sins. May God preserve us from carelessness as to our conduct. "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him."

Beloved, now are we the children of God and oh, that it might be manifested in faith, and love and righteousness, in freedom from sin's domination and victory over the world. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Could there be a sadder proof of the extent and reality of the fall than the deep-seated distrust of our Lord and Master that makes us hesitate to give ourselves entirely up to Him, that fears that He might require something beyond our powers, or call for something we should find it hard to do or to give?

The real secret of an unsatisfied life lies too often in an unsundered will.

We are apt to seek the Lord more because of our need than for His joy and pleasure. This should not be. We do not admire selfish children who only think of what they can get from their parents, and are unmindful of the pleasure that they may give them.

We are ever welcomed by God our Father when we are forced into His presence by our need. He invites us to make our requests known to Him; but we remember the story of the little fellow who nestled very close to his father, who said to him, "And what do you want now?" and whose answer was "Just to be near you, father." Of course his father was pleased. And is not our Father pleased when we seek His presence because of His love to us and ours to Him?

The consecration of all to our Lord, far from lessening our powers to impart, increases both our power and our joy in ministration. The five loaves and two fishes of the disciples, first given up to and blessed by the Lord, were abundant supply for the needy multitudes, and grew in the act of distribution, into a store of which twelve hampers full of fragments remained when all were fully satisfied.

DOES GOD CARE?

A. J. Pollock

OF course He does, and far more than any of us realise. Did you ever read Psalm 136? It consists of 26 verses, and each verse ends with the words, "**His mercy ENDURETH for ever.**" The first verse says, "O give thanks unto the Lord; **for He IS good : for His mercy ENDURETH for ever.**" If the Psalmist, with his limited knowledge compared with ours, had such confidence in the enduring mercy of our God, we may well with our fuller knowledge take up the strain with triumph and exultation.

How easily we get depressed! Business may be wrecked by present circumstances. Untoward circumstances are allowed, nay, may be planned, to test us, and show to us how little we really trust God.

Job of old, not even a favoured Jew, a sheik of the desert, was intent on maintaining his own ways, his own righteousness before the Lord, yet along with wrong thoughts as to himself, and tested far more than any of us in loss of health, vast possessions, and of family in one fell swoop, could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13. 15). Can we say as much as that?

I remember learning a great lesson, the effect of which abides. An elderly Christian man in Sydney, Australia, carried out a remarkable system of evangelization. He had in his back garden a really powerful telescope. He would invite his friends and neighbours to look through his telescope, and when they were impressed, he would bring before them the claims of a God of mighty creation, and from there would press upon them their need of a Saviour.

He pointed out to me a blank space in the heavens. He asked me if I could see anything in this blank space. I could not. He then bade me look at that blank space through the telescope. To my utter surprise I saw a large group of stars in a close cluster. To my still greater surprise he told me if his telescope were very powerful I would

have seen hundreds of stars in that blank space.

My friend quoted, "He telleth the numbers of the stars; He calleth them all by their names" (Psalm 147. 4). I could only respond by quoting "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain to it" (Psalm 139. 6). I was overwhelmed. When I thought of the millions of stars, our planet a mere insignificant item in such a galaxy of wonder, and that God knows their numbers, and calls them by name, I exclaimed, "I can understand now more fully the Scripture, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father knoweth. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt. 10. 29-31). No wonder the Psalmist added the words, "**His knowledge is INFINITE**" (Psalm 147. 5).

What a comfort filled my soul as I stood under that star-lit sky in distant Australia. I felt that nothing could be hid from God's knowledge **and loving care**. If He could number the stars and note the falling worthless sparrow, He surely knew me and cared for me.

And when I reflected on the special relationship between God and myself, quite unlike the relationship simply of Creator that linked Him with the stars and sparrows—the special relationship forged in the furnace of divine love at the cross of Calvary, that God's Son was my Saviour, and that in receiving Him I had the privilege to become a child of God (John 1. 12), I could not doubt God's care for me, whatever happens.

Might I not learn a lesson from the Apostle Paul, who at the beginning of his missionary career was found with bleeding back, feet fast in stocks in an inner noisome prison at midnight **SINGING praises unto God**. At the end of his devoted career we see him as a prisoner in Rome. Paul the aged,

worn out in the service of his Master, with no prospect before him, but of laying his head on the executioner's block, yet he could write, "**REJOICE in the Lord ALWAYS: and again, I say, REJOICE**" (Phil. 4. 4).

We do well in bringing this article to a close by quoting Habakkuk's brave words, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive

shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hind's feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places" (Habakkuk 3. 17—19).

That is the spirit that will carry us through dark days.

There is a disease in children called the rickets, when they have great heads, but their lower parts are small and thrive not. I fear many professors have the spiritual rickets: they have great heads, much knowledge, but yet they thrive not in godliness; their heart is faint, their feet feeble. they walk not vigorously in the ways of God; and the cause of this disease is the want of meditation.

Meditation and study differ . . . Study is the work of the brain, meditation of the heart; study sets the invention on work, meditation sets the affection on work. Study is like a winter's sun that hath little warmth and influence; meditation leaves one in an holy frame; it melts the heart when it is frozen, and makes it drop into tears of love.

We had being in God's thoughts before we had a being; He thought upon us "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1. 4). Before we fell, He was thinking how to raise us. We had the morning of His thoughts. . . . If we have some of God's first thoughts, well may He have our first thoughts. . . .

The devil is an enemy to meditation; he cares not how much people read and hear, nor how little they meditate; he knows that meditation is a means to compose the heart, and bring it into a gracious frame. Now the devil is against that; Satan is content that you should be hearing Christians, so that ye be not meditating Christians.

Meditation fits for prayer. . . . "I muse on the works of Thy hands: I stretch forth my hands unto Thee" (Ps. 143. 5, 6). The musing of his head made way for the stretching forth of his hands in prayer. . . . Prayer is the child of meditation: meditation leads the van, and prayer brings up the rear.

He who stooped in lowly grace to Calvary's gloom
 Rose in glorious majesty from out the tomb;
 Now a Prince and Saviour—Lord of all is He—
 Able to deliver from sin's slavery.

GOD AND THE "POWERS THAT BE." J. T. Mawson.

THE 82nd Psalm may be of some help as to the relation in which "the powers that be" stand to God. It opens with the reassuring statement, "God standeth amongst the mighty: He judgeth amongst the gods." The word "gods" stands for those in high positions—the mighty, having authority and power. The reference in the first place is to the judges in Israel, as the Lord's citation of this Psalm clearly indicates (John 10. 34, 35). But "the powers that be" in all nations are also included, for "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 3). They are His representatives in the way of government, little as they may realize it; indeed they are spoken of as His ministers, and He will hold them responsible for the way they use the power deputed to them. Sometimes He allows this power to be in the hands of the "basest of them" (Daniel 4. 17), for every sort of man must be tested that all may know that Christ is the only hope of the world.

In democratic lands it is usual to speak of "the people" as the great and final tribunal at which the verdict is passed upon the acts of the rulers; and "the bar of humanity" and "the verdict of history" are common phrases, but God is He who will have the last word about everything; every act of every ruler will be judged by Him finally, even as He controls all things now. If "the powers that be" are ordained of God, surely He can and will control them. They may determine to do their own wills; their wild ambition may result in far-flung battlefields and torrents of blood and tears, yet if God permits this He still holds the reins and says "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" and will say to them in His own time, as to the ocean's billows: "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraineth the rest."

"He judgeth among the gods" and He is supreme. This we must recog-

nize and hold without fear, doubt or equivocation, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, for it is only as we do this that we shall have confidence and rest of soul in the midst of the welter of iniquity and the successes of the evil powers that abound. Consider the alternative: If any evil power in the universe could break the bounds of God's permission, and act in defiance of His absolute will so that the final supremacy of that will would be made impossible, there would exist a throne of darkness against which He would have no power, and He would cease to be God, faith would be vain, and the hope of the complete overthrow of evil would vanish for ever. That is unthinkable. We must maintain with the utmost tenacity our faith in the absolute sovereignty of God in the affairs of this world. He is not for the moment intervening publicly, nevertheless providentially He controls all things. GOD IS, and must ever be; this is the immovable anchor for our souls amid the threatening waves. "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4. 17).

"The powers that be" have failed more or less in the maintenance of justice in the world. The failure would have been absolute but for the overruling hand of God, and if we see evil pursued and punished and justice in a measure upheld, we are entirely indebted to the mercy of God for it. The failure is there, however, as the challenge of the second verse of our Psalm shows: "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the person of the wicked?" And the exhortation is given in which the purpose of their ordination is set forth: "Defend the poor and the fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and the needy; and rid them out of the hand of the wicked." If they had done this they would have rightly represented God, for He cares for the poor and the needy. I venture to say that if the governments of the nations had attended to this business for which God

had appointed them there would have been no war. They would have had God's approval instead of His chastisement. But often the spoilers of the widow and the orphan have been and are honoured by the rulers of this world if they have wealth and power enough to bring them into notice, and their victims cry in vain except to God. It is not always so, because of God's restraining hand upon evil; nevertheless that is the trend.

So it has to be said, "**They know not, neither will they understand; they walk out in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.**" How true of the present state of things is this latter sentence, the result of the fact that the rulers of this world walk on in darkness instead of in the knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

But the time is coming when God will remove them, and judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained. Then the prayer which closes this Psalm shall be answered. "**Arise, O God, judge the earth, for Thou shalt inherit the nations.**" God will yet show to the world what righteous judgment is: "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isa. 11. 4). This righteous rule shall

obtain when the Lord Himself, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, shall take the sceptre. Then all the nations shall be His inheritance.

The Christian has to recognize the powers that be as ordained of God. To embarrass those under whom in the providence of God he is placed in any way, to join in an agitation against them, or to rebel against their authority are unchristian acts—resistance of the ordinance of God (Rom. 13. 2). It is the Christian's duty and privilege to pray for them, not for the rulers of one land only, but for **all that are in authority** (1 Tim. 2), that the people of God in all lands may be unmolested in their Christian walk and able to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. We may in this way prove a blessing to men generally, little as they may recognize it. Finally, we know that these powers are but temporary, they are necessary to the existing state of mankind, and serve God's purpose in the meantime, but they must be shaken and pass away to make room for a kingdom that cannot be moved, the metropolis of which will be the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and the administrator our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and God will judge the world in righteousness by Him.

"**Thou hast dove's eyes.**" These are the words of the Bridegroom to the bride. Is that how the Lord can address us? Some christians are hawk-eyed, keen, penetrating, quick to discern evil, making them swift to pounce upon it. Dove's eyes may not be brilliant, but they, and not hawk's eyes, please the Lord. Purity, peace, love; these are the features that should beam from us whether we look up to Him or abroad upon His cherished saints.

There never could be a break in the Lord's interest in us; if communion with Him is broken it is most surely on our side. The clouds cover us, not Him.

Yet sweet 'tis to discover
 If clouds have dimmed my sight,
 When passed, eternal Lover
 T'ward me as e'er Thou'rt bright.

REMOVING "THIS MOUNTAIN."

A. S. Loizeaux.

Our Lord said to His disciples, "If ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21. 21—22).

THIS passage has been a difficult one for many christians, to whom it seems an exaggeration as to the power of faith in removing difficulties.

In the first place, the Lord said "THIS mountain", not A mountain, nor ANY mountain. The mountain that confronted the Lord and His disciples at that time was the opposition of the rulers of the Jews. The Lord had just come into Jerusalem as King. He had driven the merchants and money changers out of the temple. The chief priests had challenged His authority, and were plotting to kill Him. He was indeed to be killed as He said in the parable of the vineyard and wicked husbandmen, in this chapter. His disciples would be left to face the same murderous power that crucified their Master.

It should be understood that in scripture, mountains are frequently used as symbols of kingdoms or governing powers, both bad and good. Thus in Jer. 51. 24 and 25, the Lord says to Babylon and Chaldea, "I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. Behold I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyeth all the earth: and I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain."

Mount Zion is a constant symbol for Israel in the good sense. The stone that smites the image becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth, symbolising Messiah's universal kingdom (Dan. 2. 35); see also Psalm 46. 2; Isaiah 2. 2; Isaiah 40. 4; Jeremiah 51. 24—25; Zechariah 4. 7; etc.

To return to our text, the question may be asked, "Was a mountain ever removed by the prayer of faith?" Yes, this mountain was removed by the prayer of these very disciples, as recorded in Acts. After Pentecost, the

gospel was preached to the nation of Israel, five thousand men believing. This so alarmed the rulers, that Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. The rulers, elders and scribes with Annas, Caiaphas, John and Alexander, in court session tried the apostles, and threatened them, after commanding them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4).

Here is the mountain of which our Lord spoke. It stood with its ancient authority against this new movement. It opposed its weight and mass against these few preachers of the gospel; what were they to do? Just what the Lord had told them to do. They could pray for its removal, and they did.

"And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. And when they heard that they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, LORD, thou art God, which hast made the Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined to be done. And now Lord behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the

word of God with boldness" (Acts 4. 23—31).

The immediate answer to this prayer was their boldness in witnessing of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the impotence of the rulers to stop the triumphs of the gospel. However the final victory was not to be won without a struggle, as it was in the days when the Lord delivered His people from Pharaoh's power. The apostles were imprisoned by the High Priest, but delivered by the angel of the Lord. They were beaten, but refused to cease their witness.

Stephen was arrested and set before the great council of the Jews. There he stood before this mountain, smoking with wrath against the gospel of Jesus. Filled with the Holy Ghost, his face like that of an angel, he gives that magnificent review of God's ways with Israel, ending with the terrible indictment of that stiffnecked people, who had killed the Just One. The issue was plain, their condemnation was complete, they had no answer but to turn in rage against the faithful witness and stone him to death.

After this James was killed with the sword by Herod. This pleased the Jews so Peter was imprisoned as the next victim, but he was delivered by an angel. Finally Saul of Tarsus, the leader and spear point of the Jewish hatred of Jesus was halted in his tracks by the risen Lord and made a vessel of His grace.

It was 37 years after the prayer of Acts 4, that the mountain of Israel's rulers and people was cast into the sea of the Gentile world. In A.D.70, Titus destroyed Jerusalem, and the Jews were scattered among all nations as the Lord had foretold in Luke 21. 24. We may well marvel at the patience and long-suffering of God in dealing with the sinful nation. In divine wisdom and grace He was saving the remnant of all who would repent, and removing them by persecution from the doomed city before the final judgment fell. When evil is in power, as it is in many

countries of the world to-day, we may rest in the assurance that God is working in grace for His own, and will finally bring the wicked to judgment.

Several important lessons in relation to prayer emerge from the scriptures we have been considering. First, Prevailing prayer must be in accord with God's will. Moses and the prophets had foretold the fall of Israel, and her scattering among the nations. Our Lord had confirmed it, so that the removal of this mountain was in line with God's revealed will.

In illustration of this principle, we may remark that in the spectacular answers to Elijah's prayers, the secret of their power is found in the prophet's statement, "I have done all these things at Thy word" (1 Kings 18. 36). God does not gratify our whims and fancies. He does care for our needs, and His own glory.

Again, there are sometimes short or long delays in God's answers to prayers of faith, but as F. B. Meyer has beautifully said, "God's delays are not denials." These delays are tests of our faith and patience, and of the reality of our need. Sometimes we find that what seemed so important, was not essential for our best interests, and has been made unnecessary by His grace.

We need not analyse too much what we ask for, however, for Jesus said, "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." God would have us to be happy children asking freely without restraint. This involves submission to His perfect will. He will choose to give or withhold for our good, and we should be happy to leave the choice with Him. Some parents spoil their children by yielding to their every selfish request. Our Father will not do so. He loves us too deeply to give what would not be for our eternal good. So let us gladly trust Him; asking freely what we desire, but thanking Him for what He sends, and trusting Him for what He withholds.

"HIM THAT SPEAKETH FROM HEAVEN." J.N.D.

Read Hebrews 12. 25—29.

THIS is the ground on which the christian stands. On the one hand he sees the full blessedness—the unqualified hope—which this voice, speaking from heaven, makes known to him; and, on the other hand, he sees there is nothing else to rest upon but the word of Jesus, which is perfectly stable in that it has been tried and proved. This cannot be removed or shaken; everything, no matter what, that is not in association with this, being liable to be shaken, shall be removed. When the voice speaks from heaven, for the removal of all that opposes it, all that is not of this heavenly character must go.

This same speaking, then, implies the deep blessedness of the believer, and his not having anything else to rest on but Jesus.

"He then shook the earth." Tremendous was the sight. The mount was all on fire, and there was a very great earthquake. This was calculated to inspire great terror.

Here we have the character of the dispensation to which we, as believers, are called; it is spoken nominally of all the professing church, though only true of those who are alive to God. They have come to this: their warrant is, that this voice has spoken to them from heaven, and that they have heard it, and that it is the voice of Jesus.

Thus then we learn from this word that this same Jesus who spake on earth is now speaking from heaven.

His voice tells us that it is the same person, the same Christ, who was humbled for our sins; who went through the world, weary and sorrowful; the same man who was crucified, dead, and buried, raised and ascended, that now speaks from heaven.

This then is the joy of the child of God, when he hears this voice of Jesus addressing him from heaven, testifying of what He has done.

It is a tale of mercy, of boundless, inconceivable mercy.

You may indeed have sorrow still as to this world; for you are in the very

midst of that world which crucified and rejected Christ, the Lord of glory.

We may be bowed down, and think hard things of ourselves; but there Jesus sits, in the calmness of conscious victory, and His words are **only** words of peace.

Persecution, affliction, and woe may speak from earth; yet the voice from heaven speaks **nothing** but peace. The voice of the Lord Jesus is a voice of peace and conscious rest. Whatever conflicts with this peace is not in or from Jesus.

We may be tempted, harassed, oppressed; but, notwithstanding that, we are really come to "the things that cannot be shaken." "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." This may indeed be but dimly seen here, but it is not less real, and it is known to be real, by the power of the Spirit dwelling in them that believe.

Thus He now speaks from heaven one whole testimony of peace; it must necessarily be the voice of peace, being in the blessedness of the results of that which brought peace.

Man knew not peace while at enmity with his Maker; and so the Lord Jesus undertook the whole responsibility attaching to His people, and has overcome all impediments to obtain their peace. And this is the only way true peace can be obtained — this is what Jesus died to obtain, and, having obtained, now testifies to the truth and certainty of it.

See then that your eyes are fixed on Him that speaks from heaven, else you can never know peace; for, in very deed, it is the word of God.

We come now to see the stability of God's promise, and the certainty of its accomplishment: "Whose voice then shook the earth." "Yet once more," etc. Have we understood this voice from heaven? and do we rejoice in knowing that everything which Satan, the world, and the flesh have set up in opposition and enmity to God, shall be

shaken terribly, even to their destruction:

But have I also heard the voice so

speaking to me from heaven as to identify me with all and everything that cannot be shaken?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Sell the Garment and buy a Sword.

"Will you kindly explain why the Lord told His disciples to sell their garment and buy a sword and yet rebuked Peter when he used a sword in Gethsemane? And how do these two passages bear on the conscientious objection to fighting?"—MIDLOTHIAN.

YOU must read the Lord's words in Luke 22. 36 in their context. It had been easy for His disciples to serve Him while He was with them. He had exercised His authority on their behalf so that when He had sent them forth without purse and scrip or shoes they had lacked nothing. But now everything was to change. He was to be reckoned with the transgressors and cast out of the world and they were to share His rejection. Ease and comfort, of which the garment was a figure, were to give place to the conflict, of which the sword was a figure. So that when we come to the Epistles the christian life is not described in the language of the couch or bed, but of warfare and the field of battle. It is clear that the Lord was speaking figuratively. They thought He meant an actual sword, but in that case, when they said "Lord, behold here are two swords," He would not have said "It is enough," but

"That is not enough, you will require one each." His "It is enough" meant that they did not understand the spiritual significance of His words.

When Peter drew his sword in defence of the Lord in the garden, he proved that he had not understood the character of the Lord's kingdom; hence the Lord's rebuke. To Pilate the Lord said, "My Kingdom is not of this world; if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered unto the Jews" (John 18).

The sword has been put into the hands of the higher powers in this world's kingdoms by God to execute wrath upon evil doers, and they are responsible to God as to the use they make of it. Romans 13. 1-5.

The two passages in question have nothing to do with the refusal to bear arms on conscientious grounds.

The church of God is not a building, nor is it merely a number of saved people, **but a body** formed into a unity with Christ its Head in heaven by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven consequent upon the exaltation of Jesus at the right hand of God.

"Be careful for nothing; 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 keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4, 6, 7).

If you encounter sorrow on the road to heaven you will get the sympathy of the great high Priest: What is that? It is the sense that the Lord Jesus feels *with* you in the sorrow, and that you have His support, so much so that instead of being occupied with the support, and much less the sorrow, you will be occupied with your Supporter.

THE MIND IN CHRIST JESUS.

J. T. Mawson.

"Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2).

"In the form of God—the death of the cross." No mind of angels or men can measure the distance that separated the form of God from the death of the cross. As being in the form of God, He dwelt "in the light which no man can approach unto; which no man hath seen or can see;" while the death of the cross was the deepest degradation to which a man could descend. There was nothing above Him to which He could aspire, for all that was true of God was true of Him. He was "over all, God, blessed for ever," and no one set Him in that place of supreme power and honour and glory; it was His because of who He was—"the King eternal, immortal, invisible, God only wise"; "The Word was God." Such He was as revealed to us in the Scriptures, and though His glory and what He is in His own Person is infinitely beyond the comprehension of even the greatest of men, for "no man knoweth the Son but the Father." yet we may humbly contemplate what is written of Him and be impressed by the Holy Spirit with His greatness whom we call Saviour, and be filled with constant wonder and worship at His condescension even to the death of the cross for our sakes. For our sakes He became poor.

Though He was so great and so far removed from us such was His mind that step by step He travelled that immeasurable distance for the glory of God and our salvation. "He made Himself of no reputation." He sought no honour for Himself; He "took upon Him the form of a servant," and that not as a great angel, excelling in strength—but "was made in the likeness of men," poor weak, frail men, utterly dependent upon God. "And being found in fashion as a man" He did not seek a high place among men; but "He humbled Himself"; for the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, to be among men as their servant. But

lower even than that He went, for He "became obedient unto death," though death had no claim upon Him, for He was the sinless man; and the death that He died was even the death of the cross, a felon's death—a death upon which the curse of God and man rested, for "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." It was our death under the judgment of God that He died. He could not have gone lower.

And He is our pattern. "Let this mind," says the apostle, "be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." How can that be? Such a mind is opposed to the very nature of men, all seek their own. We know it well; naturally we love our own way, and prefer disobedience to obedience; we grasp at what is higher than we; our ambition urges us to climb. Our pride—sinful pride—will not allow us to stoop and obey, it hates submission and rebels against the will of God, how then can this mind of humility and obedience which was in Christ Jesus be in us? Only as His life is in us.

The life of Christ was in Paul, and Christ was his pattern; he followed closely in the steps of his Lord in his sacrificial service. "Yea," he said, "and if I be offered up on the sacrifice and service of your faith I joy and rejoice with you all." But Paul was an Apostle and had seen the Lord; we say. Yes, but this same life and mind was in Timothy, for said Paul of him, "I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." Yes, we say again, but he was Paul's constant companion and was so greatly attached to him that his whole life was influenced by him and took character from him. Yes, that was so, but the same life and mind was in Epaphroditus, and he was one of the Philippian, an ordinary man like ourselves, though Paul heaped honours upon him when he

described him as "my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and he that ministered to my wants." Six verses in our chapter are devoted to the perfect pattern, to the Lord's humbling of Himself and His exaltation, and six verses are devoted to Epaphroditus and the way he answered to the pattern. And Epaphroditus was neither an apostle nor an apostle's delegate, he was just a brother.

What made these men transcripts of Christ that they were a joy to one another and of so great help to their brethren? The life of Christ was in them, as it is in every Christian, but for that life to shew itself as it did in them something more is needed. Consider the words "It is God that worketh in you both to will and do of His good pleasure." That inward working of the power of God there must be, and as we consider that saying, another comes to the mind which is of great encouragement. "Being confident," said Paul, "of this very thing, that He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. 1: 6. But that

inward working does not turn the life inward but outward; it makes Christ the supreme object of the life. This is clearly shewn in chapter 3, where Paul tells us that he counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and still counted them but dung that he might win Christ. To him Christ was brighter and better than the brightest and best that earth could give.

"It is God which worketh in you," We can always count upon that, but there is our responsibility in the matter. As the loom is subject to the weaver, and he is able to work into it the warp and weft and out of it the fine linen that he desires, so are we to be subject to God and "to work in harmony with, Him. Wherefore, my beloved," said Paul, "as ye have always obeyed . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Selfwill must be judged and checked that God's will may be paramount in our lives. In this subjection to the will of God and glad obedience to Him the mind of Christ will be active in us and so shall we do "God's good pleasure."

Change your Man.

I remember being arrested by an address given many years ago; the burden of it was "You must change your man." The speaker's subject was "From Adam to Christ." It was a needed subject and poured considerable light into my soul. We were in Adam by natural birth, we are "in Christ" through grace. But in which man is our **practical** life? With which man do we walk? If you prefer it let us speak of "From self to Christ." Self, the life and nature derived from Adam, has ruined you, but Christ was delivered for your offences and raised again for your justification. On one side of the road there walks the man that ruined you, on the other the Man who died to save you. Have you crossed the road? Surely you should turn your back upon the one and walk with the other. Whether of the twain is the more attractive? If you have learnt the truth as to yourself, you have said, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, good does not dwell." and if you have looked upon the Saviour, you have surely confessed "He is altogether lovely." Then it should not be difficult for you to change your man, to do so would be a great deliverance, and such have all found it to be who have turned away from self that Christ might be their gain.

666

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six.” (Rev. 13. 18).

This article was suggested to the writer when he read of a question being asked, what is the meaning of 666? and the answer given after a time of reflection, was, No. 1.

A GREAT many people without understanding have made many foolish guesses as to the meaning of the mystic number, 666. Each Roman, Greek or Hebrew letter carried with it a corresponding value expressed by a number, and many people exercised their ingenuity, after the pattern of a jigsaw puzzle, to piece together some name on those lines and arrive at the number, 666. In this way Napoleon, Mahomet, General Boulanger, Adolf Hitler and many others, have been triumphantly pointed to as “the Beast” of Rev. 13. Evidently, in the short list we have given, all but one are demonstrated to be false and ununderstanding guesses for they have died without fulfilling what was expected of them. The one exception is Hitler. He is alive as we write, but we are assured he answers no more to 666 than the others, who have died.

It is clear that “the Beast” of Rev. 13 in the last days, as seen in its final ruler will be the Head of the revived Roman Empire. He will therefore be an Italian and not a German.

It is instructive to note that there are two different words used in the Greek for the word, **beast**, as employed in Revelation. In Rev. 4 we read of four beasts. There the Greek word is zoon, which stands for a domesticated animal such as an ass or an ox, common animals known for their docility and usefulness to man. But the Greek word for “the Beast” of Rev. 13. 1 and 11, is **therion**, which designates a wild savage beast.

Surely the forerunners in character of such are seen in these upstart totalitarian dictators, such as Mussolini,

Hitler and Stalin, ruthless men, who set at defiance every law of God, men who have no regard for their plighted word, who glory that brute force shall crush down everything that opposes their cruel and insatiable ambition, which threatens to engulf civilisation itself.

But now to our point. What is the meaning of 666? We are definitely told in Rev. 13. 18, “It is the number of a man.”

Six is the highest number below seven, and seven in the symbolism of Scripture stands for spiritual perfection, for complete fullness, which can only be true of what is Divine, or the product of the working of divine power or grace. So we get in Rev. 4. 5, “Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices: and there were **seven** lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the **seven** spirits of God.” It is not that there are seven Spirits of God, there is but One, but seven sets forth the fullness and perfection of His operations.

This is happily and aptly illustrated by the golden candlestick or lampstand in the Tabernacle. It was **one** candlestick or lampstand with a central stem and six branches with **seven** lamps. We read, “It shall be **one** beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the **seven** lamps thereof.” (Ex. 25. 36, 37).

Six then is the highest number short of seven, six sets forth that which is nearest to seven, perfection. 666 is the strongest emphasis of this. We have $600+60+6=666$. Does it not signify that “the Beast,” arising out

of the sea (the Mediterranean), seen in its final Head, will present to the world **the** Superman so largely talked about, the finest specimen of fallen human nature, but without one feature that is of God? Doubtless such a person will be a most perfect specimen physically, of brilliant intellect, powerful of will, unsurpassed in highest statesmanship allied to the highest order of military effectiveness. When all this is seen in a man, who has no regard for God and His word, these very superb qualities, which under the control of God would be magnificent, turn out to be frightful and terrible instruments for the enslavement and misery of mankind. What under the hand of God would be a wonderful instrument for blessing to the world, under the domination of Satan will be found to be the greatest instrument of rebellion against God, and therefore of destruction of men and civilization.

In short "the Beast" in the last days will be the world's great Superman, the gigantic colossal Egotist, the world's supreme Number 1, the biggest creature the world has ever seen.

Closely allied to the Beast will be the Antichrist—"the Beast," the one, through whom Satan will find expression as "the Prince of the power of the air," (Eph. 2. 2); in the Antichrist, the one through whom Satan will find expression as "the god of this world," (2 Cor. 4. 4), the one political and military, the other religious and antichristian.

It is very illuminating to see that what we find of evil working in the political world finds its strong counterpart in the religious world. The flesh is the same wherever we find it. So we read, "little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." (1 John 2. 18).

There is no doubt both the Beast and the Antichrist will work hand-in-glove, and each will arrogate to

himself divine honours. We read of the Antichrist, "and he had power to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed." (Rev. 13. 15). It is interesting that the last of the Roman Emperors called for divine homage to be paid to them. Shortly after the Roman Empire was smashed up by the Huns and the Goths swarming into Italy, capturing Rome, and ending the power of that debauched and enfeebled empire. As it was then, so it will be in the last days. When the revived Roman Empire gets to the stage of its last and final head claiming divine honours and to be worshipped as God, the end will come with speedy vengeance from insulted Deity.

It seems that the answer to what is the meaning of 666, is very illuminating and worth pondering over. 666 stands for **the No. 1**, the super Egotist, the man who cannot be happy save at the very top, who cannot endure to have his will challenged even by God Himself.

It reminds us of the ancient story of King Canute, who sat by the seaside, and gave orders to the tide to stay its course, and not encroach on the beach where he was sitting. But King Canute had to move to save himself from a watery grave. And the two Beasts will find in a moment their power will be crushed and disappear for ever and they will find their place eternally in the Lake of Fire, along with Satan, the great triumvirate of evil, who troubled the world in such frightful fashion, doomed to their fate.

It will be helpful if we seek to get present and personal benefit from what we have been considering. If 666 sets forth **the No. 1** in the world's history, one wonders how far No. 1 bulks with ourselves. 666 is very bad, but what of 66 and 6? There are degrees in this matter. But wherever No. 1 bulks in any measure it is the result

of the flesh working, and the flesh is always antichristian. No. 1 is the troubler in the world, and he is always a troubler. One of the most scathing things that has ever been said of Satan is that he would rather be first in Hell, than second in Heaven.

We have seen things like this in our time, where a Christian man would rather be head of a tiny fragment than second in something larger. Such console themselves with the reflection that the divine path is narrow, and even if only two or three are found faithful, they claim to be among the number, and plume themselves that they are superior to everything around them in the way of Christian profession, and would be defiled by touching anything outside their tiny fragment.

Was not Diotrophes a case in point? We are told that he loved to have the pre-eminence in the church. He was in his own little way 666. He sought to disparage even the Apostle John, prating against him with malicious words. He refused to receive any of the brethren who might perchance rival him. He forbid those who would welcome such. He was

ruthless, even casting out of the Church any that disputed his word or position.

Alas! Diotrophes did not die a bachelor. His progeny are to be found in all circles. Wherever they are found they are troublemakers. By their very nature they are such.

May we be warned as we consider such. May we seek to drop No. 1, and be characterised by the spirit of Him, who was meek and lowly of heart.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matt. 5.5). “Thy gentleness hath made me great.” (Ps. 18. 35). “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Matt. 11. 29).

How diametrically opposed this is to the spirit at work to-day, soaking the very earth with blood and tears. When the Prince of peace comes,

“He shall come down like showers
Upon the new-mown grass,
And joy and hope, like flowers,
Spring up where He doth pass;
Before Him on the mountains,
Shall Peace! the herald, go;
And righteousness, in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.”

Lord, hasten that day.

God our Refuge and Strength.

J.N.D.

Psalm 46 gives us one most simple truth, but a most solemn and weighty one—much needed by Christians in the heavings of this world, when the tendency is to seek relief by human effort. “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; we can be still. For no matter what power or swelling there may be if GOD be there, He is our refuge. Only we must wait and wait until He comes in; and here it is that faith is tried. Hence “and know that I am GOD.”

This implies that nothing else is a refuge 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 wholly left 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.” Only we must wait. Human effort shuts this out.

There are duties, and when there are, do them, when there is not a duty our path is to be still. Human efforts prove want of faith. Human effort spoils all. In His own time and way God will come in.

THE FATHER AND THE CHILDREN.

David Ross.

Scripture read. 1 John 2. 3-28; 3. 6-28; 4. 12-16.

CONTINUING our subject of the family of God. In a family there is union of life derived from a common parentage. This is so in God's family; all who are born of God, being His children, are brethren having one life. There are three things that characterise this life. An able teacher of the Word has given them in three Latin words, that I will pass on to you. First **Cognitio**, which results in **Communio** which is followed by **Constancia**. The three run together. First knowledge, then communion, then continuance. We know Him, we are in Him and we abide in Him. We started our Christian life with the knowledge of God—the babes know the Father. It was here that John began. He stood with the Baptist and heard him say "Behold the Lamb of God:" The word behold means the look of knowledge, of recognition, it is more than a passing glance. And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments, and that knowledge leads to communion. "Whoso keepeth His word in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." And this communion or fellowship will abide for ever.

God sent His Son into the world not only that sinners might be saved, but that they might know God, and be brought into fellowship with Him. His delights were with the children of men, but communion was broken with them in Eden, it is now restored on a higher and more blessed plane, not now between the Creator and His creatures merely, but between the Father and His children.

In answer to the Lord's question to the disciples, "What seek ye," John had answered, "Master, where dwellest thou?" The word is "abidest," John uses it 46 times in his Gospel, and 26 times in his Epistles. It is the same word that our translators have translated by four or

five different words. The Lord's answer to John's enquiry was, "Come and see." What an invitation, for where did He dwell? "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." That was His abiding place, it was His eternally, and it is now open for us. Oh, that we might be led into the teaching of John! The Word became flesh, He entered into the world and dwelt among us that we might know the Father whom He revealed, that we might enter through Him into fellowship with the Father.

Notice the wonderful reciprocity of this fellowship. In the Gospel we have the Lord saying "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me." In the Epistle we read "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Who can unfold the grandeur of that? Why is our conception of these glorious things so poor? The efficient and initial cause of this communion is our knowledge of God; it is life eternal to know Him, the only true God and Jesus Christ His sent one. To have communion with Him you must know Him, and the more communion you have with Him the better you know Him. You know Him and the more you know the more capable you are of communion with Him, and those who are "farthest ben" like John and Paul are those who are the more earnestly seeking to know Him better, the cause of it all.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." If you have confessed Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God, not as a part of a creed, or an item in the Catechism, but in the deep consciousness of the soul, it was God's gracious work in you. You did not arrive at that confession by a process of reasoning. Simon Peter was the first to make the confession and Jesus said to Him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona,

for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." But if that confession is real and vital you will be obedient to Him. "Hereby we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him." "Ye are my friends," saith the Lord, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." That is a very simple but true chorus.

"Trust and obey
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus
But to trust and obey."

There is another thing that accompanies this confession of Jesus as the Son of God; it is love. "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." It could not be possible for me to be in communion with God who is love if I am cherishing hatred in my heart. There is a further condition "If that that ye have heard from the beginning shall abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and the Father." What was from the beginning? The revelation of the Father in the Son, given to us in the Word of God. Now what is your measure of communion with the Father and the Son? It is the measure in which you confess, and obey, and love, and keep, and cherish the word of God in your heart. I have said these are the conditions. That is not a very good word to use, because the condition is sometimes the cause. There's a mutuality about this. It is confessing because abiding, and abiding because confessing. Obeying because abiding, and abiding because obeying, loving because abiding, and abiding because loving. Knowing the word of God and having it abide within the heart because having fellowship with the Father and the Son, and that because the word of the revelation of Father and Son is abiding in the heart.

Someone may say, this is too much

in the air for me, I am a very pedestrian Christian. I must go on foot. But whatever sort of Christian you are, you cannot enter into these things apart from the Spirit of God. And that brings me to another point of the greatest importance. "Hereby know we that we abide in Him because He hath given us of His spirit" and again "Hereby we know He abideth in us by the Spirit He hath given us." Your dog may obey your word but it does not know your thoughts or enter into your mind. "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Your intellectual powers are useless here, no system of theology can enlighten you as to the vital knowledge of God. If you have not the Spirit of God the things of God are a closed book to you. But the simplest of believers having received the Spirit enters into this knowledge which leads into communion with God. It is by the Spirit that you know you are one of God's children. The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. It is by the Spirit that we confess and obey and love and have the word of God abiding in us. The Spirit is the power by which we have fellowship with the Father and the Son.

What are the consequences of this wonderful communion? The first is continuance. "And now, little children, abide in Him." Be at home in Him. There are some people who are never at home even when they are at home. Here is a lad who does not cultivate love of home; he does not like it, it may be his fault or it may be partly his father's, but if we are not at home in God the fault is entirely on our side. But communion begets confidence and continuance. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in My love." Can we be indifferent to such words as these? And yet knowing how changeable how fickle, our hearts are, we do need to pray.

"Hold our hearts. O Lord, we
pray Thee,

By and in Thy love.”

What rest of heart there is in the knowledge of the Father and the Son, and what confidence this knowledge yields. Have we all got it? “Little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear (the Lord Jesus) we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.” Confidence not only at His coming, but because He is coming. Confidence is the one thing that this devil-oppressed world lacks. Men’s hearts are failing them for fear for they have no assurance either as to the present or the future. We do not know what may happen here, but we do know that nothing can change this wonderful relationship with the Father and the Son. In other lands the worst has happened, homes have been destroyed and families scattered—it may come to us, which God forbid—but even if it does we know that neither things present nor things to come, on land, on sea or in the air, neither the power of men or the malice of hell can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, or dissolve the family bond into which He has brought us.

Bearing much fruit is a consequence of this abiding in Him. First is the reproduction of the life of Christ in

us. Is that possible? It is if we abide in Him. “He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.” What an attractive cluster of fruit that is that is called the fruit of the Spirit. “Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, self control.” It is all Christ and gives great pleasure to the Father, and it makes clear the word “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, as he walked.” And that carries us back to John’s introduction to his Lord. “Again the next day after John the Baptist stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith “Behold the Lamb of God.” To walk as He walked, is to be like Him.

“Like Him in faith, in meekness, love
In every beauteous grace,
From glory into glory changed,
Till we behold His face.”

Little children, abide, abide in that which was from the beginning, find your dwelling place in Him who is your Father and your God; let His bosom of love be your place of communion and your confidence, then will you continue in the truth, bearing much fruit, and thereby glorifying the Father.

The Blood of Jesus.

Of the blood of the passover lamb in Egypt, God said two things. “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” That word to the children of Israel would give them peace of heart on the night of judgment. But He also said “The blood shall be to you for a token.” It was to them a token of God’s deep interest in them and of His determination to save them righteously. So the blood of Jesus speaks in two directions. It speaks to God of a sacrifice accomplished and justice satisfied, and the knowledge of that gives peace to the heart. But it speaks to us also, it is to us the token of God’s great love, and of the length that He would go for our Salvation and to secure us for Himself. The blood of Jesus has this two-fold witness, righteousness and love. What peace it gives!—He made peace by the blood of “His cross,” but with what strong bonds it binds us to the heart to God, it tells the measure of His love. “We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son,” and our hearts find rest and satisfaction in His love. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Have Faith in God.

HAVE faith in God! for He who reigns on high
 Knows well thy grief, and hears the suppliant's cry;
 Still to His arms, thine only refuge, fly.
 Have faith in God!

Fear not to call on Him, O soul distressed!
 Thy sorrows burden drives thee to His breast,
 He who is oftenest there is oftenest blest,
 Have faith in God!

Lean not on human reeds; slake not thy thirst
 At earthly cisterns, seek His kingdom first,
 Though man and Satan fright thee with their worst,
 Have faith in God!

Go tell Him all. The sigh thy bosom heaves
 Is heard in heaven. Strength and grace He gives
 Who gave Himself for thee. Our Jesus lives.
 Have faith in God!

The Body is the Lord's.

Your body is the Lord's; He paid a great price for it, and has taken possession of it by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power by which the Lord will accomplish His will in you, so that in your very body in which Satan sowed every evil thing to bring forth a harvest for your dishonour and to bring upon you the judgment of God, He may now bring forth the fruit of the Spirit; your body may be the garden of the Lord. You get it all in the first Epistle to the Corinthians—"Ye are God's husbandry"—His tillage, His garden, chapter 3. 9. In chapter 6. 19, "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." It is a great point in Christianity, that the body is the Lord's. Paul understood this when he said. "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." Phil 1. 20.

There is nothing more comforting than the perfect confidence that the knowledge that God is my Father gives. If I think of God as judge and who will judge me, I cannot let the affections have full play. The children of God will never come into judgment.

Saviour and Lord, Thou wilt sustain
 The humble mourner with Thy might;
 Who looks to Thee, mid joy or pain.
 And findeth not his burden light.
 Peace and repose possess the soul
 That walks beneath Thy blest control.

Sweet thought, we have a Friend above,
 Our weary, faltering steps to guide,
 Who follows with the eye of love
 Each sheep and lamb for whom He died.

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 19 : 10—21 : 22.)

THE Lord's teaching as to divorce was new and surprising even to His disciples, and prompted their remark recorded in verse 10. This in its turn led Him to declare that marriage is the normal thing for man, and the unmarried state the exceptional, as is also inferred by Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 7 : 7. If "it is given" to a man, then "it is good not to marry;" but normally, "Marriage is honourable in all" (Heb. 13 : 4).

Following this, the Lord gave to children their true place. The disciples manifested the spirit of the world when they treated them as of no importance, so much so that the bringing of them was an intrusion. Thus they showed that they had not as yet learned the lesson that He taught in the verses that open chapter 18. The Lord on the contrary laid His hands on them in blessing and uttered the memorable words, "Forbid them not, to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Next comes the case of the rich young man who claimed to have kept the law, as regards the commandments relating to one's duty towards one's neighbour. The Lord did not deny his claim, so apparently he had been blameless as far as outward observance was concerned. He was much mistaken however in thinking that by doing some good thing he could have eternal life. Coming on that ground, Jesus at once tested him, and under the test he utterly failed. "What lack I yet?" was his question, and the answer was designed to show him that he lacked the **faith** which discerned the glory of Jesus, and which consequently would have moved him to give up everything in order to follow Him. He approached Jesus as "Good Master," and the Lord would not accept the epithet "good," unless it were given Him as the fruit of acknowledging His Deity. "There is

none good but one—God," so that if Jesus was not **God** He was not **good**. If the young man had recognized the Deity of the One who said to him, "Follow Me," his "great possessions" would have been as nothing to him, and he would gladly have followed Jesus. Have we each so recognized the glory of Jesus as to be lifted clean out of the love of mere earthly things?

The Lord now pointed out to His disciples how tenacious a hold earthly riches have on the human heart. The rich enter the kingdom of God with great difficulty. Among the Jews wealth was regarded as a sign of God's favour; hence this saying also overturned the thoughts of the disciples and greatly astonished them. They felt that nobody could be saved if the rich had such difficulty. This led to an even stronger statement. Salvation is a thing not merely difficult or improbable to man, but **impossible**. Only if the power of God be brought in, is it possible.

We may summarize verses 10-26 by saying that the Lord shed His light upon marriage, children and possessions: three things that occupy so much of our lives in this world, and in each case the light He shed overturned the thoughts which previously the disciples had entertained—see, verses 10, 13, 25.

Peter seized upon the Lord's words, desiring a definite pronouncement as to what reward was offered to those who like himself had followed the Lord. The reply made it plain that there is to come "the regeneration;" that is, a wholly new order of things, when the Son of Man should be no longer rejected but be seated on the throne of His glory, and that then the disciples should also be enthroned and vested with powers of administration over the twelve tribes of Israel. In that age the saints are going to judge the world, and here is indicated the

place of special prominence reserved for the Apostles. It is also indicated that all who have given up earthly relationships and joys for His Name will receive a hundredfold together with everlasting life. The life which the rich young man desired, and missed by not following Christ, shall be theirs.

The last verse of the chapter adds a word of warning. Many who are first in this world will be last there, and vice versa; for God's thoughts are not as ours. Chapter 20 opens with the parable of the householder and his labourers, which in verse 16 brings us back with fresh conviction to just that point. The parable also has direct reference to Peter's question, which asked for a definite promise of reward, since it contrasts the difference of treatment meted out by the householder between those who served him as the result of a bargain, and those who did so without any bargain, but with simple trust that he would give them "whatsoever is right." We can all well understand the feelings of those earliest workers, and the complaint they lodged of unfair treatment since they had borne the burden and heat of the day. What workman is there who would not be inclined to reason just as they did? But the "goodman of the house" placed great value on that **confidence** in the rightness of his mind and **faith** in his word, which characterized the later comers. He had a right to do what he willed with his own money, and so highly did he rate faith that he gave to the last just what he did to the first. And in distributing the money he began with the last. Thus the last were first and the first last.

Here then is a lesson that we all take a long time to learn. The Lord will not undervalue work, but He will value even more highly the simple faith in Himself—His rightness, His wisdom, His word—which will go on serving Him, even though late in the day, without much thought as to reward, or any attempt at a bargain. The

faith and love which would move any to serve Him thus is sweeter to Him than the actual work they may be able to accomplish. We shall profit if we read, mark, learn and inwardly digest this parable.

Jesus was now on His way to Jerusalem for the last time, and He once more pressed upon His disciples His approaching death and resurrection. As far as the record of this Gospel is concerned, this is the fourth time He did so since His great prediction as to building His Church, in chapter 16. Here there is a wealth of detail in few words. He predicts His betrayal by Judas, His condemnation by the Sanhedrim, His being delivered by them to Pilate and his soldiers, the mocking, the scourging, the crucifixion, and finally His resurrection—all in the compass of two verses.

Yet the minds of the disciples were still filled with anticipation of the speedy establishment of the kingdom; so much so that James and John were brought by their mother with a request for places of prominence in it. Jesus answered by a question which indicated that honour in the coming kingdom will be proportionate to the measure in which one may have been identified with Him in His sufferings and rejection. At the same time He indicated that rewards in the kingdom were to be given according to the Father's award. The Son of Man Himself is going to receive the kingdom from the hands of the Father, as had been indicated in Psalm 8, and Daniel 7, so the saints too will receive their place in the kingdom at the Father's hand. The recollection of this will help us to understand the Lord saying of reward, it "is not mine to give."

This is the only case, as far as we remember, where a parent came to the Lord with a request for a child and met with a refusal. But then here the mother was asking for a prominent place as a reward: in all the other cases the request was for blessing from His hands. That was never denied. There was evidently

a spirit of competition amongst the disciples, for the ten felt that the two had stolen a march on them and were indignant. This led to one more beautiful lesson as to the humility that befits the kingdom. Even to-day we are very slow to recognize that the principles that prevail in the Divine kingdom are the opposite of those that prevail in the kingdoms of men. In the world greatness is expressed in dominion and authority: the great one is in a position to lord it over his fellows. Amongst the saints greatness expresses itself in ministry and service. The word for minister in verse 26 is "deacon," and that for servant in verse 27 is "bondman;" the word which Paul uses for Timothy and himself in the opening verse of the Epistle to the Philippians. Paul was pre-eminently a bondman of Jesus Christ, and he will not be found small when measured by the standard prevailing in the kingdom of heaven.

On the other hand there were in Paul's day men who aimed at dominion and authority by bringing believers into bondage, by devouring them, taking from them, exalting themselves and smiting others on the face. But such were false apostles and deceitful workers—see 2 Corinthians 11: 13-20. There are people about in our day who assert their dominion in the same fashion, and we do well to beware of them. The Lord sets Himself before us as the Son of Man who came not to be served but to serve, though to be served was His right. Daniel 7: 9-14 shows this in a twofold way, for Jesus may be identified with the "Ancient of Days" as well as the Son of Man. As Ancient of Days "thousand thousands ministered unto Him" before He descended amongst us. As Son of Man "all people, nations, and languages" shall "serve Him." Yet between came the time of His humiliation when He devoted Himself to service; which went to the extreme point of giving His life a ransom for many. Thus for the fifth time since chapter 16 the Lord set His death

before the minds of His disciples; and this time He spoke of its **redeeming** virtue. Thank God! that we are amongst "the many."

The closing scenes of the Gospel begin with the incident concerning the two blind men as He departed from Jericho. Both Mark and Luke mention only one of them, whose name was Bartimaeus, but evidently there actually were two. The same feature is seen in the accounts of the casting out of the legion of demons, for at the end of chapter 8 Matthew tells us of two men, where Mark and Luke mention one only. In both cases there were two witnesses of the power and grace of Jesus, and Matthew mentions it since it would be specially impressive to Jewish readers, accustomed to the stipulation of their law as to the validity of the witness of two, whilst one only might be disregarded.

The Son of David was now for the last time approaching His capital city. These men had sufficient faith to recognize Him and they received from Him the physical eyesight that they desired. With opened eyes they became His followers. This was symbolic surely of the spiritual need of the masses of Israel. If only their eyes had been really open they would have seen their Messiah in Jesus in the day of their visitation. The situation to-day is similar. People often complain of want of light. What they really want is the spiritual eyesight—that is, **faith**—which would enable them to see the light, that has shone so brightly in Him.

Chapter 21 opens with the Lord presenting Himself to Jerusalem according to the prophecy of Zechariah. The Lord had spoken through the prophet, and now some five centuries later the ass and her colt were standing ready exactly at the right time, under the charge of someone who would immediately respond to the need of the Lord. Once more the Lord was plainly authenticated before them as their Messiah and King. He had been born of the Virgin in Bethlehem,

brought out of Egypt, and had risen as the great Light in Galilee, as the prophets had said. Now, when the sixty nine weeks of Daniel 9 were completed, as King He entered His city. Alas! the people overlooked the fact that He was to be **meeek**, and the salvation He was to bring must be compatible with that, and not based upon victorious power. Consequently they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.

Yet for a brief moment it looked as if they might receive Him. The example of the disciples was infectious, and the multitude did Him honour, saluting Him as the Son of David, and as the One who was to come in the name of the Lord. But the reality of their faith was soon tested, for entering the city the question was raised, "Who is this?" The answer of the multitude displayed no real faith at all. They said, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Quite true, of course, as far as it went; but it went no further than what was obvious even to those who had no faith. A good many prophets had entered before this, and Jerusalem had slain them.

Jesus had just presented Himself to them as King, so, arrived in the city, He went straight to the temple, the very centre of their religion, and asserted His kingly power in cleansing it. He had done this at the very beginning of His ministry, as recorded in John 2; He did it again at the end. The trafficking and money-changing in the temple had doubtless sprung out of the kindly arrangements of the law, which Deuteronomy 14: 24-26 records. Ungodly men had taken advantage of this provision to turn the temple precincts into a den of thieves. God intended His temple to be the house where men drew near to Him with their requests. Its custodians had turned it into a place where men were swindled, and so the name of God was maligned. To defile or corrupt the temple of God is a sin of tremendous gravity. 1 Corinthians 3: 17 shows this, in its application to God's present temple.

Having driven out these evil men, Jesus dispensed mercy to the very people they would have kept outside. The blind and lame were forbidden to approach in Leviticus 21: 18, and 2 Samuel 5: 6-8 records David's sentence against them: he said, they "shall not come into the house." The great Son of David had now arrived in Zion, and He reverses David's action. The kind of folk that were "hated of David's soul" were loved and blessed that day. The sordid money-changers had misrepresented the God whose house it was, and caused men to blaspheme His name: in healing the needy, Jesus rightly represented the very heart of God, and in result there was praise. Even the children were found crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" They had caught up the cry from the older folk.

The religious leaders themselves witnessed His wonderful works of power and grace, and to their sore displeasure they heard the children's cry. Jesus vindicated them in their simplicity, quoting the verse from Psalm 8, as finding a fulfilment in them. The Psalm says, "ordained strength," whereas He gave an application of it in saying, "perfected praise;" but in either case the thought is that God accomplishes what He desires, and receives the praise He looks for, through small and weak things. Thus it is made manifest that the strength and the praise is of and from Himself. Thus it was here. When the leaders were not only silent but opposed, God took care to have suitable praise through the lips of the babes.

For the moment however the city and temple were in the custody of these unbelieving men; so He left them and it, and went out to Bethany for the night—the place where was found at least one household that believed in Him and loved Him. Returning next morning He uttered His sentence against the fig tree that bore nothing but leaves. All outward show but no fruit; and on that tree no fruit was to grow for ever. It was utterly condemned. Immediately it withered

away! The occurrence was so obviously miraculous that it compelled the attention and the comment of the disciples.

The Lord's reply turned their thoughts from the fig tree to "this mountain." The fig tree was symbolic of Israel, more particularly that part of the nation which had returned from the captivity and were now in the land. Judged nationally there was nothing in them for God and they were condemned; and since they were picked samples of the human race the fruitless tree set forth the fact that Adam's race, as men in the flesh, is condemned and there will never be found in them any fruit for God. Jerusalem and its temple crowned "this mountain," which symbolized, we believe, the whole Jewish system. If they had faith they might anticipate

what God was going to do in removing the mountain so that it might be submerged in the sea of the nations. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows how the Jewish system was set aside, and "this mountain" was finally cast into the sea when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.

What is needed is **faith**. Hebrews emphasizes this, for in that Epistle there occurs the great chapter on faith. Israel's system was after all but a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things. It needed faith to discern this and many who believed in Christ had not got clear of the shadows even when Hebrews was written. The man of faith it is who penetrates to the realities which Christ has introduced, and such may pray in the confidence of receiving what they ask.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." Romans. 8. 28.

This is a well-known and oft quoted text, yet often a doubt creeps into the mind as to it in days of adversity. Not that a true child of God can ever doubt the truth of His word, but the question arises as to what good can come out of things that seem only evil. All doubts will surely disappear if the wider passage in which the word occurs is considered. Take this for instance, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." Set these "all things" that puzzle you in the light of that great fact, and how different they appear. Then look onward, God's justified children are to be "conformed to the image of His dear Son that He might be the first born among many brethren." Let the light of that coming glory shine upon these "all things," and you will cease to question. The dews of sorrow are lusted with His love. It was love that delivered His Son, it is love that has predestined us for the glory, and it is our privilege to honour our God and Father with perfect trust where we do not understand.

Death is not an accident that happens without the will of God: it has no more dominion over us; Christ our risen Saviour and Lord holds the keys of it. How immensely blessed to know that He has won a complete and final victory over death, and over every foe that could threaten us. "Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

God's love and wisdom can only conduct us in the way of His will. God cannot bend to our wills, and if our wills are active there is conflict and not peace in our hearts and we make no progress. An unsundered will is the cause of much sorrow in the lives of Christians.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

The Galatian Epistle.

“What part of the Divine Revelation would be missing if we had not the Epistle to the Galatians? How do you view the subject of the Holy Spirit in this Epistle?—ALNWICK

THE Epistle to the Galatians was written in defence of the gospel which is unfolded in Romans, but it goes farther. Though probably written before Romans, it is supplementary to it. Romans gives the **entrance** into the new life, Galatians gives the **continuance** in it. The Galatian Christians were slipping away from the truth. They would have admitted that they had entered into the new life by the hearing of faith and not by the works of the law, but they had been seduced into believing that for continuance in the new life they needed the law. They were really substituting human effort for the power of the Holy Spirit who had sealed their faith. The quotation from the prophet Habakkuk, given three times in the New Testament, helps us. In Romans it is “**the just shall live by faith,**” but in Galatians it is “**The just shall live by faith,**” and because it is a question of living the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity and is set in contrast to the law in the Epistle. It may be said that grace stands in contrast to the law, and that is so in Romans and certainly grace has its place in Galatians, as also has the hearing of faith, but the great characteristic of the Christian life as it is given in this Epistle is the Holy Spirit. He is the power by which we continue in and develop the new life, which is new creation life, and maintains the honour and dignity of it.

Crucifixion has an important place in the Epistle: the cross and the Spirit

go together. The cross is the condemnation and end of sinful flesh. **Sinful flesh** lives and moves and has its being in “**the present evil world,**” and **the law** was given to restrain it and keep it in order. These three go together and hold the soul in bondage, and the cross is the way of deliverance from them. Ch. 1. 4, is the basis of all the blessing and gives us the right to deliverance. There it is **substitution**, the holy sacrifice offered instead of the sinful men; but in ch. 2 20; 5. 24 and 6. 14, we have **identification** with the sacrifice, and while all who believe are in God's reckoning identified with the sacrifice it has to be taken up individually if it is to be of present practical value. In these three statements we have freedom from the law, the flesh and the world. They describe something that is done once and for all but maintained in the power of the Spirit.

The Epistle is a righteously indignant exposure of the effort of the enemy to pervert Christians from the grace of God and bring them into bondage, making the Holy Spirit that dwells in them ineffectual and robbing them of their free access to God as Father. This Galatian error lies at the root of all the legalism and ritualism that has spread over the whole Church, Popery being the centre of it. Never in the history of the Church on earth was this Epistle more needed than now. Its place in the Divine Revelation is the defence of the foundation of our faith.

The Burnt Offering in the Book of Ezra.

The offering of the burnt offering was the first thing the Israelites did on their return to Jerusalem in the Book of Ezra. What is the teaching in this for us?—EDINBURGH.

THE children of Israel were aware of their weakness and were afraid of their enemies; they knew that their

only hope and resource was in God and they approached Him in obedience to His word and in His appointed

way. The altar they built and the burnt offering sacrificed upon it were typical of Christ and Him crucified, the only way, but the all-sufficient way, by which sinful men may approach to God. The Lord said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" John 14. 6. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Timothy 2. 5, 6. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Hebrews 10. 19.

There are men who reject the word of God and despise the cross of Christ: they presumptuously imagine

that they can approach God without it and that He will accept them on their own merits. The fact is they "know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" and their doom is certain; they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. God hath set "Christ Jesus forth to be a propitiation (a meeting place) through faith in His blood." Romans 3. 25. There the worst of sinners can meet God in His holiness, and discover that He is just and yet "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Christ our Righteousness.

Christ is our righteousness from God. But who could appreciate this who had not been convinced of two things. First, that he had no righteousness of his own, and then that he had need of righteousness to be at peace with God. But what a surprise it is to discover that the God against whom we sinned has provided the righteousness, just as the father whom the prodigal had slighted provided the best robe. And at what a cost! "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5. 21.

God's love provided the Lamb, but God's righteousness required the propitiation, and only by the cross of Christ the love of God could reach us, only by that cross could God's righteousness be vindicated, and His majesty in the sight of an intelligent universe upheld. The men who refuse the cross and preach a gospel without it not only deprive sinners of salvation but God of His glory. The Son of man must be lifted up. Who is this Son of man? God's only begotten Son whom He gave because He loved the world.

To the Servant of the Lord.

If you feel that the Lord has entrusted you with His word, has put it into your heart, not only for yourself, but for others (Galatians 1. 15, 16), then fear nothing. Your faith will be tested but it will be strengthened; You will learn your weakness but prove God's faithfulness. Even the difficulties, perhaps from your brethren, are the evidence of His tender care for you, that you may lean not upon them but upon Him. And suppose you are set aside or laid aside for awhile, that also is well, for it will give you that which is a necessity if your service is to abide in freshness, the opportunity of reviewing it with Him. If He has called you He will sustain you; He does not send His witnesses to warfare at their own charges. He is their resource, their base of supply. Their sufficiency is of God.

Frail vessels, storm-tossed, but sustained by Thee
 We brest the wave, surmount the raging sea,
 Nor fear to sink when in Thy company.

PEACE IN THE LORD.

J. T. Mawson.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." John 16. 33.

IF we are to have this peace in the Lord we must know what the things are that He has spoken, and that means we must often read these chapters, the 14th, 15th and 16th of John. We cherish the opening sentence of them **"Let not your heart be troubled."** From the time they were spoken these words have been comforting and peace-giving words to multitudes. But how shall we be men and women of the untroubled heart when trouble is surging about us like the waves of the sea? Only by taking heed to the words He has spoken. **"Ye believe in God, believe also in me"** is the answer to every fear. All that God ever was to those who believed in Him in ages past, our Lord will be to us in days yet to come. What a refuge and resource those saints of old found in their God. They never turned to Him in vain. He never failed them in their vicissitudes and distresses. Even so will our Lord be to us. Can we trust Him?

There are many witnesses to the faithfulness of God in the Old Testament records, but none of these appeal to us more than David. We recall the darkest hours of his varied experience. First in his early manhood, before he came into his kingdom. His town of Ziklag had been burnt with fire while he was away at the war. His wives and the wives and children of his gallant men had been taken captive by a ruthless foe and were gone they knew not where. They had lost everything; they were beggared and bereaved, and wept until they could weep no more. Then their grief turned to rage and those men who had been so faithful to David rose against him and spoke of stoning him. He was greatly distressed. To whom could he turn? He turned to his God. In that dark hour "David encouraged himself in the Lord." He committed his way to God and God was with him.

He recovered all and more than all, and the dark night of his distress changed to a radiant morning, that brought him the crown and the kingdom.

His direst tribulation came on him in his old age, near the close of his career. His favourite son had rebelled against him. He was a fugitive from his palace-home, driven out of Jerusalem, his beloved city, by a fickle people. The wisest of his counsellors and his hitherto best friend had gone over to the rebel, and his enemies who were many mocked him, saying, "There is no help for him in God." He had reached the very nadir of his fortunes and seemed to be a hopeless man as he "went up by the ascent of the Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and went barefoot" (2 Sam. 15. 30); the very opposite to the booted, fearless warrior of his former days. It was then that he turned afresh to God. "Lord," he cried, "how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they, that rise up against me. . . . But Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill." And what was the result of that crying to God? He said, **"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me."** (Ps. 3.). He believed in God, and God heard His cry. God was for him; God loved him, watched over him and cared for him and in the knowledge of this he laid him down and slept. He had peace of heart, peace in God; and though his circumstances were not changed he was no more troubled for on awaking he said, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about." He had committed himself and his cause to God. He believed in God and was not forsaken. "Ye believe in God," said

the Lord, "believe also in Me." Is not that a peace-giving word?

That is the beginning of our peace in the Lord, but He spoke also of what lies beyond the trials of this life. **"In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."** This is "that blessed hope" that He has set before us. We can face the eternal future with confidence, His precious blood and sure word have secured it for us, and our home is prepared for us by His presence in the Father's house above the heavens. It is from thence that we look for Him, our Saviour, for He has said, **"I will come again and receive you to Myself."** We reckon that the sufferings of this present time and all the tribulation through which we may yet pass is not worthy to be compared with the glories and joys that await us there, when He shall have fulfilled His word, **"Where I am, there ye shall be also."** His words are peace-giving words; we believe them and rely upon them and look onward and upward with untroubled hearts.

"Yes, we can call our home
Our Father's house above,
The rest of God, our rest to come,
Our home of liberty."

These disciples of His were troubled because He was going from them. They felt that without Him they would be orphans in a hostile world. He met that fear by the promise of "Another Comforter", a more than adequate provision for all their need. He said, **"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter: that He may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of Truth."** As He had cared for them, so would this other Comforter care for them. As He had been among them as he that serveth, so this other Comforter would be their servant: He is the **Paraklete**, the one who comes alongside to help in every emergency. He would bring divine wisdom to their ignorance and divine

power to their weakness, for He is the Holy Ghost. And He abides with us to this day, the same Comforter, unwearied in His service towards all who are loved and redeemed of the Lord. He shall "abide with you for ever." These peace-giving words that the Lord uttered "are spirit and life," and we cannot appropriate them and assimilate them except by the Holy Spirit, but He is with us to make them all effective in us. He takes of the things that are Christ's and shows them to us. Of Him the Lord said, **"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."** As we walk in the Spirit we may expect that He will lead us ever more deeply into the meaning of the words of the Lord, and as He is unrieved within us these words will be our food and joy. And in this connection the Lord speaks again of His own peace being our portion, and of the untroubled heart. **"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."**

His words reveal the tender love of His heart towards "His own." As we read them the words of the 13th chapter come with power to our memories "having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end." And in the course of these final communications to us He tells us of the measure of that love. **"As My Father hath loved Me so have I loved you: continue ye in My love,"** and He tells us not only of His love but of the Father's love also. **"The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me."** We cannot surely read these words without wonder and gratitude, and as we meditate upon them we find them "sweet to our taste yea, sweeter than honey to our mouths," they are "better to us than thousands of gold and silver," they are treasures

beyond all price, to be kept and cherished, and He says, "If a man love Me he will keep My words : and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." And what trouble could disturb the man who has the Father, the Son and the Holy

Ghost abiding in and with Him? Surely heaven's own peace, the peace of God would be his portion.

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

The Time is Short.

A. M. Chambers

"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain ; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not ; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?" (Prov. 24. 11,12).

The time is short ; the swiftly deepening shadows
Warn us this world's day waneth to its night—
A darkness that shall never know a morning
Nor any more a gleam of heavenly light ;
Those that are drawn to death are all around us,
Perishing without hope and without God ;
And shall we be aloof, unmoved, indifferent ?
What if of us He should require their blood?

Let us not say, "Behold we did not know it"
When at our very door-ways souls are lost,
And we put forth no hand for their deliverance
Lest to ourselves too high might be the cost.
"If thou forbear"—the word comes like a sword-thrust,
Tearing the wrappings of self-ease apart—
"He that doth keep thy soul, doth He not know it?
Doth He not see who pondereth the heart?"

O Saviour, Thou art called the Friend of sinners,
Thou gav'st Thy life for rebel sons of men ;
Constrain us by Thy love, that at Thy coming
We may not be ashamed before Thee then.
But let that love so brightly burn within us
That selfishness must shrivel in its flame.
And though so late the hour. Thou still might use us
To publish to the lost Thy saving Name.

Two sides of the Truth.

There are two sides of the truth. First there is a Deliverer ; He brings you to God by His work on the cross, and second, you are to be like the Person who has delivered you ; you are to be an expositor of the One to whom you belong. Beholding His glory you are to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. In yourself you are a briar root but you have been engrafted to bear roses, to shed around the fragrance of Christ.

THE FATHER AND THE CHILDREN.

David Ross.

"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and Eternal Life. Little Children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

THIS knowledge of God is not reached by a process of reasoning. It does not come by investigation, but by revelation. And He has given to every believer an understanding, the faculty and power to know Him by recognition, and acquaintance and experience. St. Augustine said in his *Confessions*, "Thou madest us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee." God alone can satisfy the longing of the human heart. But where and how shall we find God? Zophar, the friend of Job, asked, "Canst thou by searching find out God, or canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" God has not left us to a vain search after Himself. He has revealed Himself in the One Who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and to change them from rebels into worshippers. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

John tells us at the beginning of his Epistle that he, along with the other apostles, had the privilege of contact with the Lord by his physical senses. He heard, saw and handled the Word of life—the Eternal Son incarnate, the revelation of the Father, the true God and Eternal life. And he wrote of Him that we in our day might have fellowship together in what has been revealed and recorded for us. It is to the Gospel we turn. John tells us what God is. Moses, the Psalms and the prophets show us the many attributes of God. The Bible is full of His glory, but if we would know what God is in His nature, it is to John we must turn. He tells us in the plainest and briefest words, "**God is a Spirit**" (John 4. 24); "**God is light**" (I John 1. 5); "**God is ove**" (I John 4. 16). This is the

threefold revelation that has come to us in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Christian life is intimately involved in this threefold revelation of God. There is a threefold outflow from this knowledge of God. It is shewn us in pattern in the home at Bethany after Lazarus was raised from the dead. He sat at the table with the Lord: that was **communion**, Martha served with a glad heart: that was **service**; Mary bowed at the feet of the Lord and poured out the contents of her alabaster box on His feet: that was **worship**. Communion is in the light, the revelation (I John 1. 7). "God is light," and it is only in the light that we can have communion with Him. In service we remember that "God is love" and no service can be acceptable to Him that does not spring from love—Divine love. Worship, true worship is not mechanical. It is the spirit moved intelligently in response to the revelation. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth" (John 4. 24).

Although the three definite statements as to what God is do not occur in John 4., yet the threefold revelation is plainly there. And what grace is revealed there. It was not to a theological professor, not to a doctor of the law, not even to a ruler of the Jews like Nicodemus, but to a broken woman, an outcast in three senses of the word. She was a woman—not of much account in those days, a member of the despised race of Samaritans, and a social outcast even by her fellow towns-folk. She had only known the Jew as the proud legalist who would have no dealings with her race. The legal man is always a proud man despising others, and her surprise was great when Jesus addressed her kindly, graciously. Even His disciples

marvelled that He spake with the woman, so little had they entered into the meaning of His mission to the world.

“Jesus said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.” That was the revelation that “God is love.” Had He not said in the previous chapter, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son?” We see the Gift of God to the world sitting at that well-side. How accessible He was! But there we see love displayed. Love gives, love stoops, love serves, love sacrifices. God is love. That is His nature. Some say God is nature. Can a poor sinner like that Samaritan woman and like me and you creep into the bosom of nature and find rest? Some say God is power, force. Can any heart, burdened with sin find a refuge in force? No, it is God, who is love, that the weary, burdened heart longs for, and here we see Him revealed in Jesus, winning the most degraded of a degraded race from her life of sin for God.

Amongst the heathen at that time and especially amongst the Greeks, many of whom lived in Samaria, all sense of what true love is was lost; it was degraded by them into lust. Their gods were gods of lust—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, and that threefold analysis of the world is the very antithesis of what God is. Something more was needed than the revelation of God’s love. It seems to me that as the Lord drew the veil aside from this woman’s life, one flash of unsullied, uncreated light, shone from Him into her very heart, exposing all that she was and had done. God is love, that is personal, God is light, that is moral. The Greeks were particularly deficient in the sense of morality, like many people to-day. They were clever, witty, lovers of the beautiful in architecture and poetry, but they had no conception of God in His moral nature. They did not know Him as the Judge to Whom all men must give an account.

That God is love and God is light was fully revealed at the Cross

“Oh the cross of Christ is wondrous
There I learn God’s heart to me;
Midst the silent deepening darkness
God is light I also see.”

The blood of Jesus stands in close connection with the fact that God is light. Texts that speak of the blood of Jesus are not well-known or popular. I had to give a text to thirty young people who were chosen for their best knowledge of Scripture. I gave them several part texts which they had to complete. Whatsoever a man soweth they could all complete that, “God so loved the world” again they were successful. But when I asked for the completion of “Behold the Lamb of God,” not one could finish it. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” That is not popular with men, but if we are to be at peace with God who is light and have fellowship with Him, the blood is indispensable, apart from it we must be shut out of God’s presence for ever. John has a way of making a positive statement, and then lest we should not be impressed he buttresses it with a negative, so “God is light” the positive, “and in Him is no darkness at all” the negative. The sun is light, but we cannot say there is no darkness in the sun. There are spots on the sun. But God is unsullied light. His purity, His holiness, His unflinching righteousness are all connected with the light. How can we have fellowship with Him? **“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”** That is the answer and there is none other. Our fitness to be in the unsullied light of God lies in the blood of Jesus, precious blood! It abides in all its efficacy, and will for ever.

This woman by the well-side felt the searching power of the light and made an effort to evade it, she would have discussed comparative religion with the Lord. But He brushed all that aside. Such questions that might greatly intrigue the theologians had no

place in the revelation that He was there to make. Now that revelation comes out in its most blessed fullness. "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." It is not God is a Spirit but God is Spirit—it is His nature. This takes you out of the realm of time and place and circumstances. You cannot confine God who is Spirit to "this mountain" or "Jerusalem"; to cathedral, chapel or meeting room. A prime minister, Lord Melbourne, made the remark, "Things are coming to a pretty pass in this country when we are asked to bring religion into our every-day lives." What a conception of religion! It is convenient and a good thing to have a place and stated times for gathering together for worship, but that is because of our limitations, it is not the essence. God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. In true worship the spirit is absorbed with God, the revelation He has made of His love and glory fills the soul with wonder. It does not puff you up, as the Jew was, puffed up when he despised the Samaritan. It makes you forget yourself and everything else but God, known as Father, and Jesus Christ His sent One.

Now let me get back to my text. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and Eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." If we know Him that is true we have fellowship in the truth, but it is all in and through His Son Jesus Christ. He is the image of the invisible God. Beware

lest you make a god in your own image. Keep yourselves from idols. The benighted heathen takes a piece of wood and makes a god in his own image. It is his conception of God and not the Revelation of God in Christ. The German leaders have invented a German god, let us beware that we do not fall into a like snare. Are you hard, legal, and censorious? Beware lest you think God is like yourself. Are you loose and indulgent? Take care lest you look upon God as like yourself. Any thought of God other than as He is revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ is an idol. We must have our thoughts purged from idolatry; they are so likely to be coloured by our own tendencies and character. We must keep the Son of God before us, He is true, He is the truth, and He has given us an understanding that we might know the true God and be preserved from our carnal conceptions of God. It is all in Christ. Have you seen Him? Have you known Him?

"Hast thou seen Him? Hast thou known Him?

Is not thine a captured heart?
 Chiefest of ten thousand own Him,
 Joyful choose the better part.
 What has stript the seeming beauty
 From the idols of the earth?
 Not the thought of right or duty,
 But the sight of peerless worth;
 Not the crushing of the idols
 With the bitter void and smart,
 But the beaming of His beauty,
 The outshining of His heart.
 'Tis the look that melted Peter,
 'Tis the face that Stephen saw,
 'Tis the eye that wept with Mary
 Can alone from idols draw,
 Draw and win and fill completely
 Till the cup o'erflow the brim;
 What have we to do with idols
 Who have companied with Him?

Listen to the warning, speaker and hearer alike. "Little children keep yourselves from idols."

It is a personal faith that appropriates and feeds upon Christ daily that ensures true progress.

“NOT SO, LORD.”

Ingليس Fleming

PETER'S language, "Not so, Lord!" when bidden to eat of the animals in the great sheet of his vision, finds a repetition in our hearts oftentimes, even if the words do not fall from our lips.

He was not prepared for the great dispensational change: That Gentiles, unclean and uncircumcized, were to be received into the kingdom of heaven on equal terms with the Jews was still foreign to his thoughts. The vision (Acts 10. 11—15) had been given to prepare him to preach the "whosoever gospel" to the Gentiles, and a severe reprimand was administered to him in order to overcome his opposition.

How often we say, "Not so, Lord!" "We comprehend Him not." We are so short-sighted. We cannot look to the end of things. We need the patience of Job that we may see "the end of the Lord." The object He has before Him is ever His glory and our good. He works for and with us that all may tend to our profit, and that we may partake of His holiness (Heb. 12. 10); that in the ultimate we may think His thoughts and magnify His name.

"Not so, Lord!" His way is in the sea, His path in the great waters and His footsteps are not known. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55. 8, 9). "As for God His way is perfect" (Ps. 18. 30).

Do we think of the histories (written for our admonition), of honoured servants of God?

Joseph is put into the pit and into the prison. Moses flees to Midian. The three Hebrew children are cast

into the furnace. Daniel is thrown into the den of lions. Jeremiah sinks in the miry pit. Paul is a prisoner in Philippi and in Rome. John is banished to Patmos. And nearer to our own time John Bunyan is in Bedford Jail, and Samuel Rutherford in St. Andrews. Each one might have said, "Not so, Lord!" as to his circumstances, but their training is "to do" them "good in their latter end," and for their testimony as God's witnesses to men, to us to-day, as we begin to see the object God had in view in these dealings.

"Not so, Lord!" each one might have exclaimed. And, yet now, with clearer vision, each would cry, Amen! to all the ways of God with him. And we in these present conditions may raise the same cry, but the word to us is "Be still and know that I am God." "Wait, wait I say on the Lord."

Some of the words of the Hon. H. F. Lyte, the author of the hymn, "Abide with me," are good in this connection:

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

"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.

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

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

If the plough share of troubles has made deep furrows in your heart it is that the good seed of the word might be sown in it.

THE MODERN BRAMBLES.

F. B. Hole.

WHEN we distinguish between God's ways in grace and His ways in government, we are not guilty of making a distinction without a difference. They differ widely.

Take as an example the case of the Apostle Paul. God's grace met him when he was in the flood-tide of his wicked opposition to Christ and His saints; he was saved, blessed and transformed. But this did not stop the working of God's righteous government on the earth, and many of his subsequent sufferings in the cause of Christ exactly suited his own previous misdeeds. He who "haling men and women, committed them to prison," had his full share of imprisonment in due season. He instigated the stoning of Stephen, and presently got stoned himself.

We needed the New Testament to give us the full revelation of the grace of God, but the Old Testament is of great value as giving us a large unfolding of the working of God's government. Observing His ways in the past, we are enlightened and warned as to what may be expected in the present; and we discover how amazingly apposite are these ancient histories. The Bible is indeed an up-to-date book.

The history of Abimelech, the ruthless and unscrupulous usurper in Israel, is given us in Judges 9. If you have not read that chapter recently, do so now and refresh your memory as to the details. Then specially notice the sarcastic parable which Jotham shouted from the top of Mount Gerizim, which, incidentally, is the first parable put on record. See if it does not strikingly fit the usurpers and tyrants with which Europe is cursed at the present moment: then consider if it does not furnish us with a forecast of what their end is going to be.

The parable concerned four "trees"; the olive, fig, vine and the bramble, or thorn-bush; each of which in turn was invited to become king over the trees. The olive had its fatness where-

by both God and man were honoured. The fig-tree had its sweetness and good fruit. The vine had its wine which cheered God and man. Each had their own place in the scheme of creation and had no wish to be other than they were. The bramble had neither beauty nor utility: it was chiefly noted for its thorns, which displayed the curse resting on the vegetable creation as the fruit of man's sin, according to Genesis 3. 18. It was quite willing to accept promotion and lord it over others.

In verse 15 we see Jotham as a master of sarcasm and a man of prophetic vision. The shadow of a bramble! Anything less protective in the heat of Palestine can hardly be imagined. And the bramble invited them to trust in **that** with the alternative of being devoured! The cedars of Lebanon were to fall before the bramble's fire! In saying that, an element of prophecy appears, for the men of Shechem and others began by putting their trust in the wicked upstart Abimelech, but very soon an evil spirit sprang up between the two parties, which ended in fire from Abimelech consuming the men of Shechem and their tower, and Abimelech himself, being destroyed.

Over three millenniums have passed and again we see a large part of the earth falling under the domination of brambles—not one but three of them. Each is proceeding in the same fashion; not merely inviting but demanding that the peoples who are smaller numerically shall put their trust in their shadows. Some have reluctantly acquiesced, and others have been violently assaulted and forced there. On the surface their actions look marvellously successful. Cedars of Lebanon have been devoured in the fires which have proceeded from the brambles.

But what was the end of the story recorded in Judges 9? Fire came out from Abimelech and devoured the men

of Shechem ; but when he thought to do the same to the men of Thebez instead of fire coming out from him a piece of a broken millstone came down from a woman of Thebez and dealt him a death-blow. The last two verses of the chapter point out that God's hand in government was behind the whole thing. The men of Shechem had been wicked accomplices in the murder of Gideon's sons, and God used Abimelech to chastise them as they deserved. Thus God made the wrath of Abimelech to praise the justice of Divine retribution, but when he essayed to go beyond this God restrained the remainder of his wrath, and brought upon him the miserable destruction which he so richly deserved. Jotham's parable not only contained a prophecy but a curse, which was fulfilled.

God it was, who sent the evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. **God it was**, who rendered again the wickedness of Abimelech. **God**, who rendered upon the heads of the men of Shechem all their evil. And

we may ask in the words of Scripture, "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" Indeed He is not: He is very righteous. The modernistic teachings of these later days has produced a degenerate and effeminate religiosity which winces at the bare idea of God exerting His holy government in executing justice. He goes on executing it all the same; and before long we may witness further striking expressions of it.

When fire goes forth from brambles even cedars of Lebanon may be devoured; but when fire breaks out in the thorn-bushes themselves they soon disappear in smoke. Thus it has been, and without a doubt thus it again will be. When it will be, we do not know; but we do know that God is still on the throne and His government is inexorable. We wait for Him, and while we wait we have His word:

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46. 10).

"Men ought always to pray."

"When ye pray say Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

How do we square up to this perfect pattern of prayer that the Lord set before His disciples? Do we not generally put ourselves and our interests first? This should not be. The Lord taught His disciples to put God first. The first desire to be expressed was that His Name should be hallowed, which means greatly revered, and approached with filial fear. Then with the greatness and blessedness of that Name in the souls to stretch out in desire to the utmost bounds of the earth and ask that every evil imagination might be overthrown, every evil work judged, and the will of God, which is good, perfect, and acceptable take the place of the rebellious will of man that has filled the earth with sorrow; that the whole earth might be filled with the glory of God.

When our hearts have reached up to the sacred glory of God's Name and broadened out to include every habitation of man, then we may ask for our daily needs. And then we shall ask not selfishly but confidently and trustfully and thankfully, with a sense in our souls of the liberality of our God and the blessedness of His Will and the grace and glory of His Kingdom. Of course there will be with our prayer the desire and determination that our lives now shall be subject to His will or our prayer would be glaring hypocrisy.

GOD.

A. J. Pollock

THE most wonderful word that can cross human lips is the name of GOD. It is said that when Jewish scribes wrote manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures, whenever the name of God had to be written, they were in the habit of cleaning their pens, and praying at the same time for a clean heart.

The writer once was addressing a women's meeting. He asked his audience what was the most wonderful word that could be spoken. One woman answered "LOVE." He replied it could not be "LOVE," for where did love originate? The Source must be more wonderful than the supply. Another woman answered "MOTHER." It could not be "MOTHER". A good mother was the greatest earthly gift any man could have, but then again the Giver must be greater than the gift.

The reply surely was GOD. Everything that is good, either in the material world or the spiritual realm, comes from Him. We have nothing that He has not planned originated and created. The word GOD is at once the most feared and the most blessed word human lips can breathe—the most feared, if we stand in wrong relations to God, the most blessed, if our relations with Him are right.

Where would our planet be, if it were in wrong relation to the centre of the system of which it plays a part, viz., the sun? The slightest lack of adjustment would mean in a moment the destruction, utter and irreparable of our world in which we live. Let it continue in right adjustment then day and night, and summer and winter, seed time and harvest, heat and cold will not cease.

Man's sin has put him out of true relation to God and therefore we live in a world of flux, of change, of decay, of death—a world sodden with tears and soaked in blood. Changes come that are catastrophic, bewildering, staggering, upsetting. It is no mere

platitude to say in the words of Scripture that men's hearts are failing them because of fear. It is a grim and dreadful reality. Fear is in most hearts to-day. It is common talk that the present war will annihilate civilization, and let loose terrible forces of disruption and utter disaster, the like of which the most vivid imagination cannot exaggerate.

There is one verse—Psalm 46. 2—which gives us in very few words the most vivid and appalling picture of what will happen in the future, and that, we believe, at no distant date. "The earth removed . . . the mountains . . . carried into the midst of the sea." The mountains are emblematic of stability, of strength, of immovability. The sea is restless. It cannot rest. Its waters cast up mire and dirt.

The sea can be terrible and remorseless when it is lashed to fury. When the sea swallows the mountains where can the terrified fly for safety? When the devouring waters sweep in their strength over the highest mountains where can escape be found?

This then is the striking imagery of Scripture setting forth the terror of the last days. The mountains set forth ordered authority, government, the power to control lawless men and movements. The sea sets forth uncontrolled masses of men, who rise against ordered government, who overturn all that is stable. The condition resulting from this will beggar description.

We ask now, Where can poor distracted man find help and safety? The answer is GOD. How does Psalm 46. begin, whose verse two we have just quoted. It begins with the word, GOD. "GOD is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble, Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea." This will be the confidence of the sorely tried remnant of Israel in

a future day when circumstances will be sufficient to make the stoutest heart quail. GOD will be their Refuge. What angry wave of the sea can reach that Refuge? GOD will be their Strength. What power on earth or in hell can overwhelm that Strength? GOD will be their Strength.

"Therefore will we not fear"! What a magnificent declaration! What a testimony to the grace of God, able, not only to sustain, but to cause those

who received it to be more than conquerors through Him who loved them.

We are living in very very difficult days. The storms may roar, the waves may threaten, and they do, but the anchor will hold, "**GOD is our Refuge and Strength.**" Things may change overnight, the bottom of everything may seem to fall out, but "GOD is our Refuge and Strength." Is this not sufficient? Is this not enough? Surely ten thousand times over it is.

Casting the Blame upon God.

A LITTLE fellow had set his heart upon having a pocket-knife, and pestered his parents about it so persistently that at last they yielded and allowed him to have his own way, and spend his shilling upon the coveted treasure. It was not long before he had cut his fingers very badly with it, and then he turned on his father and said, "You ought not to have let me buy it."

When I heard the story I was reminded of many who when they fall into any trouble always cast the blame directly upon God. "Why," say they, "did God allow this to happen?" This is a question that is being asked by many in regard to this desolating war. "Why does God allow it to continue?"

The fact is that all trouble in this world is the result of sin being here, and especially may this be said in regard to the war. Sin is lawlessness—independence of God, the determination of men to go their own way without reference to His will in any matter. If men are determined to please themselves, like the boy with the knife, and, in spite of the warnings and entreaties of God's Word, will persist in the refusal of His will, and of the way that He points out to them as the way "of pleasantness and peace," how can they complain if they reap the harvest of their own sowing? "God is not mocked" and men cannot flout His

will and then expect that He will shield them from the consequences of their folly. "They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own ways and be filled with their own devices." (Prov. i. 29, 30). Thus it is written in the Word of God, and His Word cannot fail.

If men in this time of trouble would turn to God, not to presumptuously blame Him for the consequences of their own folly, not to link up His name impiously with their own sinful ambitions and devilish schemes, but to hallow His name by acknowledging that He is just in all His dealings with them, and that His way is always right, and to repent before Him because of their waywardness and sin, and forgetfulness of Him then they would immediately find Him to be a very present help in time of trouble, for none ever called on Him in vain.

None of us can do his own will and expect to be immune from the consequences, but blessed it is to know that there is forgiveness with God that He might be feared, and though the cut fingers may not be immediately healed, yet the heart may be comforted by God's grace, and the valuable lesson learnt, that His way is better than ours.

THE OUTLOOK.

J. T. Mawson.

"The rulers of the darkness of this world."

WE believe there is more in the present upheaval in the world than the wickedness and ambition of godless men. Spiritual powers—the principalities and powers in the heavenly places that rule this world's darkness. (Eph. 6. 12) are working behind the scenes in the dictator states. We read in the prophecy of Daniel of "the Prince of Persia," and "the Prince of Greece." These were great spiritual powers that controlled and gave energy to those world-empires in ancient days, and it is our conviction that such powers are increasingly active in world-affairs in our time. A sure sign that we are nearing the end of the age. When a nation of more than 60,000,000 people casts off its Christian profession, relapses into its former paganism, takes lying and deceit for its chief weapons, becomes devoid of all human pity, exalts brute force and savagery to the highest place, and marches with ever-increasing success along a road that must end in disaster, apparently at the will of one man, it is surely evident that a supernatural power is blinding, energizing and driving not the man only but the people. Having cast off the fear of God, such men as these become the willing instruments of evil powers in their struggle against light, and good and God, and when the wickedness of men and devices of devils are joined in one purpose they make a most formidable force, and more is needed than Spitfires and tanks, guns and bombs, submarines and battleships, and the unconquerable spirit of British men, if their power is to be broken. We thank God for the remnant of faithful Christians in Germany who stand true to God and His Christ, and who are suffering persecution for their witness. The prisons and concentration camps in which they suffer are a proof of what we say.

We are confirmed also in this view of things when we learn on the authority

of Sir Neville Henderson, the former British Ambassador to Berlin that Hitler waits for "the Voice" before coming to his decisions and issuing his commands. He hears what his ministers and generals say, but he is not guided by their advice. It is "the Voice," with a capital V, that governs his policy and actions. He is a foreshadowing of the coming "Beast"; a man to whom the dragon (Satan) will give "his power, his seat, and great authority" (Rev. 13. 2). So great will be the success of that devil-inspired man, that his followers and the smaller nations will say "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him," and they will render divine honours to him (Rev. 13. 4). This is how the German nation already regards Hitler. His infatuated followers make the blasphemous claim for him, "Hitler is a new, a greater, a more powerful Jesus Christ; our God, our pope is Adolf Hitler." "We believe in our leader; our body, our spirit, our possessions, our soul belong to the Fuehrer. He is the sum of our power and meaning, and we live through him as God." Coming events are casting their shadows.

These spiritual powers, "the rulers of this world's darkness" have more in view than the destruction of the British Empire and world-dominion for Germany, they are against God. They are against the Christian faith and every man who is faithful to it; because every true Christian on earth is a witness to the fact that Christ is the one lawful Heir to all the kingdoms of the world, and that He is coming again to take unto Him His great power and reign over them all. They would exterminate the Jewish people for they know that it is God's purpose to make them the head and not the tail of the nations, that when they shall have passed through "the great tribulation," which is called "Jacob's trouble," and shall have submitted

themselves to their Messiah, whom they crucified, they shall be established in the Holy Land and all nations shall be blessed through them. These powers are fighting against the purposes of God in the vain hope of postponing them, or thwarting them altogether. They know that when the Lord Jesus, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, does come forth from heaven to take the kingdoms it will be the end of their chief's domination as "the god" and "the prince of this world," for he will be cast out of the heavens (Rev. 12.) and chained in the bottomless pit "that he should deceive the nations no more" (Rev. 20.), they know that his defeat will be the end of their power and authority as the rulers of this world's darkness. Hence their increased activities.

We know that the activities of these evil powers are not confined to Germany, Russia and Italy, they are at work in Britain. They have the subtlety of their leader, who is the "dragon, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan" (Rev. 12. 9; 20. 1). They know men and nations, and they vary their operations to suit the temperament and character of the people they set out to deceive and destroy. Their work is seen chiefly in this land in efforts to discredit the Bible and destroy its influence. It has been our great bulwark in the past against moral and spiritual evils that have overflowed some other lands, but its hold on the consciences and lives of the people has been sorely weakened of late years. Destructive criticism of the Bible, the absurdly false evolutionary hypotheses, and modernism in the pulpits have done their deadly work, more deadly than that done by Bradlaugh and Ingersol of a past generation. These are our worst and most subtle enemies. In Russia and Germany and France also, they have spoken openly and boldly, and defiantly "against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2.), but these men are "fifth columnists" as far as God and His

kingdom are concerned, while professing continued allegiance to Him they are against Him, undermining faith in Christ as Lord, and should be more feared than German hordes, for they at their very worst can only kill the body, while these men, speaking perverted things in the midst of the church (Acts 20. 30), are destroying the souls of men, for they are robbing them of the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and are loosening the cords that bind the consciences of men to the will of God. It is of such that Paul wrote "If any man preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1. 8). We quote his Holy Ghost-inspired words, and leave them there.

On the other hand we may be profoundly thankful that there are tens of thousands in the land who still fear God and wait for His Son from heaven. They reverence His word, spend time and money in its circulation. It is encouraging to know that millions of copies of the Scriptures are sent forth from this land to lands across the seas that have not hitherto had the light of the gospel, and that men and women who love the Lord go forth from us to bear witness to the saving power of the Name of Jesus even to the uttermost parts of the earth. We may thank God too that amongst those that rule us are men who own and honour God and His Word. Our gracious King, for instance, has commended the Bible to all his forces serving by sea, land or in the air, and to all who are engaged in the defence of the Realm, in these words, "For centuries the Bible has been a wholesome and strengthening influence in our national life, and it behoves us in these momentous days to turn with renewed faith to this Divine source of comfort and inspiration." And the fact that he has twice desired and called the Empire to a day of national prayer shows that he looks beyond and above the might of the Empire to God for strength and guidance and victory over the evil forces

that menace us. Lord Halifax too, in a recent Broadcast uttered noble words which must have stirred the hearts of God's people as he appealed for continued prayer to God for His directing hand in the affairs of the nation.

What then must we do who realize that the powers of evil are active behind the scenes? We recognize that the sword has been put into the hands of the powers that be for the punishment of him that doeth evil; but the sword is no protection against spiritual powers; from them no "king is saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. **Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy . . . Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our help and our strength.** For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy Name" (Ps. 33.). Yes, we may, we must pray. Prayer brings God in. It is the recognition of His supremacy and of our dependence upon Him; it is the right attitude of man towards God. In our prayers we must put God and His Kingdom first. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." We must pray, "Father, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We know that His kingdom will only come when Christ comes, but as we pray for it and long for it, we shall come under its moral power now, and the Name of God our Father will be hallowed in our lives, and that will be a great gain. Next we may pray for His Church—His "called out" ones in every tribe and tongue and people and nation—we may desire that affairs in every land may be so controlled

and ordered that they may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2). We may pray for the overthrow of these evil powers for the sake of the nations ruthlessly trodden down by them, for "the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5. 11). We may pray for our own land that it may not suffer as others have done; and that it may still be the centre from which the gospel of God shall go forth into every land. But as we pray for ourselves it must surely be with contrition and repentance and confession of sin. For here in Great Britain, God's great and long continued favour has not had the effect upon men that it ought to have had. "Men are lovers of their own selves . . . unthankful, unholy . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3). And in religious circles the time has come when the many "will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they heap to themselves teachers; having itching ears. They turn away their ears from the truth and are turned to fables" (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4). We may pray for comfort for the bereaved and sorrowing, the anxious and distressed, and we may pray that the sorrows and dangers of these days may make many ready to listen to the gospel of God's grace and turn in heart and mind to Him who is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Whatever burdens may lie upon our hearts we may bring them to God, and make our requests known unto Him.

If these evil days result in a revival of spiritual life in those who have confessed Jesus as Lord, and they are mightily stirred to pray and to serve Him in the gospel we shall have cause to praise Him, while we wait for our Lord from heaven, Who is the Sun of righteousness and the Prince of peace.

THE PLACE OF BLESSING.

We have been asked to say something on what constitutes "an assembly of God." We suggest that these searching words by the late J. N. Darby are a fitting introduction to the consideration of such a subject.

THE pretensions and energy of man are strongly manifesting themselves, but to learn, in a day of grace, to be still, and know that God is God, is completely above the education of the flesh.

The spirit of the age affects many Christians, who labour to restore old things for the service of God, instead of being broken before Him by the sense of their downfall.

To confess openly that which we are, in the presence of that which God is, is always the way to peace and blessing. Even when only two or three are together before God, if it be thus with them, there will be no disappointments nor deluded hopes.

The word for the remnant is, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." The Holy Ghost does not gather saints around mere views, however true they may be, upon that which the church is, upon that which it has been, or that which it may be, on the earth, but He always gathers them around that blessed Person, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. **"Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."**

We need to be watchful against boasting; we need to be still in the presence of God: for there is much independence and self-will almost everywhere.

If anyone speaks of separation from evil, without being humiliated, let him take care lest his position becomes simply only that which at all times has constituted sects, and produced doctrinal heresy. Nearness to Christ would keep us from Sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart.

Now I know, at the present time, of no service which is worthy of Him, if

it is not done in humiliation. This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the church of God, so dear to Christ, is dishonoured in this world; if it is scattered, ignorant, afflicted, he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. True service of love will seek to give according to the need, and because of their need, he will never think of slighting the objects of the Master's love because of their necessity.

Men taught of God, for His service, go forth from a place of strength, where they have learned their own weakness and their own nothingness. They find that Christ Jesus is everything in the presence of God, and Jesus Christ is everything for them in all things, and everywhere.

Such men, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, are real helps for the children of God, and they will not contend for a place, or a distinction, or for authority, among the scattered flock. The communion of a man with God about the church will show itself in a willingness to be nothing in himself, and such a one will rejoice in his heart to spend and to be spent.

Neither the anger, nor the prudence, nor the pretensions of man can do anything, in the state of confusion in which the church is now. I freely own that I have no hope in the efforts which many make to assure themselves an ecclesiastical position.

When the house is ruined in its foundations by an earthquake, it matters little how one tries to make it an agreeable dwelling-place. We shall do better to remain where the first discovery of the ruin of things by man's deed has placed us—with our faces in the dust. Such is the place which belongs to us by right, and, after all, it is the place of blessing.

Divine Light or Encircling Gloom.

God has graciously made the path of His will known for all His saints ; others have made difficulties, and talk and write of the surrounding darkness as Newman did when about to go over to Rome, "Lead, kindly light, amid the **encircling gloom.**" J. N. Darby wrote the truth, "**Light divine** surrounds thy going."

There are difficulties, for the Scriptures recognize these as "perilous times," but the saints are in the light, however feebly they apprehend it ; and the **truth** is given to enable them to meet the difficult times. "The true light now shineth" (1 John 2. 8). Difficulties do not make the day dark ; they should stimulate those who are "in the light" to overcome them in faith.

Do not spoil the chime of this morning's bells by ringing only half a peal. Do not say, "Hold thou me up," and stop there ; or add, "But all the same I shall stumble and fall as usual." Finish the peal of God's own music, the bright words of faith that He puts into your mouth, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." That is not your joy but His, though a joy in which you will share when you see how wonderfully He has kept you, upheld you and brought you safely home. Then "unto Him . . . the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Amen.

If we walk before God we do not fear men, their praise or blame does not move us. But the one who walks before God is conscious of his own nothingness, and will not complain if others blame him, nor take offence if they trample on him. Seek, not a good name among your brethren, but to be approved of God.

If our affections are resting on Christ, and we are engrossed with Him, all His saints will be dear to us, because they are one with Him, every one of them equally dear to Him. It is the devil's work in our hearts if we despise any one of them, and better a millstone be hung round our neck and we cast into the depths of the sea than offend one of them.

Have faith in God. Unbelief puts fear into the heart when there is nothing to fear ; it robs the soul of strength when difficulties arise ; it leads to despair, and despair is but unbelief without a bridle.

Where unbelief is, there is pride ; and where pride is, her whole brood of evils will be found with her. With the obedience of faith there is humility and all her train of precious graces.

You think your trials are heavy : How much will they weigh when this mortal has put on immortality and you see the face of the Lord in the glory of God ?

Measure everything by the love that gave the Son of God for us. Be sure that that love makes no mistakes with us. It was commended to us when we were yet sinners and has set the eternal glory of the Father's house before us. It will not fail us between the two, and because it is what it is, we know that all things must work together for good.

Be assured that God does **more in** us than we do **for** Him, and what we do for Him is only really for Him in so far as He works the willing and doing in us.

THE FRIENDLINESS OF THE LORD JESUS.

J. T. Mawson

“ Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” Read John 11

WITH the exception of the Crucifixion and Resurrection chapters no chapter in the four Gospels is more instructive and blessed than this 11th chapter of John. In it God and His Son are glorified. As the story unfolds, the love and wisdom and power of the Lord shine forth most clearly, and the greatest of these is love. Love is His nature, and wisdom and power are great attributes that dwell in Him and are the servants of His love.

But one thing that stands out in the chapter and arrests by its attractiveness is the friendliness of our Lord and the wisdom of that friendliness. There was a circle at Bethany where He was free and at home. It was He who said, “ Our friend Lazarus,” not your friend, or My friend, but “ our friend.” The disciples were included in that happy circle. Where friendship is true and real there is no restraint, and a friend may be better than a brother. Certainly this “ Friend who loveth at all times ” “ sticketh closer than a brother.” We do not reveal our secrets to strangers, but to a friend whom we love and trust we tell our inmost thoughts and unburden our cares. The basis of friendship is confidence and love.

Now this true friendship prevailed at Bethany. Jesus was the Centre of it and bound them all together in its blessed bonds. He was the Friend of them all, so that when Lazarus fell sick the sisters did not delay, they sent to Him at once. They did not send to Peter or to John to plead with the Lord on their behalf, but to Himself direct. They had no question in their hearts as to His interest in them—He was their Friend, they could tell Him of their trouble, and were sure of His sympathy. It may be that they expected His immediate aid. Certainly He was a long way off, at least two days’ journey, but He had been just as far away from the nobleman’s dying

son in Galilee, and had spoken the word only, and from that hour the fever left him and he began to mend (ch. 4) ; and he was a stranger, while Lazarus was His friend.

These sisters addressed Him with the greatest reverence. He was their Lord, yet that fact did not lessen, but enhanced the blessedness of the friendship. He had power and authority such as no other had, and they believed He would use these to relieve them in their distress. Their confidence in Him honoured Him and must have been most gratifying to Him. It may be that Peter remembered these sisters and their trouble when he wrote, “ Casting all your care upon Him ; for He careth for you.” Yet this story seems to reveal something even deeper than that ; there is in it a flow of trustfulness on the one hand, and of sympathy and love and wisdom on the other that is inexpressible in words.

Now notice the ground upon which they based their confidence in the Lord’s intervention. They said, “ Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” It was not their love for the Lord, or the love of Lazarus for Him that they pleaded, but His love. His love was sure. It could not be questioned ; it had flowed out to them without stint, they knew it and had experienced it. It was the cause and the strength of their confidence in Him. It had made them His friends, as it had most surely shown them that He was their Friend. These sisters of the sick man were wise women when they pleaded His love and not theirs.

Yet, strange it must have seemed to them, when He had received their message, “ He abode two days still in the same place where He was.” He did not move. He waited until the sickness had done its work and Lazarus lay dead. What a test that must have been to their confidence in Him. We

may be sure that the devil was not far away from them as those days passed by with leaden steps; he would suggest that their trust had been misplaced, and that Jesus was unable to deal with that special sort of sickness, or, worse still, that He had ceased to care. It was then that we have the significant comment by the Holy Spirit, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." It was not the lack or loss of love that kept Him from them; it was not indifference that made Him delay; it was the perfection of His love, the wisdom of it. He had something in store for them which was infinitely better than the best they had expected of Him. And His love for them was an impartial love; their characters and temperaments were different, but that made no difference to His love. Speaking from our view of things, they may not have been equally loveable, but His thoughts are not as our thoughts, and His love, unlike ours, finds its motives for loving in itself rather than in the objects of it. Each one of them had an equal place in His heart.

At length He said to his disciples, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent that ye might believe; nevertheless let us go unto him." The news of His coming went before Him, and Martha went out to meet Him with her burden of sorrow. Was there reproach in her words to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died?" Did she mean, You are too late, why did you delay? It may be so, yet what measure of faith she had in Him was not shaken. "But I know," she added, "that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee"; and again, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God that should come into the world." But what a revelation of Himself her limited faith in Him brought out. "I am the resurrection and the life . . . whose liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." O bereaved and sorrowing heart, lay hold of that. There is a life,

eternal life, and he who has it through faith in the Son of God shall never die. Death may sever natural ties, life on earth may cease, but no power on earth or in hell can sever a soul from the Son of God, or dissolve the life that is in Him. They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them from His hand.

Then came Mary, and she came to Him with her sister's words upon her lips. How often they must have said to each other, "If only the Lord had been here, our brother had not died." So she said it to Him, and then fell down at His feet and was silent. Her sorrow was too deep for words — it could only be expressed in tears.

"JESUS WEPT"

Those words must stand together and alone. There are none others like them, except those that tell us that Jesus bled. He had no words for Mary, only tears. Those tears spoke more eloquently than words of the heart that beat in His bosom, and of the sympathy that filled that heart. Here was a Friend indeed! Well as Mary had known Him, she had not really known Him at all until that moment when she looked up through her tears into His face and saw Him weeping. Then she knew Him; then all doubt of Him was driven from her heart, and throughout eternity she will never forget His tears; ages of glory will never blot out that memory, or efface from her soul that experience. Precious tears, crystal drops that flowed from the deep ocean of God's compassion! Precious tears, revealing a love and a friendship that fully entered into the sorrow that sin and death had brought into the world, and that felt the sorrow more even than the bereaved themselves. "Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him."

Then He spoke, first to His Father, for all the works that He did were His Father's works, and they were done in full unison with His Father; and He would have those that stood by to know that He was in their midst as the

Father's Sent One, doing the Father's works, for He sought no glory for Himself, but lived always on account of the Father. Then with a loud voice He summoned Lazarus from the dead. The answer was immediate, for He is Master of the unseen world, and all that are in their graves must answer when He calls. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28—29.)

So those sisters received their beloved brother alive from the dead, and their perplexity and sorrow were turned into wonder and joy. But that was not the end of the story, there was a most blessed sequel, given to us in the following chapter. That family of three made Him a supper. There were others admitted to it, but they made it for Him. And there He sat at their table—the Resurrection and the Life, the Master of death, and mightier than the grave, their Lord, and yet their Friend and their Guest. He sat there as one of themselves, so gracious was He, He found His joy in their company, such was His love. And Lazarus sat with Him, saying nothing as far as is recorded, silent in the joy of communion. And Martha served, not now with question and scolding, no longer excited and cumbered, but with a quiet grace that blended well with that feast. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment—very costly." It was the most precious thing in the house, and she had prized it and kept it. She loved her brother and she might have poured it upon him when death laid him low, and so have preserved his body from corruption for a while, but she did not. She had kept it for the supreme hour of her life, and that hour had come. She did not pour it on herself, self was eclipsed and forgotten in His presence who had wept with her in her sorrow. Upon His feet and upon Him alone it was poured out, her heart's tribute to Him, her soul's

adoration of Him who was more to her than sister and brother and self. With a spiritual intuition that none shared with her she realised what lay ahead of Him, and He knew what was in her innermost heart when He said, "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this."

Now let us apply this wonderful story. It has been recorded by the Holy Spirit that we might learn and understand the heart and ways of our Lord. We may surely turn to Him in times of stress and sorrow; we may know and treat Him as our Friend in just such times as these are. He waits for us to confide in Him, and if He does not immediately answer our pleadings we may be sure that He is not indifferent to our need, but waits and keeps us waiting because He has some better thing for us than that which we have asked for. It is His will that we should make our requests known to Him and unburden our hearts at His feet; and if the trial through which we are called to pass increases in its intensity, and the sorrow deepens and runs its course, He would have us know that it is not because He loves us less than we thought He did, but more. He would have us learn that His love is wiser and truer than our highest thought of it; that it passes knowledge and has our eternal good in view. If we are allowed to pass through trial and to suffer, we may have Mary's portion, we may know the sympathy of His love, which is greater than the greatest sorrow that we could know. It is confiding trust on our part that pleases Him; and it is His love, His sympathy, His friendship, that sustains us in trial and danger. And to this learning of Him there may be a sequel as great in our lives as that recorded of this well loved family. The knowledge of Him, learned in sorrow and trial, will change us from the self-centred beings we are by nature into such as give Him the supreme place in our thoughts, and lose all thought of self in occupation with Him. If He who was greater than death went into death for us, it would

not be a thing to be wondered at if we laid our all in a full surrender at His feet. The wonder, indeed, is that we are so slow in doing it!

It is interesting and instructive to see that John closes his final Epistle with this salutation, "Our friends

salute Thee. Greet the friends by name." These are they who are friends of Jesus, who know Him as their Friend, who consequently are friends of one another, and may make Him a feast, while they wonder, serve and adore.

The Song of Habakkuk.

Habakkuk is just the word for us in the maelstrom of the day; everything topsy-turvy, upside down, and downside up; trees fruitless, folds empty, flocks cut off, desolation all round; yet faith rejoices in the Lord, takes its stand on the "watch tower"; and, whilst waiting for the vision, looks onward and sees something fine, beautiful, transporting—"the earth filled", not only with the glory of the Lord (as promised in Numbers 14.), not only with the knowledge of the Lord (as in Isaiah 11.), but with both of them, "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord!" Oh! happy Habakkuk! What a vision! Splendid! a mere visionary? Not at all! Why not? Because "the just shall live by his faith". "Live", not die, nor decline, nor droop. He shall live by a power as immortal as invisible.

Hearken, ye Romans, ye Galatians, ye Hebrews, ye who live in 1940: thou soul of mine! List to the truth which holds the field in triumph till the vision bursts, and the eye sees, and the hands touch, and things become material, actual, permanent.

How is that? "The Lord is my strength. He . . . will make me walk on my high places". That is the secret of it all. "Because I live ye shall live also".

And the subscription? "To the **Chief Musician** on my stringed instruments".

Most becoming. Sing on, Habakkuk!

"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven". Luke 7: 47.

Because my transgressions are many,
Are more than the hairs of my head,
The sins that are black and secret,
The sins that are crimson red,

Because on Thy cross I have seen them
Beholding how deep was their dye;
Because Thine own lips have ab-
solved me

Here, here, O my God, am I,

Here, here, in Thy holy temple,
Brought near to Thy holiest place,
To shew to Thy wondering angels
The miracle of Thy grace—

My God and my Saviour, as surely
As Thou art in glory in heaven
So surely, rejoicing, I own it
That I, even I, am forgiven.

THE FATHER AND THE CHILDREN.

David Ross.

I John 1: 3-4; I John 2: 1-2, 7-8; 5 B.

JOHNSON gives, amongst others, three reasons why he wrote his Epistle. First, "I write these things unto you that your joy may be full." Second, "I write unto you, little children, that ye sin not." Third, "I have written these things unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Fulness of joy carries us back to the Gospel. Six times John speaks of it. Now where is fulness of joy to be found? Psalm 16 tells us. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." And where do we get that Divine presence? John writes of it. In his Gospel God is revealed. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and "the Word was God." John had kept company with the Word, the only begotten Son. He had seen Him, heard Him and lovingly contemplated Him. He had put his head upon the bosom of the One who was the complete and final revelation of God, and in that Presence he had known fulness of joy. And the first of his reasons for writing his Epistle is that we might come into fellowship with him and know this fulness of joy.

Four times in the Gospel reference is made to this fulness of joy and I want to indicate the conditions for it. We will consider them in the order in which they occur. First, as the mission of John the Baptist was drawing to its close, some of his disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptiseth, and all men come to him" (ch. 3. 26). They may have been jealous for their teacher, but their words aroused no jealousy in his heart. Hear him, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom rejoiceth greatly when he heareth the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." I want to press this especially upon the

young Christians, who have life before them. It is in this surrender of self, the losing sight of self in the presence of the glory of Jesus that you will begin to know fulness of joy. As long as you are self-occupied you will be unhappy, whether good self or bad self, clever self or stupid self, it matters not. By self-occupation the devil keeps thousands of God's children unhappy, and they remain spiritual dwarfs. But beholding the Lamb of God, as the Baptist beheld Him coming to him, self will be eclipsed and your joy will be full. That gifted French preacher, Th. Mond, wrote of the time that he remembered with shame, when, in answer to the Lord's pleading, he said "All of self and none of Thee." But as the glory of the Lord shone upon him, his love of self decreased until at last he sang:

"Higher than the highest heaven,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered,
Grant me now my supplication,
"None of self and all of Thee."

Second, the Lord said, "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (Ch. 15. 10, 11). His joy was the joy of absolute and willing obedience to His Father who sent Him. His delight was in the will of God, and never a cloud obstructed between the Father and Him. In a like obedience you shall know the fulness of joy, for as you obey His will you will abide in His love. I have quoted a simple verse before, but will do it again:

"Trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus
But to trust and obey."

This joy is not affected by circumstances. Paul rejoiced in the Lord in

prison. He would not have been there if he had not been obedient to the word of the Lord. He was there for Christ's sake. Obedience to the Lord may cause you to suffer, but suffering for Christ's sake does not hinder the Christian joy; your joy is not dependent on your circumstances. The love of Christ known and enjoyed is the cause of it, and as you keep His commandments you shall abide in His love and your joy shall be full.

Third. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Ch. 16. 24). The Lord was drawing His disciples into a close communion with Himself and anticipating the time when, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, they would be attuned to the very thoughts of God and would pray as Christ's representatives on earth. This is the joy of communion with the Father concerning His Son, resulting in prayer and its answer. Why should some Christians think the prayer meeting gloomy and dull? It is because they are worldly-minded and not attuned to that bright world above. But if we grasp the privilege of speaking to the Father we shall delight in the meeting for prayer. The name of Jesus is our passport into the Father's presence. His name is our plea as we present our petitions, and in His name we prevail in prayer and our joy is full.

Fourth. "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are . . . And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (Ch. 17. 11-13). It is the Lord Himself speaking to His Father about all His loved ones. His prayer was that they might be "kept." And He spoke these things in the hearing of His disciples, that they might have the joy of knowing that they were kept. Have you that joy? Do you know that in a world like this you are being kept, preserved from the evil that is in the world by the Father's

hand? Kept by a love that will not let you go? Kept in the Father's Name? These are the four causes of fulness of joy as we see them in this Gospel: The surrender of self; obedience to the word of the Lord; answered prayer; and the knowledge that you are kept by the Father's hand and heart.

Now we come to the second reason for the writing of the Epistle. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." He had just warned them that the man who claimed to have no sin in him was self-deceived. Well, says the careless Christian, if sin is in me I cannot help sinning. And we are all liable to excuse ourselves and take refuge in such a saying as, "To err is human, to forgive is divine." But that is not what John said. He wrote his Epistle that we sin not. To sin is abnormal to the Christian life. There are three reasons given why we should not sin. Christ died for us, and, says the Apostle, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake" (Ch. 2. 12). Do you imagine that our sins have been forgiven to encourage us to go on sinning? "Sin no more" were the Lord's words to the man whom He healed in John 5, and to the guilty woman in John 8, and to us comes the word of God "that ye sin not." Then He is the propitiation for our sins. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and there God bruised Him because of them, God has met us in Him, and through Him we have peace with God. Surely we cannot think lightly of that which cost Him so much. Some have said, when they heard that where sin abounded grace did much more abound, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound," but such, said Paul, are blasphemers, and their damnation is just. Then, if any man sin, Jesus Christ the righteous is our Advocate with the Father. He who suffered for our sins lives to maintain our cause with the Father if through unwatchfulness we fall into sin. But that very fact should make us abhor sin and walk with care. It is not

“when” a man sins, but “if” a man sins. It is not viewed as a necessity but as a possibility; if that happens we are absolutely dependent upon the Advocacy of the One who died for us. This is the divine provision for us. The propitiation which He made abides in all its efficacy in Him for us, He is the righteous One and will never parley with sin, nor should we; and it is with the Father that He intercedes for us, who is faithful and just to forgive our sins, when we confess them to Him, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This whole Epistle is written that we might not sin. It tells us that we are children of God and as born of God we cannot sin for His seed—holy seed remaineth in us.

He stirs up our minds by way of remembrance. “I write no new commandment unto you”. Beware of novelties in divine things. John goes back to the beginning; that abides. He warns us against seducers; they are those who advance beyond the truth (2 John 9). How are we most easily seduced? By something new and advanced being offered to us, with the flattery, “You are an advanced young man, intelligent and abreast of the times, you cannot be content with what is old; progress must be your slogan”. But turn away your ears from these seducers. That which was from the beginning, the full and final revelation of God in His Son, Jesus Christ, may be old as time goes, but it is ever fresh and living, it will never be superseded and it will satisfy the hearts of the myriads of God’s children for ever. There are glories in it that we have not yet perceived. As you advance in growth from babes to young men and from young men to fathers the truth

will become more wonderful and vivid to your souls, but it will be in the truth that you do advance. It is as that abides in you which was from the beginning that you will be preserved from the seducer, and “you shall continue in the Son and in the Father” and that is infinite ineffable and eternal.

Finally—“these things have I written unto you that believe in the Name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (Ch. 5, 13). The word “know” is not knowledge attained by a process of reasoning. It is instinctive knowledge. You have believed God’s record, your faith has put you into living contact with the Son of God and you have life in Him; it is eternal life. You have life outside this scene of death that no evil can move, or power take from you and you know it. Popular theology says you cannot know; some go through life mournfully singing:

“ ‘Tis a point I long to know,
 Oft it gives me anxious thought:
 Do I love the Lord or no?
 Am I His or am I not?”

We turn from all that to the record that God has given of His Son. “And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (Ch. 5, 11).

The Apostle’s purpose in writing will not be lost if we enter into **the fulness of joy** that the revelation of God as Father in His Son yields. It is this that will secure for us and maintain us in **freedom from sin** and will intensify the **fulness of assurance** that we have eternal life.

Divine Love.

“The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them” (John 17: 22). The Son’s rich and unjealous love, for it is divine, gives us the glory which the Father has given to Him, and will display us in the glory which approves before the world that the Father has loved us as He loved Him. (J.N.D.)

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

T. Oliver.

No. 6. THE LILY PSALMS

In the divine inscriptions of the psalms, four are found bearing titles which may be so translated. They are described in the plural as Shoshannim, viz. Psalms 45, 69, 80, while Psalm 60 is entitled Shushan-Eduth which is the singular, meaning, "The lily of testimony." The term "lilies" reminds us of the Song of Songs where it occurs seven times. "Feeding among the lilies" is there indicated as the pinnacle of spiritual happiness. Israel will yet blossom as the lily for the good pleasure of God (Hos. 14.5). That is a beautiful figure of souls loyal to Christ in all the qualities of the lily, e.g. perfect form, spotless purity and vivid whiteness, representing the true sons of the light (1. Thess. 5, 5). In its subjective aspect the light is the teaching of the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the true source of all formative work in the soul. Sonship is relative to the Day of Glory which is analogous to the coming of age celebration of the heir. Hence anyone with the consciousness of such a destiny will be marked by the peculiar dignity of that scene now, however little external circumstances may seem to support the view. Moreover the testimony will unite souls in the bond of loyalty to the Lord. That will have a startling effect on the bodies of the Christians too. They will be found presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, (Rom. 12. 1).

In the Song of Songs, the term "Lilies" indicates what the Lord thinks of His people. In the Psalms, the force is rather what His people think of Him! There is a beautiful harmony between the two usages. In the 45th Psalm there is a joyous utterance of appreciation of His moral excellencies. While the aspect of "the Sons of Korah" may be expected to dwell upon the power and majesty by which He will deliver His people and establish His universal dominion. The Shos-

hannim or Lily aspect expresses the moral perfections of the One who is far fairer than the children of men, who loved righteousness and hated lawlessness and as a result is set over everything, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Christ eclipses the glory of all others. The transcendent expressions suggest the inward exercises of praise from souls instructed by God.

In Psalm 69 the Lord's people meditate upon Him in the scene of suffering, reproach, sorrow and death and praise Him in His perfections exhibited there. In divine grace He condescended to identify Himself in loving sympathy with them in the scene of humiliation. He goes on to bear their sins and suffers the forsaking of God which is the prominent thought in Psalm 22. The first 21 verses of Psalm 69 dilate on the sufferings associated with the line of martyrs or witnesses to the righteousness of God in opposition to the lawlessness of the world. Primarily the words expressed the exercises of David, when the people spoke of stoning him. (1. Sam. 30). The consideration of these expressions stimulates a sympathetic line of testimony in believers as witnesses to the ways of God, so that the meek and afflicted see and are glad and the conclusion of the Psalm shows the purpose of God in the blessing of His people.

In Psalm 80, we find reference to Israel marching through the wilderness. The progress of the Ark is the focus of interest for God. According to the purpose of God it is the Ark of Testimony in Exodus. In Numbers it is the Ark of the Covenant which is introduced. The usage is continued in Joshua, but later on when Israel had sadly vitiated the principles of the Covenant, the Ark was described as the Ark of God. The witness had broken down so that God could not associate them

with Him in what the Ark set forth. He remained faithful in spite of their unfaithfulness! Psalm 80 is God's way for the moral restoration of the remnant in a day of ruin. He had been the shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock in the wilderness, dwelling between the cherubim in the Ark, and going before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh in the march. The common thought is in people's minds that God changes with the times, that is He will manifest himself in a different way in the twentieth century than in the first! But God is faithful, i.e. absolutely consistent with His eternal character. His face is always towards us in unchanging grace. Although in government He may have to deal very firmly with us, restoration is in view. Those intelligent in the mind of the Lord pray "let thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand" (Ps. 80: 17). We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God. When we see Him there we are confident of God's victory. He will ultimately show forth His glory both in the Church and in Israel to the wondering universe.

The singular usage 'Shushan-Eduth'

in Psalm 60 expresses the united purpose of the remnant in the maintenance of the testimony. Their faithfulness will incur the greater opposition of their enemies. But in spite of that they will display a banner in the cause of the truth and God will reward their faithfulness. He is not occupied with the doings of the great on the earth. He refers to Succoth and Shechem, because they are in His land. Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah are His special portion, while he speaks in terms of the greatest contempt of Moab, Edom and Philistia in spite of their natural relationship and the intrusion of the last mentioned in the land of promise. Vain is the help of man. The people of God are assured of victory, not through human agency but by the intervention of God. True godliness looks beyond second causes, owning God's hand in everything. Israel will yet turn to God eschewing all efforts and the help of man. How encouraging is such testimony, stimulating the faith of the people of God in trial in every era.

Psalm 60 is also the last Golden Psalm, inscribed as "Michtam."

'Stormy winds fulfilling His Word.' Ps. 148. 8.

Our natural way is to pray that the stormy winds might cease—that the war, for instance, might come to a speedy end. It helps us to a more spiritual view of things if we realize that God is over all and turns that which seems wholly evil to the blessing of His own people. One day by God's great mercy every mystery will be solved for us; we shall see how the tribulation preserved us from becoming entangled in the world and its ways, how the stormy winds drove us to God to find our shelter under His wings and to learn His feelings towards us and purposes for us in a fuller way. Now we look only on the loss and

shrink from the howling winds and the muttering thunders, then we shall see how they did but make heaven the more to be desired and quickened our feet on the road to that goodly land, our home in heaven. The stormy winds fulfil His Word, and His Word is good.

Yet when we think not of ourselves but of the suffering multitudes we may well desire an end to these distressing days and God has given us the privilege of approach to Him to make our requests known in His listening ear. Our prayers must embrace all men in their sorrows and needs.

"I have discovered a grave error I have been making for the greater part of my life. He has been asking for ME and I have been offering Him my service instead. WE ARE MORE TO HIM than all our bits of service".

BIBLE STUDY—MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 21, 23—23. 14)

THE religious leaders felt that the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem and His wonderful actions were a challenge to their authority, so they determined to act aggressively and challenge His. By doing this they started a controversy, the record of which continues to the end of chapter 22. It produced three striking parables from the lips of the Lord, followed by three crafty questions from Pharisees and Herodians, from Sadducees, and from a lawyer, respectively; and then crowned by the Lord's own great question which reduced all His adversaries to silence.

In demanding that He produce His authority, the chief priests assumed that they had competency to assess its value when produced. The Lord's answer was virtually this, that if they would prove their competency by pronouncing on the far lesser question of John's authority, He would then submit His authority to their scrutiny. This at once plunged them into difficulty. If they endorsed John's baptism as coming from heaven, they condemned themselves for they had not believed him. If they rejected it as merely of men, they would lose popularity with the people who held him to be a prophet. That popularity was very dear to them, for "they loved the praise of men" (John 12. 43). They **would not** say John's baptism was valid, and they **dared not** say it was invalid, so they took the ground of ignorance, saying, "We cannot tell." Thus they destroyed their own competency to adjudicate and lost any possible ground of protest when Jesus refused to reveal His authority. The power of God that He wielded gave Him ample authority apart from anything else. But they had refused it and attributed it to the energy of the devil, as we saw earlier in the Gospel.

The Lord now took the initiative with His parables. As we consider them we shall see that the first con-

cerns their response as under the law; the second their response as tested by the presence of the Son upon earth; the third is prophetic and looks on to the response which would be accorded to the Gospel. The Divine order is observed—the Law, the Messiah, the Gospel.

Jesus opened the first with the words, "What think ye?" since He submitted the short parable to their judgment and allowed them to condemn themselves. The parable as to two sons in Luke 15. is somewhat lengthy, whereas here we have a parable of two sons which is very short, yet in both the same two classes are portrayed—the religious leaders on the one hand, the publicans and sinners on the other. Here however we find their responsibility under the law, whereas in Luke 15. it is their reception according to the grace of the Gospel.

In several Old Testament passages the figure of a vineyard sets forth Israel under the law; so the words, "Go work to-day in My vineyard," most aptly express Jehovah's command. These words are often quoted as though they urged Christians to serve their Lord in the Gospel, but that is not their meaning, if read in their context. The figure which would apply to us is that of labour in "the harvest" and not "the vineyard," as we see in chapter 9. 38, John 4. 35-38, and elsewhere. The great word under the law was, "This DO," for it set men to work; but by the works of the law no flesh has been justified.

This fact may be seen in the parable, for neither of the two sons was marked by full obedience. One made fair profession in words but totally disobeyed. The other flagrantly refused at first, but then was brought to repentance, and obedience as the fruit of that. Just so the chief priests and elders were deceiving themselves by

their religious profession, while publicans and harlots repented and entered the kingdom. In verse 32 the Lord definitely connects the matter with John's ministry. He came at the close of the age of law, calling those who had failed under it to repentance. Thus the Lord Himself connected the parable with law and not the Gospel.

The parable of the householder and his vineyard follows. It is still the vineyard, we notice; and "the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel" (Isa. 5. 7). Now we have not only their failure under the law but their ill-treatment of all the prophets by whom God had addressed their consciences, and then finally the mission of the Son, who came as the supreme test. The "husbandmen" of the parable evidently represent the responsible leaders of Israel, who now not merely repeated their failure to produce any fruit for the benefit of the "householder," but crowned their wickedness by slaying the Son. They desired the whole inheritance for themselves. Thus the Lord summed up the indictment against Israel under these three heads: no fruit for God; ill-treatment of His servants the prophets; the rejection and murder of the Son.

Having propounded the parable He again said, in effect, "What think ye?"—submitting to their judgment what fate the husbandmen deserved. His opponents, though so acute as to things concerning their own interests, were obtuse and very blind to everything of a spiritual nature. Hence they entirely failed to discern the drift of the parable, and gave an answer which foretold the righteous doom which would come upon their own heads. They would find themselves in two words, **dispossessed** and **destroyed**.

The Lord accepted as correct the verdict they had passed upon themselves, quoting Psalm 118. 22, 23, in corroboration. He was the stone which they, the builders, were reject-

ing. He in no way fitted into the building which they designed and they refused Him. A day is coming when He will be brought forth to be the foundation and set the lines of the building that God has in view; and this wonderful event will involve the destruction of wicked men and their false building.

In verse 43 and the beginning of verse 44 we get the present effects of His rejection. He becomes a stone of stumbling to the leaders of Israel and the mass of the nation, and in consequence they are broken as a people. This finally came to pass when Jerusalem was destroyed. God's kingdom had been established in their midst through Moses, and now this was definitely taken from them, and it was to be given in another form to a "nation" that would produce its proper fruits. The prophets of old had denounced the sin of the people, and announced that God would raise up another nation to supplant them, as we see in such scriptures as Deuteronomy 32. 21; Isaiah 55. 5; 65. 1; 66. 8. That nation will be "born at once" at the beginning of the millennial age; that is, they will be born again, and so have the nature that delights in the will of God, and enables them to bring forth fruit. We Christians anticipate this, as we see in 1 Peter 2. 9. Redeemed and born again, we have been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and so are enabled as "an holy nation" to show forth the virtues of the One who has called us. This surely is bringing forth fruit which gratifies Him.

The latter part of verse 44 refers to what will happen to the unbelieving at the beginning of the millennium. The Lord's words look like a reference to Daniel 2. 34, 35, and set forth the pulverizing effect of the Second Advent upon men, whether Jew or Gentile. So the teaching of these two verses comprises the national breaking of Israel as a consequence of their rejection of Christ, the substitution for them of a new "nation", and the final

destruction of all adversaries when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire.

Having heard these things it dawned upon the darkened minds of the chief priests and Pharisees that He was speaking of them, and that unwittingly they had been condemning themselves. What a shock it must have given them! In their defeat they thought of murder, and were only restrained for the moment by fear of popular opinion. In verse 26 we saw fear of the people putting its restraint upon their **tongues**. In verse 46 it lays a restraining hand upon their **actions**.

But the Lord calmly pursued what He had to say to them, so in the opening of chapter 22 we have the parable of the marriage of the king's son, which predicts the Gospel day which was about to dawn. There is no question, "What think ye?" about this parable, for it travels beyond men's thoughts altogether. It is also distinguished from the other two parables by beginning, "The kingdom of heaven is like," or, more literally, "has become like." Men come under Heaven's jurisdiction by the reception of the Gospel invitation, when the breakdown is complete as figured in the other parables. We are now again going to hear something new, just as we did in chapter 13.

In this parable the king does not demand anything from anybody. He **gives** instead of **demanding**. He too has a "Son" in whose honour He makes a marriage feast, sending forth His servants to call men in. How aptly the call sets forth the Gospel message: "I have prepared . . . all things are ready: come unto the marriage." **Prepared** through the sacrifice of Christ. **Ready**, since His is a finished work. Hence it is not now "Go, work," but "**Come**."

In the first place the invitation went to "them that were bidden," a number of specially privileged folk. We see the fulfilment of this in the early chapters of Acts. For a short time the

Gospel went out only to the Jew, but the mass of them made light of it, occupied with worldly gain, while some actively opposed, persecuting and slaying some of the early messengers, as seen in the case of Stephen. This first stage ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, as foretold in verse 7.

Then the invitation is widened out as we see in verses 9 and 10. In the parable of Luke 14 we find one servant, representing doubtless the Holy Spirit; here many servants are in question, representing the human instruments that the Spirit may use. They go into the highways, bidding all, as many as they meet, whether bad or good. The Spirit can "**compel**" men to come in, as in Luke 14: the servants are instructed to **invite** any and all they run up against. Not all will respond, but by this means the feast will have its full complement of guests. The Gospel preacher has not to embarrass himself with questions as to God's electing grace. He has simply to pass on the word to all he meets; gathering in all who respond, for God will touch the hearts of men.

The second part of the parable, verses 11—14, shows that, as always when human service is referred to, what is unreal may enter and remain for a time. By not accepting the wedding garment the man had declined to honour the king's son. When the king came in he was detected and consigned to his true place in outer darkness. The Divine presence will unmask all that is unreal and disentangle everything. We saw this in chapter 13, and shall see it again in chapter 25.

That the Pharisees were now getting desperate is seen in the fact that they were driven to an alliance with the Herodians, whom they abominated. Their question as to the tribute was cleverly framed so as to bring Him into disrepute with either Caesar or the populace. They began with what they intended to be flattery, but which was a sober statement of truth. He **was** true. He **did** teach the way of

God in truth. He was wholly above regarding the person of men. Asking for the tribute money, He showed them that it was evidently Caesar's, for it had his image upon it. If Caesar's it must be rendered to him; but then He set them in the presence of God. Were they rendering to God the things that were His? This great answer not only amazed them but also so smote their consciences that they went away. Jesus had stated a great principle of action applicable to all of us so long as we are under the jurisdiction of any kind of Caesar. We must render to Caesar all his rights, but the things that are God's are far higher and wider than all that is his.

The question propounded by the Sadducees was cleverly designed with the twofold object of embarrassing Jesus and of ridiculing belief in resurrection, which to their minds only meant a restoration to life under ordinary conditions in this world. Doubtless they felt sure that in result Jesus would be discomfited and themselves confirmed in their unbelief. But the Lord's reply showed that resurrection introduces into another world where different conditions prevail, and He quoted Exodus 3. 6, as showing that in the days of Moses the Patriarchs were living in that other world, though not yet raised from the dead. The fact that their spirits were there guaranteed that eventually they would be there in risen bodies.

In those days the priests were mainly of the Sadducee persuasion, and the Lord did not spare them in the directness of His rebuke. "Ye do err," was His plain word, and He indicated the source of their error; they knew neither the Scriptures, that they professed to expound, nor the power of the God, whom they professed to serve. This twofold error underlies all modern religious unbelief. First, the Scriptures are frequently misquoted and always misunderstood. Second, in their minds God is so stripped of His power and glory that endless difficulties are created. Let His power be admitted

and difficulties cease to exist.

The Lord's answer astonished all who heard it. Evidently it was quite new to them, even to the Pharisees, who had never been able to silence the Sadducees like this. Hearing it, the Pharisees came together, and one of them put to the Lord his question about the law, raising a point that they had doubtless often discussed amongst themselves. He was thinking of the ten Commandments in Exodus 20., but the Lord turned him to Deuteronomy 6. 5, and added Leviticus 19. 18. The demand of the law is summed up in one word—love. First, love to God; second, love to one's neighbour. When Paul tells us, "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13. 10), he is only stating in other words what Jesus said here (verse 40).

The three parables had brought them face to face with the grace of the Gospel; the three questions had been so answered as to impress upon them love, as the supreme demand of the law. To that love they were strangers. Yet being still gathered together Jesus propounded to them His great question, "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?" They knew He was to be the Son of David, but why David should call Him his Lord, in Psalm 110, they did not know. The only possible solution of that problem has been given in the first chapter of our Gospel. "Jesus Christ, the Son of David" is "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." If faith once seizes that the whole position is as clear as sunlight. If that be refused, as with these poor Pharisees, all is gloom. They were in darkness. Not a word could they answer, and their discomfiture was so complete that they dared not question Him more.

However though they were done with Him, the Lord had not finished with them. The time had now come to unmask these hypocrites in the presence of the multitudes, who were under their influence. Chapter 23. records His burning words. In a few

days the multitude, influenced by these men, would be shouting for His death. Their responsibility and guilt was greatly increased by this warning the Lord gave them as to the true character of their leaders.

He began by according to them the place they claimed as the exponents of the law of Moses. Therefore the people were to keep and do the law as they heard it from their lips. Yet they were to carefully avoid taking them as examples. Their lives contradicted the law they proclaimed. They legislated for others without the smallest conscience as to their own obedience. This the Lord stated in verse 4, and it is a very common offence with professional religionists, who love directing other people while having an easy time themselves.

Then, verses 5—12, He exposed their love of notice and pre-eminence. All was for the eye of men. At feasts—the social circle—in synagogues—

the religious circle—in markets—the business circle—they wanted the chief place as Rabbis and Masters. The disciple of Christ is to be the exact opposite of all this, so let us take it deeply to heart. The abasement of such men is only a matter of time. They were supposed to be signposts into the kingdom but really they were obstructions. They did not enter themselves and hindered others.

Moreover, they used their position to rob the poor and defenceless widow, covering up this enormity with the parade of long prayers, consequently they should receive severer judgment. Long prayers may impress the crowd, but they did not impress the Lord! Let us remember this and avoid them ourselves. We venture to affirm that no one marked by deep desire and really conscious of the presence of God, can wander about in a maze of words. As Ecclesiastes 5. 2 indicates, **his words must be few.**

“Adorning the Doctrine.”

I was asked to give a short gospel message to a large company of men who had gathered at the grave-side of their foreman. I did this with confidence, for I had known for some years the one who had answered his home-call as a happy consistent Christian. I had visited him a few days before his death, and though he was suffering much no murmurs escaped his lips, instead he was full of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord, and insisted on singing a verse of a hymn that had been running in his mind. It was:

“Thy death has brought to light the Father’s heart,
 And **mine** has won;
 And now I contemplate Thee as Thou art,
 God’s glorious Son!
 And know that I am loved with that great love,
 That rests on Thee in those bright courts above.”

I had confidence in speaking of the power of the Lord Jesus to save and sustain, because I could instance my friend as one who in the very presence of death had proved that power. But I had another ground of confidence also. Sitting by my side in the coach on our way to the cemetery was the master of the works where my friend had been employed. He said to me: “We never had a more faithful servant; he was a most conscientious and honest man, and all the men who attend his funeral to-day will be there out of regard of his thoughtfulness for, and kindness to others, that made me feel that in preaching the gospel to his fellow-workmen I should have their attentive interest because the effect of the gospel had been seen in his life by them. Not only on a bed of sickness and suffering, but in the humdrum duties of his daily toil he “had adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour”. And it is lives such as his that often make men ready to listen to the gospel because with their own eyes they have seen it reduced to practice.

THE ETERNAL STATE.

A. J. Pollock

QUESTION: In the Eternal State will Israel remain an earthly people inhabiting a new earth while the redeemed saints of God are in heaven?

ANSWER: In the Eternal State we shall have arrived at the full condition of new creation. This is plain from Rev. 21: 5, "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Moreover in 2 Cor v. 17 we are told, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (**literally**, there is a new creation): old things are passed away: Furthermore, Col. 3: 11 tells us that in new creation, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free but Christ is all in all."

These Scriptures clearly show that Israel will cease to be Israel in the Eternal State. Nations came into existence through man's sin. You read the account of it in Gen. 11 in connection with the Tower of Babel. But you may say, was not Israel chosen as a nation by God when He gave the call to Abraham, and promised that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed? That is so, but Col. 3: 11 is quite explicit, "Neither Greek nor Jew." To bring in Israel as a separate nation would perpetuate for ever the sin of the Gentile nations. Thank God, every trace of sin's story will be completely absent in that blissful future of new creation.

Gal. 3: 28 says of new creation, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Now here we have added, "neither male nor female."

Conditions in this life must not be introduced into new creation. A little reflection will show how wise it is that earth's relations as such cease, whether it be nationally as Jew and Greek, or domestically as husband and wife etc.

It has been wisely said, and Scripture is the foundation of the remark, that distinctions begun in eternity last for

eternity, and distinctions begun in time cease with time. The distinction between Jew and Greek began in time and were part of God's **ways** and will cease with time. The distinction between the Church and the rest of the redeemed was the subject of **divine counsel** in a past eternity and will be preserved in the future eternity.

The question asks, "In the Eternal State will Israel remain an earthly people inhabiting a new earth, while the redeemed saints of God are in heaven?" You will see there is no thought of an earthly people being on a new earth and a heavenly people being in heaven. The holy city comes **out of** heaven. The holy city is a symbol representing the Church of God redeemed and blessed, but here as the bride prepared for her husband. The tabernacle of God is with men. There will be the distinction between the Church and the redeemed that do not form part of the Church.

I remember once breaking bread in the United States of America. The following nationalities were represented, American, English, Scotch, Irish, French, Swedish, Russian, Jewish. In the Lord's presence we forgot that we belonged to different nationalities. We were all one in Christ Jesus. Thank God when new creation comes there will be nothing to remind us of the sorrows of earth.

It is well not to speculate about what will or will not be in the Eternal State. We gladly seize upon all that is revealed in the Word of God as to it. Apparently the positive description is too wonderful for us to bear in our present condition. The Apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven and heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. 12. 4).

Rev. xxi. 1—5 tells us the Eternal State will be distinguished by the ab-

sence of all that makes this world undesirable, of all that sin has brought in its train. There will be no tears, no death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain. one thing we may be sure of, the con-

ditions of the Eternal State will leave no regrets in our minds. There will be no room for prayer, but only for praise, eternal praise to Him who doeth all things well.

The Blessedness of Evangelising.

“In connection with what you tell me about evangelisation, be it of the appeal to souls, I am as far as possible from thinking it a **low thing**. A faithful brother who had at heart the walk of the brethren, reproached me for devoting myself too much to it, more than twenty years ago. I have no regret, far from it; I feel that other brothers have a greater gift for it; but it is a joy to me, when God gives me the grace of being occupied with that part of the work. In these last times this work is of the greatest importance. Also, God has led many people into it. With some there is what is superficial, so that a work which acts more deeply in consciences becomes almost necessary; but, here at least, it is as if God would urge souls into a place of safety before the end. Thank God, there is more zeal among brethren on that side also; **but I believe that, in all times, blessing within is in the measure of the spirit of evangelisation**. The reason is very simple. It is the pre-

sence of God which blesses, and God is love, and it is love which makes one seek souls. It is not at all to despise or neglect the care of souls that are Christian. Nothing is more important in its place, but it seems to me that the two things go together where the love of God is found. Nor is it any more to neglect what are called the principles of brethren, principles to which I always attach the greatest importance, as the testimony of God in these last days. It is the word which made me receive them as the truth at the beginning; experience has made me feel the importance of them for the whole church, and that in the sight of the Lord and as the testimony of God essential for these times. But God loves souls, and if we do not seek them He will set His testimony elsewhere. He loves us, I believe; but He has no need of us. May He give us only to be faithful to Him, and He will certainly bless us. His patience also is great.”—J.N.D.

The Word of God.

The Bible is a book great and wide as the world. While all other books evince only human skill, in the Bible is not a vestige of art. As nature is above art, so is inspiration above nature. It is a book unique in vitality, in its attractiveness, and in its power. A book of revelation is an intrinsic necessity. A divine revelation embodied in a book is not unworthy of God, and it is according to divine wisdom and love, that God, who revealed Himself in acts and words to the fathers by the prophets and hath in these last

days spoken unto us in His Son, should cause the whole revelation to be committed to writing in order that all future generations might possess it in a form, secure, complete, correct, and easy of access. This book is inexhaustible. The mine is deep, and the more we search, the more are there brought out treasures from hidden depths. The Bible is the word of God. It speaks to us out of the fulness of divine omniscience. It reveals to us spiritual and heavenly realities.—**Saphir**.

THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

J. T. Mawson.

“Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet Him”. (N.T.) Matthew 25.

THREE great facts make up the Christian testimony to the Lord in the world. 1st, He has been here. 2nd, He is not here. 3rd, He is coming back again. When He was here He was the Light of the world: then why is He not here now? Because men loved darkness rather than light, and they rejected Him and cast Him out. He was cast out by the princes of the world; they crucified the Lord of glory. 1. Cor. 2. 8. Then the world's night began. It is because of the world's darkness, because of the absence of the Bridegroom from it, that the virgins of our parable needed lamps alight. When He comes back again He will arise as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings: the millennial day will break for the world then and there will be no need of lamps; but during His absence—the rejected Bridegroom—it is the world's night, and we who are going out to meet Him must have our lamps trimmed and shining.

It was ever God's intention that the Church on earth should bear witness to the world that her Saviour and Lord would surely come again. It was the first great truth that was proclaimed from heaven after Jesus ascended there. As soon as the cloud of glory received Him out of the sight of His wondering disciples, two angels descended on swift pinion and announced, “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven”. Acts I. 2. And this great truth was an integral part of their message to men, given in the power of the Holy Ghost, so that those who believed the gospel looked earnestly for the return of the Lord. The church at Thessalonica is proof of this; to it Paul wrote: “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 the dead, even Jesus,

which delivered us from the wrath to come”. 1. Thess. I. 9. 10. They believed the gospel, received Jesus as their Saviour, confessed Him as their Lord, and looked for Him as the Bridegroom who should reign over the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

But strange is the story. The Church that at the beginning of its career on earth went forth to meet the Lord, despising the world's prizes and gladly suffering for His Name's sake, soon slipped away from this great calling and hope. “While the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept”. They fell into that deep slumber against which they were warned in the Epistles of Paul, and they became indifferent to the truth and fact of the Lord's return. All were alike in this, wise and foolish, true possessors and mere professors, all alike settled down and made their home in the world, which He will judge at His coming, just as though there was no difference between them and it. The lamps of the wise went untrimmed and burned but dimly, and the darkness steadily deepened until was reached that period known as the dark ages. It was the midnight hour indeed, when the profession of the Name of Christ on earth, which should have shone with a great light in the darkness to guide the people in the way of truth, robbed them of any light they might have had by its gross sensuality and apostasy.

The history of the professing church on earth was faithfully forecast in those solemn messages from the Lord to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2. 3.) and the period of this dense darkness, the midnight hour, is described in the central message of the seven, that to the church of Thyatira. In it the depths of Satan were known as nowhere else on earth. At that time, popes, cardinals, bishops, priests and monks, lived openly wicked lives: they turned the most sacred things into subjects for

their obscene jests and were profane in conversation, and profligate in conduct. It was a common saying: "If there is a hell, Rome is built over it: it is an abyss whence issues every kind of sin". But worse than all, the people were corrupted by these ministers of Satan, who devised a scheme of indulgences and sold them publicly, by which were granted absolution and security from punishment beforehand for any crime a man wished to commit. As the great dignitaries of the church required money in order to pursue their rascalities, the people were urged and forced to buy these indulgences under threat of losing their souls. Standards of right and wrong were obliterated, for the people could do as they pleased so long as they paid, and this was called "the richly offered grace of God". "We Italians", said a historian of that period, "are principally indebted to the church for having become impious and immoral".

It was in His message to the church in Thyatira, which describes this period, that the Lord brought out afresh the fact of His coming again. It was the midnight cry, and was sent to "the rest" who "had not known the depths of Satan". There were such in the midst of the corruption and darkness who were faithful to Him. A small remnant probably, such as Suso, Tauler, and Ter Stegen, whose poems have been beautifully translated by Mrs. Bevan. And it is remarkable that the thought of the Lord as the Bridegroom has a large place in these poems. The Lord has always had a few who refused to bow the knee to Baal. These had kept the light from being wholly extinguished, and to them He said, "I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already, **hold fast till I come.**" To such, what a wonderful word this must have been, "**I will give him the Morning Star**". Jesus Himself is the Morning Star, as He declares in Rev. 22. "I, Jesus . . . am the bright and Morning Star". The morning star shines out in the darkest hour proclaiming the fact that the day

is coming, the sun is on his way.

From the records that have come down to us we learn that some did "trim their lamps", many more no doubt than men knew of, but the Lord knows them that are His. But whether many or few heard the midnight cry, it is certain that then the Lord commenced in a fresh and special way to prepare a people to meet Him at His coming. In many lands the light broke out and faithful servants were raised up who sealed their devotion to their Lord and His word by their blood. Through Luther the Holy Ghost proclaimed afresh the great truth of justification by faith without works, which truth is indispensable in this preparation for the coming of the Lord, for it is only the Justified who possess the oil that keeps the lamps shining in the darkness.

The oil that the wise virgins possessed and the foolish virgins lacked is rightly interpreted as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is only given to those who believe the gospel. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us" (Romans 5. 1, 5.) "In whom (Christ) ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1. 13). Only those who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit's indwelling are ready to respond to the midnight cry: they only are ready to meet the coming Bridegroom, for it is the Holy Spirit that gives the vital link with our Lord and He only can keep the lamps of our testimony burning in the absence of our Lord. But all who have believed the gospel of our salvation have received the Holy Spirit. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you" wrote Paul to the Corinthian believers. (1 Cor. 6. 19).

From that time the coming of the

Lord began to have, more or less, a place in the preaching of the Word. But it was not understood by the preachers, nor clearly preached, for the distinction between the church and the world was not discerned, and this great truth, along with all prophetic truth, must be obscure to all who do not see and maintain this distinction. It was thought and preached that the world would first be converted by the preaching of the gospel, and that then the Lord would come and establish His Kingdom of righteousness; and this by pious men who no doubt read and studied their Bibles. It is still popular, but as false as it is popular. How it could have gained currency is difficult to understand with such a solemn passage in the Bible as that in Revelation 1. 7: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen". A converted world would surely receive Him with acclamation, and not wailing. There are many other passages which are equally emphatic, such as 2 Thess. I. 7-9; Rev. 6. 15-17: 19. 11-16.

After the Reformation the church soon settled down again in the world. It has been said that the ambition of the Romish church is to dominate the world; it did in former days, and will do so again; but in Protestantism the world rules the church. In the message to Sardis which describes this condition of things, the Lord says, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead". And, "**I will come on thee as a thief**", which is the character in which He will come to the world, which cares nothing about His coming, except to scoff at it, or hate the thought of it; thus will He come to the unwatchful and indifferent church.

But the cry which went forth first at the midnight of the church's history is sounding louder now, for in the message to the church at Philadelphia the Lord says, "**Behold, I come quickly**: hold fast that which thou hast, that

no man take thy crown". And this word has awakened a response in many hearts, and these bear in some degree Philadelphian characteristics, which are, loyalty to the Word of the Lord, devotion to His Name and love to all the brethren. May they greatly increase and grow for His Name's sake.

Many have been recovered to the truth of the Lord's coming. It has become again a real and living hope, but those to whom it is real and living have trimmed their lamps, they are known by this, for two things are infallibly united: devotion to Christ and witness to the world. Those who are really looking for Christ, who are truly saying, "Come, Lord Jesus", will by their very lives bear a witness to the world; they will shine as lights as they pass through it.

Their testimony will be that the Lord is coming, and that they are going forth to meet Him. The world's fashions and ways, schemes and ambitions will not engage and entangle them, for they know that it lies under judgment, along with Satan, its god and prince, and that its time is short and its doom is sealed. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Yet they will not be indifferent to the needs of men; they will mingle with their testimony the evangelistic cry: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely".

This cry, "Behold the Bridegroom" is a great test. It finds us out. It tested these awakened virgins in the prophetic parable, and we learn from it that the test is intensely individual. Is the coming again of the Lord the hope, is He the supreme object of the heart's desire? To what community you belong is not the test, nor what profession you make; everything depends upon whether you have the oil in your vessel—Have you received the Holy Spirit? None can receive Him for another, or, having received Him, impart Him to another. Each must receive Him for himself.

The time is short. Fleeter than these foolish virgins imagined were the feet

of the Bridegroom, for while they went to secure oil for their vessels, He came, and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and THE DOOR WAS SHUT. It was too late for them to buy the oil or enter the door, and their knocking was in vain. The Bridegroom only knew those who possessed the oil, and only those whom He knew passed with Him in to the marriages. The word is in the plural. A marriage in Scripture is figurative of a celebration, a festivity, of gladness and feasting, and those festivities will continue for ever, for in His presence is fulness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Are any who read in doubt as to this vital and indispensable possession? and do they ask, Where can we buy the oil? To buy indicates a personal transaction. You must have personal dealings with God, first as to your own sinfulness and need of a Saviour, and then as to the Saviour He has provided. Paul preached, "Repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ", and Peter declared, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye (Jews) slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things: and so is also The HOLY GHOST, WHOM GOD HATH GIVEN TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM" (Acts 5. 30-32).

I have called the Lord, "the rejected Bridegroom". He came to Israel as the Bridegroom. He took this title to Himself when He answered the Pharisee's question as to why His disciples did not fast. Said He, "Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast", (Matt. 9. 15). That time came when His own to whom He

came received Him not and cried, 'away with Him, crucify Him', But He also stands in the relationship of Bridegroom to the whole creation, for surely the sun is a figure of Him in the language of Psalm 19. "In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of the earth; and there is nothing hid from the heat of it". As the Bridegroom He will fill the whole universe with light and joy: all creation awaits His advent; it will continue in travail and pain, it will groan until He appears. As one of our poets has sung:

"Lord, Lord, Thy fair creation groans,
The air, the earth, the sea
In unison with all our hearts,
And calls aloud for Thee".

But His church is nearer and more precious to Him than any other circle. And though the title Bridegroom is not used in His relation to the church, it is called "the Bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 19. 7: 21. 9). And speaking of it, Paul said, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin, to Christ" 2 Cor. 11. 2; It is also said, "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. . . : that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" Eph 5. 25-27 While human and natural figures are used to illustrate spiritual facts, we must look beyond the figures. As the Bridegroom the Lord will fill the universe with light and peace and gladness and all will take character with Him, —He will glorify every circle that He touches with His blessing, but the church will be His chiefest circle, His greatest treasure, she only will be "the bride, the Lamb's wife" and all who compose that church should be earnestly crying in unison with the Spirit. "Come, Lord Jesus".

PRAYER: ANSWERED AND UNANSWERED.

F. B. Hole

GOD does not always answer our prayers by granting the thing that we request. Frequently, by not granting our requests, He indicates that His answer is, No. In the history of one Old Testament character—Elijah—we have examples of prayer, both answered and unanswered, of a most striking and instructive sort.

The first thing that we know of Elijah is that "he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." (Jas. 5. 17.) As the fruit of this fervent, effectual prayer he boldly announced to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." (I Kings 17. 1.) Here in truth was a most genuine prayer of faith—a faith which expressed itself, just as James the Apostle demands, in works, in the form of a prophetic utterance. His faith in the completeness of God's answer was so clear and implicit that he announced not only no rain, but also no dew! He was sure that God would answer his request in the spirit and not only in the letter. God acted just as he requested.

How came it that he was able to pray with such clear-cut assurance? Do the Scriptures throw any light upon this? We believe that they do. The Lord had said through Moses, "Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit." (Deut. 11. 16, 17.) Now they **had** turned aside under Ahab, and they **were** serving and worshipping other gods, and so Elijah expected God to do what He said He would do under those circumstances. He asked Him to do it; he expected Him to do it; he

boldly announced that He would do it. That was faith.

Elijah was not praying for something which would entail pleasant consequences for himself. He shared in the miseries of the prolonged drought, and suffered along with the people, though God made special provision for him which preserved him from starvation. It was evidently true that, as he said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts." He hated the terrible apostasy of Israel towards Baal, his heart burned for the glory of Jehovah's name, and he felt the time had come for God to act in the judgment He had specified. Anything was better than that Israel should pursue their downward way unchecked. The rod of government was to be preferred to utter ruin; so he prayed for the stroke of chastisement, though it was to fall on his own back amongst the rest. That prayer was answered.

James also informs us that, "He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." We might have deduced that he was praying from the account in I Kings, 18, of how on the top of Carmel "he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." But James sets the point at rest by telling us that it was so. He prayed, and sent his servant to look, even seven times, for the answer. The answer came in no stinted measure. There was a great rain.

Again we ask, how come it that he could pray with such assurance? I Kings 8. 35, 36, coupled with verse 3 of the following chapter, supplies the answer. Solomon had requested that if when heaven was shut up there was prayer and confession of Jehovah's name and a turning from their sin, that rain should be given; and the Lord had told Solomon that he had heard his prayer. The people **had** confessed Jehovah's name and **had** publicly repudiated Baal by slaying his

prophets, so Elijah prayed with full confidence that God would make good His word in mercy, just as previously. He had in judgment. Again it was a question of asking God to fulfil His own word.

Earlier on that same day Elijah prayed that God would answer by fire, consuming the sacrifice that he had prepared. This request of his met with an answer so remarkable that not only was the sacrifice consumed, but the stones of the altar, together with dust and water. Though in this case there does not appear to have been any specific word on which his faith could rest, there was precedent. God had answered Solomon by the falling of fire from heaven, as also David when a period of chastisement was over and sacrifice was offered—see, 2 Chronicles 7. 1, and 1 Chronicles 21. 26. So Elijah proposed an answer by fire as the test, and his confidence was not misplaced. His prayer was answered.

Now these instances very plainly show us with what confidence we may pray when our requests are based upon the Word of God. We may be sure that He will do what He has said He will do. We may also expect Him to manifest His power and vindicate His Name as He has in days gone by, for He is an unchanging God. Another thing which stands out very clearly is that if we pray, not for things that suit our own personal convenience, but rather for things that concern His interests and glory, we may have great assurance that we shall be heard and our requests granted.

When, however, we pursue Elijah's story into 1 Kings 19, we very soon meet with another prayer of his that evoked no response whatever. It was completely unanswered. Threatened by Jezebel, he ran away. His courage having failed, in deep depression he flung himself under the juniper tree, and then, "He requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life." Jezebel and those acting under her had been seeking his life to take it

away, as he afterwards complained to the Lord at Horeb, he would rather that the Lord took it away than that she should do so. But the Lord did nothing of the sort.

Not a few may be found who complain that God does not answer their prayers, when the trouble really is that they do not perceive the answers that He has given. He has answered; but not just as they thought He would, and so His reply passes unrecognised. But in Elijah's case this prayer of his was unanswered, in the sense that the reply was an emphatic NO. In fact a more complete and thorough-going case of unanswered prayer could hardly be imagined, for not only did he not die when he requested that he might, but **he never died at all!** He proved to be the second of the two men in the whole history of the world that have been translated to heaven without tasting death.

This request of Elijah's was a prayer of depression and not a prayer of faith. It was also a purely personal prayer. He requested "for himself" that he might die. For a brief moment Jezebel and not God filled his mind's eye, and he felt he would like to be out of the conflict. This is just the type of prayer that goes unanswered. It is also just the type of prayer that many of us frequently offer. We want to be out of trouble; we are swayed by personal preferences; we utter our cry, but we are not heard.

What a pity it would have been, had God answered this request of Elijah's! God had far better things in store for him; chariots of fire were to accompany him to heaven, and he was to appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was a good thing for him that God said No.

And for us also unanswered prayers are no tragedy. A day is surely coming when we shall see that those unanswered were as much a blessing as those answered—perhaps, as in Elijah's case, even more so!

GOD'S PROMISE, MY PRAYER, YOUR PERSUASION.

R. McCallum.

An address given in Edinburgh, October 12th.

WE are living in days of anxious care and strain, unprecedented in the memory of any of us. Into the causes we need not now enter except to note that these affect every sphere of our complex constitution—body, soul and spirit. It is possible that there are those here to-day obsessed with anxious thoughts that concern their physical being—sleep, shelter, safety—who have never given thought to such things before. There are mental perplexities and cares pertaining to ourselves and friends pressing upon us with an intensity hitherto unknown, and most trying of all spiritual anxieties and worries affecting individuals and assemblies undreamed of in the past. Whatever the immediate causes, whatever department of our nature be acutely affected, the consequences are the same; anxious care in the saint. This is dishonouring to God, and destructive of joy, effective witness, and service. It is important then, that we should guard against it and be in possession of "Heaven's Cure for Earth's Care". With this in view I have read to you Hebrews Ch. 13, v. 5 and 6: Philippians Ch. 4 v. 6 and 7 and also v. 19 of the same chapter. Here then, are the antidotes which I find in these verses. Firstly—His Promises: secondly My Prayers and thirdly Your Persuasions and by this last I do not mean your expressions of opinion but your unshakeable convictions based upon mature Christian experience.

His Promise—

Hebrews Ch. 13 and 6 tells us something which as believers we say **boldly**. It is grand in these days of weak-kneed theology when conviction has given place to doubt and warranted dogmatism to inexcusable apology to be able to assert with boldness that "The Lord is my helper". Notice from the context how logical this assertion is. Because He has said, "I will never fail

thee, nor forsake thee"—"I will never let you down and never never let you go". We may boldly say, "The Lord is my Helper". Our confidence is rooted in His promise, a promise made in the first instance to Joshua but confirmed to us in Christ, in whom all the promises which come to us now not merely with the force of Old Testament witness, but with the added confirmation of the New.

Greek scholars disclose that our word "Helper" is in the original a composite word built up from two verbs, one meaning **to hear**, and the other, **to run**. The Lord is our friend whose ear is open to our cry of need and who is swift to answer our cry. What comfort there is here! "The Lord is my Helper", surely there is none to compare with Him. It is not merely that He has helped in times past and may succour in days to come, but He is a very present help. "The Lord is my Helper". And how individual is the confidence! For the Lord is **my** Helper! and He is my **Helper**, who comes to my side to sustain and to aid. With this promise to strengthen and encourage each one of us can say, "I will not fear what man shall do unto me". Let man do his worst, God is my helper. This is a promise which brings contentment and dispels all covetousness. In the strength and joy of it, let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

My Prayers—

The trying circumstances of life come upon us in the permissive providence of God that realising our helplessness and need we may be cast upon His loving care, that where we cannot see,

we may learn to trust. This attitude of trust is expressed in Prayer. Let us hear again the Apostle's well-known injunction, "Be careful (full of care or over anxious) for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God". Here is the three-fold exhortation: (1) Be careful for **nothing**. (2) Be prayerful about **everything**. (3) Be thankful for **anything** which God sends, knowing that in His love and wisdom He sends only what is best. Yes, Prayer is more than petition; it is Thanksgiving; it is submission, it implies co-operation. More and more I incline to believe that we are not simple or child-like enough in prayer.

When Jesus attended the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, Mary the mother of Jesus and His disciples were also there. Now it was Mary, His mother, who observed the need of the host and brought it to Jesus saying, "They have no wine". What could be more natural or simpler. This is indeed, an intercessory prayer for it brought to Him the need of others. There is no multiplicity of words; not a suggestion as to how the defect should be met; and when an apparently discouraging reply was given Mary did not retire dismayed and defeated. There is on her part submission to His will and co-operation with it as she says to the servants, "Whatsoever He says unto you, do it". It is this complete renunciation of our own plans and ability coupled with whole-hearted reliance upon His revealed will that dispels anxious care and assures the peace of God as a guard to the heart and mind through Christ Jesus". May God grant to us all this peace in this day of turmoil and distress!

Your Persuasions—

In rehearsing this blessed conviction which the apostles states for the encouragement of the Philippian saints, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus", let us keep in mind the

background. Paul was in prison in Rome, in bonds for Christ's sake. While there the Philippians had ministered to his need by sending a gift by Epaphroditus and the beloved apostle full of gratitude for their remembrance of him says in effect—

"You have supplied one of my needs, God will fill full your needs".

"You have supplied one of my needs: God will fill your every need".

"You have supplied a material need—God will supply every material and spiritual one".

"You have supplied my need out of your poverty, God will supply every need according to His riches in glory".

You have sent your gift by means of Epaphroditus, a true servant of Jesus Christ. God will meet your needs through Jesus Christ Himself".

Someone has referred to the parts of this great promise in the following terms:

God—the Bank,

Will supply (or fill full)—the Cheque

All your needs—the Amount

According to His riches in glory—the Capital.

By Jesus Christ—the Signature.

But let us not forget that a cheque has no monetary significance until it has been endorsed and presented at the bank. We are in danger of acting with such a blessed promise, as the Indian did who had fought under George Washington. On discharge from the Federal Army he received a pension for life signed by the General. Yet this man found his way into a western Missionary settlement, dirty, hungry, starving. A bright coloured ribbon was round his neck from which there hung a small dirty pouch which he declared to be a charm. When opened it proved to be the pension paper, never yet drawn upon but carried as a charm. Let us not be carrying this promise as a charm instead of claiming the blessings of this promise through Jesus Christ.

Let us not fear to claim this promise of the apostle in the material needs of life. God will hear for we can say in truth, "The Lord is my Shepherd, nothing shall I lack."

The story is told, of a good Scots-woman who in great simplicity appealed to God in every trying experience of life. Her humble faith was well known in her village and often times provided amused mirth to the village youths. When she had finished her bite and had no more bread in her house and no copper left to purchase more she knelt at her table to place her need in His care. These youths heard her and discovered in her prayer for bread the opportunity for rather a poor practical joke. So off to the baker's shop they went and returned with the loaf wrapped in brown paper. This they dropped down the old-fashioned chim-

ney and there the loaf for which she prayed came rolling through the wide fireplace into her kitchen. Amazed at the speedy answer but accepting the miracle as from God she dropped on her knees to render thanks for His Fatherly care. Just as she rose the youths burst into the room to tease her saying, "God never sent it Missus, we bought it, we dropped it down your chimney." The aged saint was not to be mocked and cheated out of thanksgiving so easily however. "Dinna ye think it my laddies", she answered, "Dinna ye think it. God sent it although He may have allowed the devil to bring it". May we be marked by such confidence in God! Then shall we with the apostle break forth into doxology saying with this great saint, "Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever.—Amen".

A Peculiar People.

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

Our English word, when rightly understood, is full of meaning and none fitter or worthier could be chosen. Webster's Dictionary tells us, that "**peculiar** is from the Roman **peculium**, which was a thing emphatically and distinctively ones own, and hence was dear". A single word sometimes contains a sermon. And what a sermon we have here! To be "a peculiar people" is not to be a queer people still less is it to be a people noted for ungraciousness or rudeness. It is to be "emphatically and distinctively" God's own people, and therefore to be very specially dear to Him.

Peace.

"Be careful for nothing: 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 keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4. 6, 7).

Power.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me", (gives me power) v. 13.

Plenty.

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Christ Jesus" (v. 19).

"IN SIGHT OF CALVARY."

Ingليس Fleming.

AT a celebration of the Lord's Supper, in the heart of darkest Africa, one of the natives when giving expression to praise, said,

"Lord we have come this morning to sit for a while at the foot of the Cross, and to think of Thee."

In this attitude of mind shall we consider together, briefly, what happened at the Cross of our Lord Jesus, as it is brought before us in the Epistle to the Galatians.

That Cross, "the centre of all eternity," as it has been termed, is viewed from various points in the epistle. Each of the chapters of the apostle's letter presents the work of our Saviour and Lord upon the tree of Golgotha, from one aspect or another.

Turning then to chapter 1., we read of Him,

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world (age), according to the will of God and our Father" (vv. 4; 5).

At the Cross the question of our sins was raised, was entered into and was eternally settled. "Our sins" were dealt with there. Not some of our sins, not many of our sins, not most of our sins but "our sins" in their totality were borne and put away for ever.

Never will that matter be re-opened between God and the believer.

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

Isaiah 53. 6 has helped many to see his truth:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him (caused to meet on Him) the iniquity of us all."

The verse begins with the "all" of sin and ends with the "all" of salvation. We enter by the first all, in repentance and faith, owning our sins and sinfulness. Then we reach the closing "all" with the assurance that all our sins were caused to meet upon Christ at the Cross. They have been taken away "into a land of forgetfulness" for ever. God now says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10. 17). This was the will of God and our Father. He is glorified (made known) in the putting away of our sins.

Chapter 2. 20 takes up the deeper question of what we were "in the flesh," in our sinful state before God. It too has been met by the death of Christ.

"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."

In the death of Christ we have been ended as to all that we were in our sinful state. "Ended not mended," as it has been said, removed not improved.

To be crucified is to be brought to a close as not fit to live. All that we were as "in the flesh," that is in our natural unconverted condition, has been brought to its "Finis" before God at Calvary. Notice the personal pronoun "I" at the beginning of the verse. Paul himself, not his sins is the subject. As linked with Adam fallen he has been crucified. As Saul of Tarsus in what he was morally he has been terminated in judgment. Yet he still lived as a man on earth, but it was no longer the old Saul, it was now Christ living in him. Christ was his life (Col. 3. 4). Paul now lived by faith in the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him.

Chapter 3. 13, 14 shows how Christ has redeemed from its curse those who were under the law, He having

been made a curse for them on the tree. And this was in order that blessing might come upon the Gentiles and the Holy Spirit be given to them. Redemption has been wrought and as a consequence the Holy Spirit has been given to empower Christians for their pathway.

As to the **past** the Holy Spirit is the seal upon us that we are redeemed to God and are now owned by Him.

As to the **present** He is the anointing by which we know our place as in Christ and have intelligence in the mind of God for us.

As to the **future** He is the Earnest of coming glory, the firstfruits of the great harvest to be reaped by us before long.

Thus past present and future are provided for by Him.

One comprehensive passage brings this before us:

"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us, is God, Who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. I. 21-22):

Chapter 4. 4-7. In these verses the work of Christ is again presented. Here it is seen to be the foundation upon which the pleasure and purpose of God our Father are fulfilled. It was His wish to have sons knowing Him, loving Him, worshipping Him.

"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. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The time long promised arrived. The Son of God came. Truly God, truly Man, truly an Israelite, He came to accomplish the mighty work of atonement, that sonship might be ours. The sinnership matters were all settled in that same work as we have seen. That subject is closed entirely. Now the **place of sons** is

given to us and the **power** to enjoy that position is bestowed as well.

Our Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, cried, 'Abba, Father' when in Gethsemane's dark garden. He prayed that the cup of judgment might pass from Him. In His perfection that cup from which He shrank, was taken to darker Calvary and there it was completely drained. Now, in result, we are brought into the blessed relationship with God and we too cry "Abba, Father" and share with Christ His joys.

Chapter 5. 24 shows how "those that are Christ's" have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. We are all looked upon as having done this if we are true believers. In sight of Calvary we judge the flesh which led men to crucify the Son of God. God has condemned "sin in the flesh" in the judgment that fell upon our Lord when He was made a sin-offering for us. We say 'Amen' to what He has done. We do not try to improve or educate or cultivate it, but we reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin" and alive to God in Christ. We live before God in the Spirit and are called to "walk in the Spirit." So doing the life of Christ will be manifested in our words and ways. For "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control)." All these graces were seen in perfection in "the life of Jesus" and now that life is to be manifested in our mortal bodies.

Nothing less than this was in the thoughts of our gracious God and Father in giving His Son to redeem us and in giving the Spirit of His Son to indwell us.

Chapter 6. 14 gives the apostle's exultation in all that the Cross has effected for him (and for us). Others might seek to glory in what they were in the flesh and in the world. Not the apostle, he 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."

The world has cast out and crucified the Son of God. He is my Lord and Saviour and I judge that world which has rejected Him. Then in response the world which rejected Him rejects me if I am loyal and true to Him. So at the Cross the world and the Christian part company. In the Cross, where all this has come to pass, we boast and glory. It is the basis of all our blessing for time and for eternity.

These of which we have spoken are but some of the many aspects of the work of the Son of God at the Cross,

brought before us in the Word of God. There God has been glorified. Our sins have been blotted out. The self-life has been judged and ended. Redemption has been wrought so that the Holy Spirit might be given to us. Sonship nearness has been brought to pass. The flesh and the world are seen condemned.

May we learn well these and other lessons of that Cross. It is "our great lesson book" as it has been termed. And may we have grace to answer to its teachings while we wait to be with Him Who endured its sufferings for the glory of God and for our eternal gain.

Long did I toil and knew no earthly rest;
 Far did I rove and found no certain home;
 At last I sought them in His sheltering breast,
 Who ope's His arms and bids the weary come:
 With Him I found a home, and rest divine;
 And I since then am His, and He is mine.

What e'er may change, in Him no change is seen;
 A glorious sun, that wanes not nor declines;
 Above the clouds and storms He walks serene,
 And sweetly on His people's darkness shines
 All may depart. I fret not, nor repine,
 While I my Saviour's am, while He is mine.

Lyte.

"Bondslave of Jesus Christ." Romans I. I. Our freedom is in the Lord alone, and to be "in the Lord" is to belong to Him, to be kept by Him and controlled by Him, as in healthy life a hand or foot belongs in its freedom to the physical centre of life and will. To be a slave, a bond servant in the abstract is terrible, but to be a bond-servant of Jesus Christ is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

"Even Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans I. 5. "Jesus", the name above every name to the believer, His human Name, telling of humility, of love, of suffering and death, "Christ", the anointed, God's chosen and exalted man, Head of all things for God and for us; "Our Lord", title than binds us to Him with a perpetual loyalty, name of authority, but authority exercised in perfect and continual grace. If everything else fails and falls into ruin, Jesus Christ our Lord abides, He cannot fail, and He is "the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever".

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH SCIENCE?

A. J. Pollock.

THE late Oswald Chambers made a very pertinent remark: "If the Bible agreed with modern science, it would soon be out of date, because in the very nature of things modern science is bound to change".

Never was there a truer or a more devastating statement. Science is always changing for the simple reason that a large part of science is not really science, but merely theory, not founded on fact. It was so even in ancient science, for Paul's advice to young Timothy in his day was "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called". (1 Tim. vi. 20). What shattering expressions—"profane and vain babblings" and "science falsely so called"!

Science, if it be **really** science, cannot change for really ascertained knowledge must remain knowledge.

One thing is certain. God is the Author alike of **true** science and the Bible. Therefore there can be no contradiction between them, between creation and Divine revelation.

But does the Bible teach science? The answer is obvious. The Bible does not set out to teach science. It is the revelation of God in Christ, a Book with a spiritual testimony, of moral import. Yet at the same time anything in the Bible that refers to science is true. We shall see how the Bible sets forth scientific facts centuries before these were discovered by scientists. One is amazed as we see how here and there the Bible forestalled by long centuries the discoveries of the human mind. Let us give a few examples.

According to Greek and Roman philosophy, the heavens formed a solid vault over the earth. Aristotle, who flourished B.C. 384, 322, described the heavens as "a sphere studded with

stars". The little girl who described the stars as gimlet holes through which the glory of heaven shone, was not far behind Aristotle in her idea.

Genesis I, that incomparable description of original creation, and the reconstruction of the earth following on a supervening chaotic state, describes the heavens by the word, **firmament**. This as it stands would support the idea of the Greek and Roman philosophies for the word comes from Latin **firmamentum**, which has for its original meaning **firm**. But when the Hebrew word, translated **firmament** in our authorized version is examined, we find it would be correctly translated by the word, **expanse**. There could not be a better word to describe the illimitable space we know as the heavens. It was the great Lord Salisbury, no mean scientist, who described the word, **ether**, as a convenient term for hiding our ignorance. Who then guided the hand of Moses when he wrote the opening verses in Genesis I? Surely it was Divine guidance, and nothing less.

The Egyptians taught that the earth was formed by the motion of air and the upward course of flame. But where did the air come from, and who or what gave to the flame its upward tendency? How was it that Moses at one stroke went back to the real origin of creation in the the simple and and yet sublime words of scripture, "In the beginning God **created** the heaven and earth?" (Gen. I. 1).

Moses of course was not present when the original creation occurred. How then could he describe what he had never seen, that is the act of creation. How puerile and unsatisfying is the Egyptian philosophy, how satisfying in its simple majesty is the **account of** creation in Genesis I.

The Hindoos taught that the earth was flat and triangular and composed of

seven stories. This in turn was sustained on the heads of elephants, and the movements of the elephants produced earthquakes.

Even the early Fathers of the church taught philosophy only a little less foolish than that. Lactantius wrote, "The rotundity of the earth is a theory, which no one is ignorant enough to believe." When we come to the Scriptures the rotundity of the earth is implied as forcibly as if stated in so many words.

We read, "On that night there shall be two men in one bed: the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together: the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left" (Luke 17. 34-36).

Here are two men in bed, **night-time**; two women grinding corn, **breakfast-time**; two men working in the field, **day-time**. How can one event find those it affects at one and the same time at different hours out of the twenty-four. Extend this statement, and the one event would find those it affects during every hour and minute of the twenty-four hours forming a complete day and night. That could only be if the earth were round and performed its diurnal motion of turning round its axis in relation to the sun once every twenty-four hours.

Even the astronomer Galileo (1564-1642) was threatened by the Romish Church with excommunication if he continued to assert that the earth revolved round the sun. It was looked upon as an insult by the Romish church that the earth should have a subservient place in relation to the sun. How is it that enshrined in the scriptures lay the truth of the rotundity of the earth, over fifteen long centuries before Galileo, and still longer before its truth found universal acceptance?

Lord Kelvin announced a great discovery which made a profound impression on the scientific world, viz.: that there is no precipitation of rain unless caused by electrical discharge. An in-

teresting incident occurred in this direction, a good many years ago. A staff officer, was lecturing on electricity to his brother officers. He alluded to this interesting discovery, and remarked that he had in his possession an ancient book, dating back over 3,000 years that anticipated this very discovery. His statement startled his audience not a little, and at the close of his lecture a crowd gathered round him asking for proof of his extraordinary statement.

He drew from underneath his tunic a pocket Bible, and read to his astonished hearers, "Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning or thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth" (Job 38. 26); "when He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning or the thunder" (Job 28. 26); "He causeth the vapours to ascend (evaporation, forming of clouds) from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain" (Ps. 135. 7); "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings with rain" (Jer. 10, 13; 57, 16). His audience was much impressed. They might well be so.

Does not the narrative of how science is taught in the Bible many centuries before man by searching discovered these matters, not convince us of the Divine authorship of the Book, of its wonderful inspiration? And if that be so should it not lead us to a reverent and daily searching of this wonderful volume? And above all to a firm and full belief in its central message, that is the revelation of God in Christ, the atoning character of our Lord's death, His resurrection, His ascension, His living ministry on high, His coming again? Everything in the blessed Book circles round and is subservient to this great central theme, even God in Christ, "the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all". (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6).

Miss this, and we miss all the meaning and blessing of the Scriptures.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

T. Oliver.

To the Chief Musician.

THE title of this article appears in the superscriptions of fifty-five Psalms and is thus of more frequent occurrence than any other. Expositors say that the term, "in the original" indicates the thought of the one who is the origin of the music, i.e. its inspiration. That would not be true in the first instance relative to the individual who was the overseer of the music in the time when the Psalms were written, but in its prophetic significance when the term will apply to no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Leader of the praises of His people in every era.

Psalm 22, 22-27 undoubtedly refers to the Spirit of Christ inspiring the Psalmist and so throughout the Old Testament. Hebrews 2 is more specific in adapting the foregoing scripture to convey the intelligence that in the midst of the Church, Christ Himself is the leader of the praise which goes up in an unbroken stream to God the Father. That is descriptive of what has been going on throughout the Christian era.

But subsequent to the Church being

translated to her proper home there will be a brief period when the language of the Psalms will apply with equal force to a revived earthly people who will be loyal to death and in the process will be led in praise to God by the same person, who is the Leader now.

Psalm 4, although primarily connected with the experience of David, applies with greater force ultimately to his Lord who was enlarged when in distress. His glory was turned to shame by the sons of men and gladness was put in His heart. ("For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame . . ." Heb. 12, 2).

Psalm 6 speaks of the many sorrows of Christ in the midst of His enemies. Psalm 12 shows the same experience developed in the persecution of "the poor and needy" remnant by the treacherous evil rulers of the day in which they live. In His devoted love He associated Himself with the poor of the flock while here. While since He has gone on high He is still watching their interests in deep perfect sympathy!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS:

Prayer to the Lord Jesus.

"Is it right to address the Lord Jesus in prayer? It has been said that there is no Scripture warrant for doing so, and that those who do it have zeal but not according to knowledge. Should prayer be offered to God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost? Ayrshire.

TO deny that prayer, which would of course include praise, should be offered to the Lord Jesus reveals a most unbalanced knowledge of the truth of the glory of His person, and His present position as Lord. To say that there is no Scriptural warrant for so doing displays a lamentable ignorance of Scripture. "All men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the

Son, honoureth not the Father which sent Him" John 5. 23.

Praise is offered to the Lord by His church on earth (Rev. 1. 5, 6) and will be offered by the redeemed in heaven (Rev. 5. 9). All those who came to the Lord seeking His blessing when He was on earth offered prayer to Him. Paul joined the name of the Lord Jesus with that of the Father in his prayerful desires for the saints in 2. Thess. 2. 16

and in 1. Thess. 3. 11, 12. And he prayed to the Lord **three times about his thorn in the flesh** (2. Cor. 12).

“God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ” Acts 2. 36. And as Lord, all power, (authority) has been put into His hands, Matthew 28. 18. As Lord He commands and controls His servant. How can they “serve Him with all humility and many tears” Acts 20. 19. if they do not pray to Him? As Lord He is the Administrator of grace to all His own and the knowledge of this bows them before Him in supplication and prayer. Stephen prayed to Him (Acts 7. 59, 60. Peter talked with Him (Acts 10. 14). Paul prayed to Him (Acts 22. 19).

It is right to praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for thus has God been revealed to us. But Father and Son have been specially revealed as Objects of

faith. We have the Lord’s words as to this. “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me”. And as Father and Son are Objects of faith, faith directs prayer to them. We have no example in Scripture of prayer being specially directed to the Holy Spirit, and the reason for this should be clear. He has come to dwell in us, to be on our side, and to be the power in us by which we pray and witness, so that we pray “in the Holy Ghost”, not to Him (Jude 20). The Spirit will make us intelligent not only as to what to pray for, but whether to address our prayers to God or to the Lord; according to the circumstances and as guided by the Spirit we shall pour out our desires and spread out our needs sometimes to One person and sometimes to the other, and sometimes to both. The last prayer in the Bible is addressed to the Lord Jesus. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” Rev. 23, 20.

Singing the Gospel.

“As to singing the Gospel; if souls are converted by it can we say that it is God’s work? Sankey’s singing, by which many are said to have been saved, is quoted, would you say this was of God?”

IT is by the foolishness of the preaching that God is pleased to save those that believe, 1 Cor. 1. 21. That is, it is by the proclamation of His gospel, and we should rely on the preaching whether to companies or to individuals, as being God’s ordained way of reaching and saving souls. But the Gospel may be proclaimed in song, and if souls are saved by any means it is surely God’s work. If God has gifted a man with a good voice, it would not be right to say he must not use it in God’s service. But it may easily become a snare. There is the danger of the nat-

ural emotions being stirred by sentimental hymns and moving tunes when there is no real work of God in the soul. On the other hand, we have known many who have been convicted and converted by the gospel as it was presented in hymns, when the preaching had had little effect. The Spirit of God used the singing when the preaching failed. Yet nothing could be more obnoxious to God than the singing of hymns by unconverted choirs, and solos by men and women whose only qualification is a good voice.

Stir me, oh, stir me, Lord, for I can see
Thy glorious triumph day begin to break,
The dawn already gilds the eastern sky,
Oh! church of Christ arise, awake! awake!
Oh! stir us Lord as heralds of that day
For night is past—The King is on His way!