Then said Jesus . . . If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8: 31, 32.
### Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers to Correspondents</td>
<td>62, 96, 111, 126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Sharpened by Love, An</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of God, An</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority of the Word, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Be ye Enlarged&quot;</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Beloved of God&quot;</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethany</td>
<td>W. Sutherland 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Study—Matthew and John</td>
<td>F. B. Hole 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42, 60, 75, 89, 106, 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>136, 150, 172, 185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary</td>
<td>F. W. G. 176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Care for the Saints&quot;</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Certain Women&quot;</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>A. E. 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confession &amp; Prayer</td>
<td>B. 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict &amp; Triumph</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast—Exodus 15 and Numbers 14</td>
<td>F. W. G. 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Count it all Joy&quot;</td>
<td>F. B. Hole 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation and New Creation</td>
<td>J. McBroom 102, 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliverer, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do all Believers Receive the Holy Spirit?</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldad and Medad</td>
<td>... 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith, Hope &amp; Love</td>
<td>J. Stoddart 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Love</td>
<td>... 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of Sound Words, The</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four World Kingdoms and their End, The</td>
<td>... D. Chisholm 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glory</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glory of the Son, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God Only</td>
<td>E. P. Brown 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God our Father</td>
<td>J. W. S. 158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's Dwelling Place</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel of the Glory, The</td>
<td>J. McBroom 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace of God, The</td>
<td>D. Ross 164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have ye any Meat?</td>
<td>L. A. Anderson 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Henceforth know we no Man after the Flesh&quot;</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Name</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit in the Church, The</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of the Potter, The</td>
<td>R. McCallum 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let us be Glad and Rejoice</td>
<td>A. M. Chambers 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit to Suffering, A</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Lord is my Shepherd, The&quot;</td>
<td>A. E. Booth 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord's Prayer for His own, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord shall Fight for You, The</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of Christ for His Church</td>
<td>J. A. T. 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Order, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on the Assembly of God</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway of Perfection, The</td>
<td>I. Fleming 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person of the Christ, The</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repent</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sacrifice of Himself, The&quot;</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>... 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated on High</td>
<td>L. A. Anderson 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See that ye fall not out by the way</td>
<td>L. A. Anderson 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So also is Christ</td>
<td>J. W. S. 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable Throne, A</td>
<td>J. Dawson 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjection, Hope, Trust</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Things that must shortly come to pass&quot;</td>
<td>D. Chisholm 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Josephs, The</td>
<td>J. T. Mawson 161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is His Name?</td>
<td>A. J. Pollock 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What manner of Persons?</td>
<td>F. B. Hole 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What Wait I For?&quot;</td>
<td>... 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship, Walk and Witness</td>
<td>J. Stoddart 49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"BELOVED OF GOD."

In Rome, beloved of God” Romans I: 7.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” Romans 5: 5.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” Romans 8: 38, 39.

Beloved of God.” How those words must have moved and thrilled that company of Christians in Rome when Paul’s Epistle was first read to them. “In Rome, beloved of God.” In pagan Rome, the centre of the Empire’s glory and the cesspool of the world’s vice; there they were, beloved of God, His treasure, His beloved. They had been gathered together by the gospel from many creeds and classes; some were Jews, some Gentiles, some were free-born and some were slaves; some bore distinguished names and some were of no account; but every distinction among them disappeared before this amazing fact, they were beloved of God. This bound them together as one, and henceforward they were to view each other from that standpoint. God delighted in them, they were beloved of Him. The reproach of Christ was upon them, for His sake they were despised in that proud city; but what of that? they were beloved of God, and that was a distinction that the angels in heaven might have coveted.

Paul had much to tell them of God and His great attributes, and how these all worked together for their present good and their eternal blessing; he had to tell them of God’s wrath, of His righteousness of His power and of His grace; but he begins with His love, for this lay at the back of everything. God is love, and every one of them who had believed the gospel of God concerning His Son was beloved of God. All His attributes serve His love, and every one of them is on the side of His loved ones, and that is why Paul exclaimed “If God be for us, who against us?” “Beloved of God”—What assurance this word must have given them as they settled down to listen to the reading of the letter.

All who have believed may take up this glorious designation. In London, “beloved of God”; in Edinburgh, “beloved of God”; whether we dwell beyond the reach of guns and bombs, or in areas that are continually menaced by death from the air, we are “beloved of God.” Here is strength in weakness, comfort in sorrow, peace in conflict, quietness in danger, confidence in fear. Here is light in darkness, wealth in poverty, hope amid the disappointments of life, and the sure pledge of present grace and eternal glory.

This love is not a doctrine but a fact to be known and enjoyed, and to be depended upon at all times, as a child knows and depends upon his mother’s love without question or doubt. Knowing that God loves you, you can commit all that you value to His care—your possessions, your life, and those who are dearer to you than life, even as you have committed your soul to Him. If He permits the great adversary, Satan, to attack you in any of
these intimate things, you may still confide in Him and rest in His love, knowing that He turns evil to good, and makes all things work together for the eternal blessing of those whom He loves.

I have said God's love is not a doctrine but a fact; it is not for the head but for the heart, as the next mention of it in this Epistle proves, and it is too beautiful to be passed by lightly. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us." It is for the heart and in the heart; but if it fills the heart, it warms and pervades the whole being; the head and hands and feet come under its influence. As the sun flooding a house with its beneficent rays drives out all darkness and chill, so does the love of God act upon the life that is thrown open to it. It is not a carnal love but a spiritual, and it can only be known and enjoyed by the Holy Ghost, but He dwells in us to give us the inward assurance of it and to keep us in the joy of it. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God."

We know that our place in heaven has been prepared for us, and God's love will never be satisfied until He brings us there; but His love is so great and real, He will not keep us waiting until we reach heaven to enjoy it, He has sent His Spirit into our hearts that we might enjoy it now. It is to be our present portion; the confidence, the rest and the joy of God's beloved is to be ours now amid the strife and trouble of the world that has gone far from God. The Holy Ghost dwells in us that it might be so.

Dwell upon the divinely inspired words; they are spirit and life. Nothing that could be said about them could enhance their blessedness. We cannot gild refined gold. The latest comer into God's family equally with the oldest saint on earth or in heaven can claim them. Each one of us can say, That means me: I am beloved of God. I cannot measure His love for it is infinite, and it is as unchanging as it is great; but I am the object of it. It is beyond my understanding, but I rest in it. It separates me from the evil that is in the world, and binds me to God with its unbreakable cords.

But our knowledge of God's love is small even at its best when compared with its own greatness, and the Holy Ghost does not turn our eyes within us to discover the measure of it there, but He turns us outward and backward to the death of Christ, and tells us that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." His argument is arresting and impressive. Says He, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." A righteous man has some merit, and a good man more, and while it would be surprising yet it might be possible that someone might be found willing to sacrifice his life for such. But who'll die for a sinner? Who'll die for a wretch that is neither righteous nor good, who has no merit at all, and who has come short of God's glory and is only fit for His just judgment? Who'll die for such an one as that? . . . CHRIST. He will; He has done it, and in His death we behold the measure and the manifestation of God's love toward us while we were yet sinners.

"Oh the love of God is boundless, Perfect, causeless, full and free; Doubts have vanished, fears are groundless Now I know His love to me. Love the source of all my blessing, Love that set itself on me, Love that gave the spotless Victim, Love told out at Calvary."

With human love there is always the fear of losing the loved object; the warmth of the affection may cool, or death may dissolve the most tender tie; but do we fear to lose this love, the love of God? There are many and mighty adversaries that would rob God of His joy in us, and us of our joy in Him. Can they succeed? Can any power in
heaven above or in hell beneath separate us from God’s love? Hear how the apostle concludes this part of his letter. “I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

And what can we say to that, but lift up the heart in thanksgiving to our God and face whatever may be before us in 1941 with confidence, knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God. And if we are such, we know that we love Him because He first loved us.

“Talk ye of all His wondrous works.” (1 Chron. 16: 9).

We must talk; we seem born to talk; we were wretched indeed if we were forbidden to speak to our fellow-creatures. From the first blush of morning, on through the bustling day, and far into the shades of the drowsy night we talk. But how are our tongues occupied? They run more quickly than our feet; beware lest much mischief comes from their babble. They are sharper than razors, some of them, enough to set whole communities ablaze. “The tongue,” to quote the most practical James, “is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”

It is a grave responsibility to have such a mischievous member to control; yet it may be done, and it may be consecrated into an instrument for the praise of God; it will be this if we talk of all His wondrous works. The flow of conversation must be drawn off from the gutters and channels in which it gathers defilement, and be cleansed and purified until it becomes fresh and sparkling. Then, redeemed from common slander and envy, foolishness and vanity, our tongues will become the vehicle for the fellowship of saints and of blessing to all, as we talk of all His wondrous works.

But “the good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good,” and “out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh.” We shall not speak freshly, naturally, and with power of God’s wondrous works unless the joy of His salvation is in our souls. “Whosoever drinketh,” said the Lord, “of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst,” but not that only, but “it shall be in him a well of water springing up.” HE WILL SING UNTO GOD; and out of him “shall flow rivers of living water.” HE WILL TALK OF ALL HIS WONDROUS WORKS.

The upspringing song and outflowing talk will not fail if the drinking is continuous. Shall the slave ever forget the moment when the chains dropped from his wrists and he was free, and can we forget the happy day when the chains of our sins were broken by the nail-pierced hand of Jesus our Saviour and Lord. Let us remember when first we were enlightened, and talk of the wondrous work that did it. Let us consider His unchanging love and His present grace, His worthiness and glory, then shall our conversation “Flow like waters after summer showers, and not as raised by man’s mechanic powers.”

Hope makes all things bright.
Love makes all things easy.
Faith makes all things possible.
THE FOUR WORLD KINGDOMS AND THEIR END.

Duncan Chisholm.

Notes on Addresses on Prophecy. No. 1.

Read Daniel, Chapters 2 and 7.

In old Testament times God spoke to men in dreams and visions, revealing to them in that manner His ways and will. In these New Testament days there is no need for that for He has given us His word, the Bible, and the Word is complete. We could not expect special revelations when God has given us His word in its fullness. All we need to know is in it. There are no fresh revelations.

In Daniel 2, God gave Nebuchadnezzar, the first Gentile monarch having world-wide dominion, a dream, which troubled him greatly for he could not remember it. The wise men of Babylon were called in to tell him the dream and its interpretations, but they were not able. But Daniel, a captive of David’s royal house, was able to tell the dream and give its interpretation. He was a man of prayer and faithful to God, and God revealed the matter to him. What he said we learn from verses 31-45.

In the early days it was God’s purpose to have one great family of men upon earth among whom He would dwell as a beneficent Creator, but His purpose was frustrated for the time being by man’s sin and rebellion against Him. After the Tower of Babel Abraham was called out of Ur and God made one nation, Israel, the centre of the nations and set His throne in Jerusalem. The throne of David was the throne of God on earth. But the house of David proved unfaithful and turned from God to idols, and again His purpose was for the time frustrated. Yet His purposes cannot fail and in the coming Millennium God will rule all nations through a restored Israel and Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the whole earth. Then when the Millennium is finished and a new heaven and new earth are brought into being (see Rev. 21) God will dwell with men, and they shall be His people and national distinctions shall disappear for ever. Whatever God has purposed shall be fulfilled, however long it may be in abeyance.

After the fall of Israel we are introduced to the four successive Gentile kingdoms. What they were to be was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. It was of a giant image. The head of gold was Nebuchadnezzar himself, head of the Babylonian Empire. After him was to follow the kingdom of the Medes and Persians—the breast of silver; that was to give place to the Grecian Empire, the belly and the thighs of brass, and last of all was to come the Roman Empire the legs of iron, to appear in its final form as the feet and toes of iron and clay. The Babylonian Empire held sway for less than 70 years; the Medes and Persian dominated the world for two centuries, the Grecian power was broken up into four kingdoms in less than one decade the Roman power existed for nearly six centuries and is to be revived.

The image was imposing and grand, shewing what these kingdoms were like in men’s estimation, but God gave Daniel a vision of them in which He shewed what they really were to be in their nature as He would see them. As Daniel saw them they were beasts, the first a lion, the second a bear, the third a leopard and the fourth beast, unlike all the rest, “dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly.” The two dreams shewed how surely their fulfilment would be. The principle is seen in Genesis 41, 32 where we have a dream given twice because the thing “is established by God,” and He will bring it to pass.
There is no room in this prophetic view for a fifth world-wide Empire. Germany aspired to this in 1914 and failed, and we conclude that this new and more determined effort of the Nazis is also doomed to failure. The interest that these prophetic Scriptures have for us is two-fold. We are confirmed in our confidence in the Word of God as we see how history has fulfilled it, and we are assured that what has not been fulfilled will be, so we know that there will be a revival of the Roman power. It is difficult to choose the best Scripture that shews Rome again in the ascendency; but let us take Revelation 17: 8. The Beast there is the first Beast of Revelation 13 and the fourth Beast of Daniel’s vision. It “was and is not.” In the fifth century A.D. it ceased to be an Imperial power. It still “is not” in spite of Mussolini’s boasting. But it shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, i.e. in its revived form it will be Satanic in character and power. “And go into perdition” that will be its doom and end.

The Lord Jesus Christ used a remarkable expression in speaking of the future of His day. He said, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” Luke 21: 24. The times of the Gentiles covers the whole period of time indicated by Nebuchadnezzar’s image and the four beasts of Daniel’s vision. Thank God that time will have an end. In the king’s dream, he saw a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image on its feet and brake them in pieces. The whole image was broken beyond all recovery, for it became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Thus will end all man’s boasting and false glory to make room for the true glory of the Son of man. Many have thought that this stone is the gospel, but it is not. The gospel does not interfere with the powers that be; it goes on its way quietly winning men and women for Christ and giving them a heavenly hope not an earthly. It is the Son of Man, coming forth from heaven in great power to exercise the judgment of God upon all who oppose Him, and to fill the whole earth with the glory of God. It is for this we look and pray. Don’t let us be diverted from it by setting the events of our day in a false perspective. We must pray more earnestly than ever. “Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as in heaven,” and be cheered in the midst of the surrounding gloom and the crash of kingdoms, by the thought of the sure and blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Peace.

“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5: 1).

Progress.

“Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3: 14).

Power.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4: 13).

Prospect.

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (John 3: 2).
"COUNT IT ALL JOY."

There has been a tendency in some quarters to look down upon the Epistle of James as being rather below the standard of the other Epistles. It is true of course that it was written rather early in the day, when the full character of that which God had instituted on the day of Pentecost had hardly come to light; and that consequently it is addressed to the twelve tribes, amongst whom the Christians were but a remnant and mainly poor and persecuted, and that mention is made of the synagogue. Still though this is so, James enforces a standard of life and behaviour which is very high, dealing with matters in a severely practical way. To listen to James—and he calls upon us to do so, saying, "Hearken, my beloved brethren" (2: 5)—is a profitable and wholesome exercise. It is also humbling, since we discover how far we come short of the standard he sets.

We have only to read the very first remark he makes to be greatly humbled. "My brethren," he says, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. The temptations of which he speaks are the things that try us and put us to proof. They may of course take the form of enticements springing from our own lusts, as verse 14 indicates; but on the other hand they may not. God never entices us but He does permit, and even send, many testings from without, thus working "the trying of your faith;" that is, the putting of faith to the test. Everything that is of value has to be tested, and God sets a great value on faith.

Every year the Patent Office in London passes thousands of applications, but very few of them come to anything. When set before men of practical experience they shake their heads and dismiss the idea as not really workable. If they should suggest that a model be made so that the idea may be put to the test the inventor is glad. And he is far more glad if the test shows that the idea is workable and valuable. The sad thing is when it is not worth even a test. Now faith is eminently worth testing, and we may indeed praise God if we have the genuine article, and confront the testing with joy.

Is this the spirit in which we are meeting the testings of the present time? We must each answer that question for ourselves, and most of us will have no ground for self-satisfaction when we have honestly answered it. The testings are certainly "divers," or "various." For many the winds of adversity seem to be blowing from all four quarters at once. Their homes are damaged and evacuated; their businesses disturbed and perhaps dispersed; their families scattered, some members injured if not killed; their enjoyment of Christian fellowship largely impaired by meetings being broken up. Others have not suffered to the same extent, yet in various ways tribulation has come in, and the old life of quietude and orderly Christian privilege and service quite dispelled. Are we counting these things to be joy?

This trying situation is being met, we believe, with considerable fortitude. But this could be asserted about the populace generally. Is our fortitude definitely Christian in its character? Does it spring from the consciousness of the rich fulness that we have in Christ? We are thankful to bear witness that we have not heard the voice of grumbling and discontent: there has been quiet resignation and acceptance of what God has permitted. This is good, but it is not that of which James speaks. So often are we resigned and quiet and even trustful; yet not characterized by joy.

What will enable us under such circumstances to rejoice? Only those things of which James proceeds to speak to us. We are to know that all these things are intended to test our
faith, and that the testing is going to work out endurance, which is a quality that God prizes very highly. In the very nature of things it presupposes trials which are long drawn out, and so we are told to let endurance have its fully developed and completed work. The process is one which cannot be hurried, trying though it may be. The end to be reached is well worth the process. It is nothing less than our being ourselves fully developed and complete, lacking nothing. When the testings have been thoroughly carried out we shall be the finished article, turned out as graduates in the Divine university.

"Alas!" we have to exclaim, "how far from such full development we are today." Truth compels us so to speak, and our imperfection is contemplated by James in the very next verse. The objective is that we be complete, lacking nothing; but immediately there follow the words, "If any of you lack wisdom . . ." How often do the testings reveal our lack in this direction! A child howls when things go wrong and it gets hurt, largely because it lacks understanding, and it cannot imagine the reason of what has happened nor its object. The grown-up man in a similar case sets himself to understand and profits by the trouble. But wisdom is more than mere understanding. The wise man is one who can apply with discretion the things he understands.

Again and again the testings reveal to us our lack of wisdom. Very well then, we are to ask wisdom from God, who gives liberally and without upbraiding, and it shall be given to us. A wise understanding of God's dealings and ways cannot possibly be ours unless it is given to us of God; hence He will not upbraid as though it were something that we ought not to need. Asking, it shall be ours in liberal measure; only we must ask in faith. It is our faith that is being tested; hence of course in our asking, faith is a sine qua non.

We make bold to say that if God thus bestows wisdom in liberal fashion He will in the same way bestow all else that we may need as the testings run their course.

In testifying to us of the benefits that flow from the testings of our faith James is not alone. Paul tells us the same thing in even greater detail in Romans 5. No sooner has he spoken of the justification which is ours by faith, than he goes on to tell us of the excellent fruits of tribulation. He mentions not only patience, or endurance, but experience, hope, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. So also Peter in the last chapter of his first Epistle: telling us that the God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory after we have suffered a while, and indicating that He can use that very suffering to make us perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle us. We may feel inclined to say, "All these difficulties and this suffering has an unsettling effect on my mind." Turning to the God of all grace however, things would work in just the opposite way, and we should be settled thereby.

The end in view, that we may be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing" is certainly most desirable. Keeping it in view we shall be able to rejoice in some measure. James however is not satisfied with a measure of rejoicing: he says, "Count it ALL joy." It would indeed be no inconsiderable thing if we could count it fifty per cent. joy, but we are exhorted to count it one hundred per cent. joy! A counsel of perfection truly! But then the faith of Christ always does set perfection before us.

The high standard which James erects should encourage us to ask in faith from our God who gives so liberally. We shall then pursue our troublesome way not wearily and with dejection, but with courage and joy of heart.
DO ALL BELIEVERS RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

A. J. Pollock.

YES, Scripture is abundantly plain on the point. How pointed is Romans VIII. 9: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of God he is none of His."

If a believer has not the Spirit of God he is in the flesh, and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. VIII. 8). That could not be said of any believer. Moreover the Scripture just quoted says, "He is none of His," that is, he does not belong to Christ at all. To deny the Holy Spirit of God to a believer is to unchristianise him, a very solemn thing to do.

Ephesians I: 13, too, is a very enlightening Scripture. We read: "In whom 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 with the Holy Spirit of promise." This Scripture makes it abundantly plain, that when a man or woman or child truly trusts the Saviour, that one is indwelt thereupon by the Spirit of God.

I remember being at a Bible reading years ago when an eminent servant of Christ was asked, "How long after receiving the gospel do believers receive the Spirit? May it be at once, or may it be after a lengthened period of time?" The answer was most satisfying. The servant of Christ replied, "It is not a question of time, but of order; first the gospel believed, then as a consequence the Spirit received." The illustration was used of the blow of a sharp sword and the cut resulting. You cannot reverse the order, the blow must come first and the cut follows. It is not a question of time, but of order; of cause and effect.

Receiving "the gospel of your salvation," surely means hearing and receiving a gospel that assures the one, who believes, that he is saved, that his sins are forgiven, that he is justified from all things through Christ and is the possessor of eternal life in Him. Can anything be clearer?

It is striking that redemption and the indwelling of the Spirit are linked together. We read: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. IV. 30).

Futhermore, Romans VIII. 11 links up the indwelling Spirit and the power of resurrection together in a remarkable way. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." God raised Christ from the dead. The Spirit of God is given to the believer as the pledge that when the day of resurrection comes he will share in its triumph. The resurrection of the believer is linked up and flows from the resurrection of Christ. This Scripture, however, has the living saints in view. The saints, who have fallen asleep, will be raised. We know that from other Scriptures. The living saints will have their mortal bodies quickened: that is, if these saints lived on to the natural terminus of life mortality in their bodies would work on till death ensued. But the moment the Lord comes and shouts the summoning shout that moment their mortal bodies will be entirely quickened, that is every trace of mortality swept away, a spiritual body will be theirs, a new creation body, a fit vessel for the heavenly scene. If we have not the Spirit of God this promise would be null and void, and that cannot be.

When the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost the assembled believers "were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts II: 4). Notice the word ALL!
When the Apostle Peter preached his famous Pentecostal sermon, and his hearers were pricked in their heart, and asked what they should do, the answer given was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 3: 8). Notice the words, "every one of you."

In this Scripture the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit are linked together, the one following the other in sequence. There was no discrimination now.

In the interesting incident of the Gentiles coming into blessing in the case of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and his friends, we read, "While Peter spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts x. 44). Again there was no distinction between believer and believer.

One who is not indwelt by the Spirit of God, cannot be a member of the body of Christ. How the Spirit of God is emphasised in relation to the one body: "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been made to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor XII. 13). Notice again the word, ALL!

Can we imagine one believer being outside the one body—Christ the Head in heaven; His saints the many members, the body on earth?

There is a remarkable case of disciples in Acts XIX. 1-7, who had not received the Holy Spirit. To base teaching on an exception as if it were the rule is foolish. There can be no case like this now-a-days. The John the Baptist ministry is past and we live in the full light of the gospel of God. This incident we are about to adduce fell in a transitional period.

When these ten disciples were asked the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" their reply was, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They were then asked, "Unto what were ye then baptized?" They replied, "Unto John's baptism." Paul then said, "John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe in Him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus."

These disciples up to then had not heard the gospel of their salvation (see Eph. i: 13). When they did hear it they were sealed by the Holy Spirit of God.

John, the Baptist, preached repentance, exhorting his disciples to believe on the One of whom he was the forerunner, even on the Lord Jesus Christ. "When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus." Then Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

This interesting narrative showing the difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism, and how the one superseded the other, with all the implications involved, only supports what we have been adducing from Holy Scripture, that those, who receive the gospel of their salvation, receive as a consequence the gift of the Holy Spirit. To teach otherwise is confusion and the unchristianizing of believers.

But now for a few words of practical import. We, believers, who have received the Holy Spirit of promise, may well ask ourselves as to what use we make of this wonderful gift. Are we sufficiently impressed by the fact that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit of God? We are exhorted not to grieve the Spirit, or quench the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and manifest the fruit of the Spirit.

Alas! how many believers walk in a worldly carnal way and grieve and quench God's Holy Spirit. This we may well be exercised about.
This teaching that some believers have the Spirit and some have not, causes introspection of an unhealthy nature. We may be depressed, if we imagine we have not received the Spirit on the one hand; or elated, if we think we have received the Spirit in contrast to other believers. This is not of the Spirit of God.

Two Aspects of the Gospel.

There are two aspects of the gospel. There is the way it affects you. You say I have received great comfort. He has poured oil and wine into my wounds and healed them. My heart and conscience are wonderfully relieved by the grace of God. But that is not all; if you stop there you do not speak of God at all; you speak only of His goodness to you. If you limit yourself to that, you are limited to your own feelings about it, and the effect it has on yourself only and the relief it has brought to you from the terrible distress of a heart wounded by sin. All right as far as it goes, but what of God’s feelings in the matter? The prodigal son could say, My Father kissed me. The first notice he had of grace reaching him was the father falling on his neck and kissing him. When you reach that what will you say? Not less than this surely, I know now God’s feelings towards me. I know how He has received me, He has shewn me His heart.

The gospel tells me what a wonderful thing it is that God could meet the smittings of my conscience, but also it conveys to me that God thinks in love about an underserving creature like me. Let us not think less of the relief we have received from the grace of Christ, but let us know assuredly from whence it has come. If I know the One from whence it comes I can always count upon it. I know My Father to begin with, and I learn that His love rests on me, and not only in me, but His Name is declared to me by the One who knows the fulness of its meaning—His well-beloved Son, that His love might be in me, the realised known and enjoyed portion of my heart.

Affection and Purpose.

The months and years speed on,
Like clouds that drift
Across the summer sky—
So light, so swift.
Sometimes we’d like again
To see these clouds, but when
We look, they’re gone.

So with our life that’s past,
WE’d have it still,
And shape it—if we could—
More for His will.

But no, He makes us learn
Time passed can ne’er return—
Alas, ’tis gone.

Let us henceforward keep
More close to Him,
Whose great unchanging love
Shall ne’er grow dim.

Himself alone to please—
Each fleeting moment seize,
’Ere it be gone.

T. W.
AN ASSEMBLY OF GOD.

We have been asked to say something on what constitutes "An assembly of God." We answer with these brief notes on the subject which we trust will be helpful. We use the word Assembly instead of Church.

The first thing without which all else is invalid must be the recognition that the Assembly is Christ's Assembly, the circle in which His love can flow out to "His own," in which He must be supreme, and in which His will and not the will of any man must be the rule. We see a clear and blessed pattern of this on the resurrection day. The Lord had come to His own, and they (Israel) had not received Him, they had cast Him out, and He had nothing of all that was due to Him. But when on the evening of the resurrection day He stood in the midst of His disciples, gathered together in the upper room, He stood in the midst of His own circle, and "the disciples were glad when they saw THE LORD." He was Lord there—the risen Lord in the midst of a people brought to God by His blood.

How gladly and willingly every one of those disciples would be subject to Him and own His rights over them and His authority in their midst, and that not as individual servants of His, but as a body, made one by His presence and by the bond of His love.

They were not there as forgiven sinners only: they were that of course, but they were more; the message of His love that He had sent to them through Mary, the message that had gathered them together, was, "Go to MY BROTHERS, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God." They were His brethren, He brought them through death and resurrection into this new relationship with Himself. As gathered together in this new relationship, they had the title to approach to God and speak to Him in prayer and thanksgiving and worship, not as Almighty, or as Lord God—He is both—but now as Father, even as He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the meaning of that wonderful statement in Hebrews 2: 11,12 "Both He that sanctifieth (Christ) and they who are sanctified (all believers) are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee."

Mark this, they did not call the Lord their brother, or their "elder brother." There is no warrant in Scripture for using such language of or to our Lord Jesus Christ; that would be bringing Him down to our level. We must not, we cannot do that. He is always Lord to us. The truth is He lifts us up to His level. He is not ashamed to call us brethren because He has made us one with Himself, having communicated to us His own life, as the Last Adam, raised from the dead. He, the corn of wheat, has fallen into the ground and died and brought forth much fruit (John 12: 24). We miss the whole truth and meaning of the Assembly if we miss that.

We can understand the supremacy of the Lord in the midst of His own being maintained as long as He was actually and visibly with them, but can it be maintained when He is not bodily present? Yes, the Holy Spirit of God has come down from Him in heaven to maintain His rights in the Assemblies, and to make the Lord's own words real to all who obey Him. "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them." There could be no Assembly of God on earth apart from the Holy Spirit of God. The Lord in the midst of His disciples on the resurrection day was a pattern of the Assembly, but it came into actual being when the Holy Ghost came down from the risen and
glorified Lord at Pentecost and indwelt the 120 disciples who were waiting in the upper room for His coming, according to the Lord's word. The presence of the Holy Spirit of God must be recognised if the blessings of the Assembly are to be known. He is here to bear witness to Christ, and to take of His things and shew them to those who have ears to hear what He will say to the churches. He is here to move the hearts of those He gathers together in responsive love their Lord. He is the Organiser of all that is according to God and the only power by which what is organised can be maintained and carried out. He has formed the whole Assembly on earth into one body, for "by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body." 1 Corinthians 12: 13; but He also acts for Christ in the local Assemblies when and where His presence and divine power and wisdom are acknowledged, and there He distributes gifts for the edification and progress and witness of the Assembly (1 Cor. 12).

The third essential to the true constitution of an assembly according to God is that all the saints must be embraced by it. "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." The faithful brethren at Colosse not only had faith in Christ Jesus, but love to all the saints also. We may not be able to gather them all together, but their place is there. Schools of doctrine, sects and parties that divide them from one another are an evidence of the Corinthian carnality into which the Church has fallen; they are not of God. The unity of the Spirit has in view the whole body of Christ on earth, not one member of that body is lost sight of. It is expressed in a practical way in that beautiful passage in Romans 15. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." Speaking of the typical teaching of the Peace offering, (Leviticus 3) J. N. Darby says, "Worship to God, true worship cannot separate itself from the whole body of believers . . . The interest of His heart takes them all in. God withal has His priests, and I cannot approach Him but in the way He has ordained and in association with and in recognition of those that are sanctified in Christ Jesus. He who walks not in this spirit is in conflict with the ordinance of God and has no true Peace offering according to God's institution." Synopsis Vol. 1: 173.

The word of the Lord abides for us to this day.

"Where two or three are gathered to My Name, there am I in the midst of them." This is true for the whole church, but it is specially encouraging to any who desire to keep His word and not deny His Name in these times of widespread drift from the truth. To be gathered to His name involves bearing His character, and He is "meek and lowly of heart": He is "the Holy and True" and without meekness and lowliness, and holiness and truth His Word is not kept, and His Name is surely denied. To aim at ecclesiastical correctness without these moral qualities is to have the broken shell without the kernel, a name to live but dead.

Two things we must bear in mind. The Church or Assembly of God has been called out of the world by the gospel, it is His ecclesia—His called out ones—But the called out ones are to be gathered together, they are not left as so many units to tread a solitary pilgrim way to heaven. They are to be gathered together, Christ the centre of the gathering and the Holy Ghost the power of it.

(To be Continued)
THE PATHWAY OF PERFECTION.

Inglis Fleming.

Read Isaiah 50.

The earlier part of Isaiah's great prophecy presents Jehovah pleading with His people Israel, with regard to their idolatry.

The latter part foretells the coming and rejection of the long promised Messiah, then of His subsequent kingdom and glory.

"The sufferings of Christ and the glory (the glories) that should follow," are before us in a most marked manner in some of the sections of this part of the prophecy.

In the forty-ninth chapter Messiah Himself is heard. He is taking the place of Servant—the place that Israel had been called to occupy and in which they had failed so grievously. For Israel had claimed the place, as having been called of, and established by, the Lord in the office of witness for Himself.

Now Messiah has appeared in their midst, and is seen prophetically as having been rejected, and His work as being a failure apparently. Thus we hear Him saying:

"I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

His confidence is unshaken. He commits His cause to Him who judges righteously. He knows that His reward shall not be withheld.

At once the answer of Jehovah is given and Messiah is seen as to be honoured in fullest measure.

"And now, saith the Lord that formed Me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength."

And He said, "It is a light thing that Thou shouldst be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth."

Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers. "Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel and He shall choose Thee." (Isa. XLIX: 4-7).

Through the Despised and Abhorred One blessing shall flow not alone to Israel, but to the Gentiles, and to the very end of the earth.

At the present time Israel is "a nation scattered and peeled, a people, terrible from their beginning hitherto" (Isa XVIII: 2). But woe is the ultimate portion of those who deal iniquitously towards that nation. "All flesh shall yet know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob" (verse 26). Thus the Lord hath spoken and He will make it good.

The fiftieth chapter brings before us prominently the glorious, gracious PERSON, the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is seen as scorned and despised, but He is the Mighty God, He is the Lowly Man in one glorious person.

"Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called was there none to answer? " He demands of Israel.

As we read these prophetic words our thoughts turn to the first chapter of the Gospel of John. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Into the world which was made by Him, into His own creation, He came; and His own people privileged as no other nation, would have none of Him. With all competency to bless He was, "set at nought" and finally cast out.

Yet His hand was not shortened at
It had been stretched forth of old for the redemption of Israel from Egypt's bondage. He still had power to deliver. At His rebuke He had dried up the Red Sea that His people might escape the hosts of Pharaoh. He had made the River Jordan but a passage way, that dry-shod they might enter the promised land. And not alone the sea, and rivers were under His control, the heavens also were subjected to Him and He adds, "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." All nature is declared as being at His command.

Surely we may rejoice in knowing His Almightiness, and that He is on our part today.

In verse 4 the same glorious person, the Mighty God, is seen as the Lowly Man. As we read again in John's Gospel, He who was eternally God, "The Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us."

Seen as in the place He has taken, "being found in fashion as a Man," He now speaks:

"The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, (or taught ones), that I should know how to speak a word in season to Him that is weary." He was here in human circumstances, knowing weariness Himself, so that He might aid the weary by a word. Having been tried He is able to succour the tried. Having suffered here, He is able to sympathise with and to comfort those who suffer now. As High Priest, He is "able to save," unto the very last step of their homeward way, all who believe upon Him and have come to God, through Him (Heb.: II 18; IV: 15; VII: 25).

It is thus we hear Him say, "Come unto Me all ye that labour (that are weary) and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. XI: 28-30).

And surely each one of us has known His succouring sympathizing, saving ministry, from on high, in our times of trial and difficulty. And He will see us through every step of our homeward journeying.

"He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned, (as the taught ones). The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back."

The ear, the organ of hearing, speaks of subjection, and of obedience. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. xi: 7). The ear has been formed that we may hear and carry out the directions of our God and Father. In the case of our Lord's pathway we find references to the ear in these connections:

1. The ear formed.
2. The ear wakened.
3. The ear bored.

1. The ear formed. "Mine ear hast Thou digged (Psa. XL: 6). A body hast Thou prepared ME" (Heb. X: 5). That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke I: 35). Thus the Lord of glory came unto the world.

2. The ear wakened. "Morning by morning." In constant dependence and in perfect obedience His whole path was trodden. (It would seem that when Martha and Mary sent to Him the message that Lazarus was sick, He awaited the knowledge of His Father's will. "He abode two days where He was.")

3. The ear bored. Exodus XXI gives us (under the picture of the Hebrew Servant) a beautiful unfolding of the devotedness of Christ to His Father and to us. There we read,
If the servant shall plainly say, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children I will not go out free.' Then his master shall bring him unto the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl and he shall serve him forever' (vs. 5, 6).

What servant ever put his love to his master before his love to his wife and children? The reference is to our Lord. He could say, coming into manhood, "Lo I am come to do Thy will, O my God." And at the close of His path, hear Him saying, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." In view of the cross He had declared, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." And He wended His way to Calvary, in submission and devotedness.

"I love my wife," the Hebrew servant's sentence finds its answer in "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it." "I love my children," may find its fulfilment in "Christ hath loved us, and given Himself for us," or in, "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Eph. V: 2, 25; Gal. xi: 20) or Israel, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me" (Isa 8: 18; Heb. 2 Ed.) We see Him perfect in every relationship thus calling for our praise and adoration.

"The Lord God hath opened mine ear." Hearing His Father's will, He would carry it out at all costs. "I was not rebellious"—(no antagonism was ever found in His spirit). "Neither turned away back." (He never was deflected from His pathway of fullest devotedness).

In our case, even if we turn not back outwardly, there may be a rebellious will within. But in our Lord all perfection was found. He could say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me."

If it were the Father's will for His back to be smitten, He would give His back to the smitters.

If it were the Father's will that the hair should be plucked from His face, He would give His cheeks to those who carried out this brutality.

If it were the Father's will that He should be spat upon, He would say, "I hid not My face from shame and spitting."

"Faithful amidst unfaithfulness, Midst darkness only light; Thou didst Thy Father's Name Confess, And in His will delight."

In Him the beating small of the incense brought forth its fragrance more fully. In Him every part of the meat offering broken small, was anointed with oil. He through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." All was in the power of the Holy Ghost. He never had to retract a word. "Without spot or blemish " He, the Lamb of God, suffered according to the will of God His Father.

In confidence in God, comely in all His goings He set His face as a flint, knowing that He would "not be confounded." In fullest trust He committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously, saying, "He is near that justifieth Me; who will contend with Me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to Me. Behold the Lord God will help Me: who is he that shall condemn Me? lo they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up."

The outcome of our Lord's obedience, obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, we know. He is highly exalted and a Name given Him above every name.

Fruit of His atoning work His words of perfect reliance are quoted, in the spirit of them, for ourselves. So we read, "It is God that justifieth. Who
is He that condemneth?’ We stand with Christ in resurrection and with triumph can cry, ‘If God, be for us, who can be against us? (Rom. VIII: 31, 33). What rich grace is this that links us up with our Risen Lord.

Thus, in this wonderful passage, we trace our Lord, in His goings forth from everlasting. We see Him as the Creator and Upholder of all things in Godhead glory. We see Him as the Messiah rejected and disowned. We see Him in His lowly grace as the Learner and as the Instructor. We see Him in His perfect obedience, in His perfect confidence in God. We know Him now justified in His resurrection and glorified at the right hand of God. Viewing it all, we may say with adoring hearts:

‘We wonder at Thy lowly mind,
And fain would like Thee be;
And all our rest and pleasure find,
In learning Lord of Thee.’

For our encouragement the exhortation is added, as we view the outcome of His faithfulness:

‘Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the LORD and stay upon his God?’

May it be ours to confide in Him fully as we wait for His return.

The saints of God in Old Testament times were not unlike a bird in the nest: it has life, but it has never flown. But in these New Testament times the saints have a new sphere like the bird on the wing. As is the heavenly so also are they that are heavenly (1 Cor. 15). I do not believe that any Christian gets freed from the world and its allurements until he sees that he not only has a new nature and life but a new sphere, above the world, radiant with the love of God. There is a new sphere, a new power, a new relationship. ‘Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’

The Gospel.

The gospel is a fact tell it simply; the gospel is a joyous fact, tell it cheerfully; the gospel is an entrusted fact, tell it faithfully; the gospel is a fact of infinite importance, tell it earnestly; the gospel is a fact of infinite love; tell it tenderly; the gospel is a fact difficult of apprehension, tell it with illustration; the gospel is a fact about a Person, Preach Christ.

Preach the Word.

Preach the word fearlessly, faithfully, fully, without fear or favour of men angels or devils. Preach the word without apology, but as those who must give account unto God the Judge of all the earth, not to please men but to please God, not to tickle their ears, but to transform their lives. If we preach the word we must preach the gospel for ‘this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.’

Trees are very beautiful and God made them so, but it was behind the trees of the Garden that Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, and men are still doing that same thing, they are taking God’s good gifts and putting them between God and themselves. It was not bad things that kept those that were bidden to the supper away from it (Luke 14). It was the land, the oxen, the wife. All good things and made by God, but those who possessed them despised God’s greatest gift. They wanted to settle down in natural good with God at a distance.
A LIMIT TO SUFFERING.

All the Prime Minister could offer the nation when he took up his onerous office was "sweat and suffering, tears and blood"; and from that suffering none in the land can claim exemption, the Christian as well as the most godless man must take his share of it as being of the nation in the providence of God. So it is written to Christians, "There hath no temptation (trial) taken you but such as is common to men." But the Christian has a great advantage over others and one that enables him to face suffering with a calm spirit, he knows God, who is over all, is "the preserver of all men, specially of those that believe. He knows that "God is faithful, who will not suffer him to be tempted (tried) above that he is able, but will with the temptation, also make a way of escape, that he may be able to bear it." That we learn from 1 Corinthians 10: 13. The Christian has a further advantage; whatever his sufferings may be, and from whatever cause, he looks beyond them, and can say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" Romans 8-19, and again, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Corinthians 4: 17. While he shares the sufferings of the nation, the Christian's destiny is not bound up with it; his hopes are not worldly or even national; his citizenship is in heaven and his hopes are heavenly and sure and certain. He is "an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ." And still further, his Saviour who died for him, rose again from among the dead and is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for him, (Romans 8: 34) and that mighty and ceaseless intercession will carry him triumphantly through all his suffering to his glorious destiny—which is, to be conformed to the image of God's Son. That He might be the Firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8).

God is the God of all comfort and the God of peace, and it is His desire that men should live in peace, and be free from sorrow and Satan's thraldom under His beneficent rule, but they would have none of it. Adam's disobedience has persisted in men through the ages, even in favoured Israel, so that God lamented over them in moving words, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10: 21). But the greatest proof of God's desire for the blessing and peace of men was the sending of His Son. In the words of the parable this is stated: "Having yet one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also last of all unto them, saying, They will reverence My Son." It was a great day for both heaven and earth when the Son of God entered the world. It was man's opportunity. All heaven
was interested, and the angels chanted heaven's joy in the words, "Glory to God in the highest, peace upon earth, good pleasure in man." "God had sent unto the children of Israel preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all)" (Acts 10: 36). But at the end of His mission to men, when He entered Jerusalem, according to the prophetic Scriptures "just and having salvation, lowly and riding on an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9: 9), His disciples went before Him, crying, "Peace in Heaven, glory in the highest" (Luke 19: 38). Why peace in heaven and not on earth? Because they did not reverence God's Son; they said, "This is the Heir, come, let us kill Him." The Lord of glory was crucified by the princes of this world (1 Cor. 2: 8); the Prince of peace was cast out of the world; He was returned to His Father with the rejected terms of peace, and peace retired to heaven with Him and will not come to earth again until He comes to reign in righteousness.

Satan is the world's prince and god and "the whole world lieth in the wicked one." The Word of God tells us this (see John 14: 30; 2 Cor. 4: 4; 1 John 5: 19). And the war has come because men have listened to him instead of to God. He is no man's friend. The Lord Jesus said of him, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth ... he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8: 44). His fourfold character is given in Revelation 12. He is "the dragon (the destroyer) that old serpent (the deceiver), the devil (the accuser) and Satan (the adversary) and "he deceiveth the whole world." And this description of him is repeated in Revelation 20. There is not a fibre of mercy in his constitution, he is wholly evil, and is out to destroy men because they are God's creatures and He loves them. But his special spite is directed against God's children, those who have believed the Word of God. If he could annihilate these he would and failing that he would oppress them with persecution and sorrow, to make them murmur when they ought to give thanks.

Job in the Old Testament and Paul in the New, and the fact that Satan desired to have the disciples, and Peter in particular, that he might sift them as wheat, are the outstanding cases in the Bible that prove his enmity against the children of God. He had long wanted to crush Job, but he had to confess that God had "made a hedge about him ... on every side." He could not get at him until God made a breach in the hedge and gave him permission to go so far. He went as far as he was permitted, and brought almost unspeakable suffering upon Job, but he was limited. "The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life" (Job 2: 6). He was not permitted to go to the full length of his malice and God turned his evil to great good for Job; and while we have heard of the malice of Satan, we have also heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; and that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy" (James 5: 11).

This limiting of Satan's power and malice comes clearly out in the Revelation, where those who have the word of God and the testimony of Jesus are a suffering people. "Ye shall have tribulation ten days" was the word to the suffering church at Smyrna. Before the persecutions began God set a limit to them. It is thought that these ten days refer to the ten great persecutions under the Roman Emperors, whether that is so or not matters little, what does matter is that the time was fixed, the tribulation was to be for ten days not twelve. And when the Beast arises, and it is given to him to make war on the saints, his time is limited, "power was given to him to continue forty and two months" (Revelation 13). And when the devil is cast out of the heavens into the earth, "he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12: 12).
Satan buffeted Paul the Apostle, but the Lord turned the buffetings to blessings, and that fact made Paul endure, sustained as he was in his sufferings by the all-sufficient grace of the Lord. And so it shall be even now. Many of God’s dear children are suffering the buffetings of Satan, some are homeless, some injured, some bereaved, some continually anxious about those who are dearer than life, but in these sufferings they are learning what God is in His sustaining grace and in the strength and courage that His presence gives them. All these things are used of God as chastening, and that does not mean punishment, but correction, it is really child-training that we might be partakers of His holiness. “But no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down” (Hebrews 12: 11, 12). The result is assured to us, if we are exercised by the trial, and God will not suffer us to be tried beyond what we are able. Then let faith rear its head in the storm, let it lay hold of God with a strong grip, let it speak out with a confident voice “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

Faith can glory in tribulation: “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us” (Romans 5: 3-5). God will not permit His children to suffer one pang of sorrow or any stroke of tribulation that He cannot turn to their good, “The Father’s hand will never cause His child a needless tear.” The sifting is needed to separate the chaff from the wheat, and in this connection there is a beautiful word in the prophecy of Amos. “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth” (Ch. 9: 9). The words have reference to Israel in the first place, but they may be well applied to this present day. The true children of God are the wheat, fair and priceless in His estimation, and it is necessary that they should go into the sieve. Yet in the sifting not a grain shall be lost. God Himself will take care of even “the least.” What comfort there is in that.

God doeth all things well, and the knowledge of this will keep us in peace, and faith will grow with trouble and courage rise as dangers increase. And the Christian can throw down the challenge, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Romans 8: 35-37). And to that we add, Amen.

“Know ye that the Lord, He is God: it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture” (Ps. 100). God is over all, know that He is God. He is our creator, and cares for the work of His hand. What confidence it gives us when we can say that we are His people, for He has redeemed us, and the sheep of His pasture, He cares for us and will care. The Lord He is God our Creator and Redeemer, the Lord is my shepherd.

Eu-hakkore

He doth uphold me! Clear and bright
His promises, like stars, appear,
He gives me songs to cheer the night
The mountain pathway to endear.
Welcome the midnight as the day,
Father! it is Thy will—Thy way!
Great zeal for the making of proselytes is characteristic of the Pharisaic mind, and the Lord’s words in verse 15 expose a remarkable feature of mere proselytism. It reproduces with added emphasis the character of the proselytizers in those who are proselytized. The Pharisees were children of hell, and their converts were the same in a twofold way. This is why there is always a tendency for evil men and seducers to wax worse and worse, until all is ripe for judgment.

In verses 16-22, the Lord condemns their fanciful teachings. The distinctions they draw between the temple and the gold of the temple, between the altar and the gift upon it, might make the unwary regard them with awe as possessing very superior minds; in reality their distinctions were purely imaginary and only a proof of their own blindness and folly. So with other matters; much punctiliousness over small things; much negligence as to great things—whether positively, as to what they observed, as in verse 23, or negatively, as to what they refused, as in verse 24. Blind they were indeed, and that type of blindness is all too common today.

Verses 25-28, expose another pernicious characteristic; they only concerned themselves about external cleanliness, so as to appear well in the eyes of men. They had no concern for the inside which was open to the eye of God. They were most careful as to possible defilement acquired by contact from without; yet most careless as to defilement which they themselves generated from within. In result they became centres of defilement, and far from acquiring it from others they diffused it to others. This is a most subtle evil, from any suspicion of which we may well pray to be preserved.

Lastly, verses 29-33, the Lord charged them with being the murderers of God’s prophets. They built tombs for the earlier prophets, since the sting of their words was no longer felt, but they were truly the children of those that had killed them; and, true to the principle of verse 15, they would prove themselves twofold more the children of murder; filling up the sins of their fathers, and ending up without a doubt in the damnation of hell.

This passage furnishes us with the most terrible denunciation from the lips of Jesus, of which we have any record. He never said such things to any poor publican or sinner. These hot words were reserved for religious hypocrites. He was full of grace and truth. Grace with truth He extended to the confessed sinners. The searchlight of truth, without mention of grace, was reserved for the hypocrites.

So it came to pass that the blood of a long line of martyrs was going to lie at the door of that generation; and now for the last time Jerusalem was having the opportunity of trusting under the wings of Jehovah, who was amongst them in the person of Jesus. Often He would have thus sheltered them as the Psalms bear witness, and often would Jesus have gathered them during His sojourn amongst them; but they would not. Consequently the beautiful house in Jerusalem, once owned as Jehovah’s was now disowned. It was just their house and desolate; and He who would have filled it was going from them, to be unseen till they should say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” They will not say this, as Psalm 118 shows, until that day arrives “which the Lord hath made,” when “the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”

All that we have been reading, from chapter 21: 23, had taken place in the temple precincts. Now, chapter 24: 1,
Jesus departed, and the disciples desired to call His attention to some of its splendid buildings, only to draw from Him the prediction that it was to be razed to its foundations. This started their enquiries as to the time of the fulfilment of His saying, which they connected with the end of the age. The first words of His reply show that His predictions are to forewarn and fore-arm us, and not merely to minister to our curiosity, or even our thirst for accurate knowledge. We are to take heed to ourselves.

False Christs are foretold together with wars and rumours, but these things do not indicate the end. There are to be famines, pestilences, earthquakes, as well as wars, but these are only the beginning of sorrows. Coupled with these things there shall be the persecution and martyrdom of disciples, the apostasy of some who have professed discipleship, the rising up of false prophets, the abounding of iniquity, and backsliding in heart of many professors. In an hour like that the real ones will be marked by endurance to the end when salvation will reach them. Moreover, all the time God will maintain His own witness among all the nations, and when this is completed the end shall come.

Three times in these verses does the Lord speak of "the end," and in each case He refers to the end of the age, as to which the disciples had enquired. To His true disciples, marked by endurance, the end will bring salvation. He emphasizes this first, before saying that it will bring judgment for His foes. Let it be noted that it is "this Gospel of the kingdom" which must be fully preached before the end comes; that is, the Gospel which the Lord Himself had preached—see, 4: 23; 9: 35—announcing the kingdom as at their doors. The Gospel which we preach today—see, 1 Corinthians 15: 1-14—could not in the nature of things be declared before Christ had died.

At the time of the end the abomination of desolation, spoken of in Daniel 12: 11, is to be found in the holy place, and Jerusalem is in question, as verse 16 shows. Evidently there again will be a temple with its holy place at the time of the end, to be desecrated by this supremely abominable idolatry. At this time will be fulfilled the prophecy of chapter 12: 43-45: the evil spirit of idolatry will enter into the people with seven-fold force, and the mass of them will accept this abomination standing in the holy place—most probably "the image of the beast," spoken of in Revelation 13: 14, 15. Because of this crowning iniquity desolation will fall upon them in the government of God. Now the setting up of this abomination is to be the signal to the godly that the predicted great tribulation is begun, and that their safety lies in flight from Jerusalem and Judaea, where the furnace of affliction will be at its hottest. The Lord was speaking to His disciples, who at that moment were just godly Israelites surrounding their Messiah on earth, though presently they were to be built into the foundation of the church that was to be. Hence at that moment they represented, not the church, but the godly remnant of Israel, still carefully observing the law of the sabbath (verse 20), and many of them located in Judaea. Instant flight was to be their course. This agrees with what is set forth symbolically in Revelation 12: 6.

The great tribulation is wholly unprecedented and never to be equalled, let alone surpassed. This the Lord states in verse 27; and the reason of it is, that as the book of Revelation shows, it will be a time of infliction of wrath from heaven—the outpouring of the vials of judgment. It will not be merely a case of men afflicting men, or a nation scourging other nations, as we see so strikingly today, but of God scourging the nations as He settles His accounts with them. Wrath from God is "revealed from heaven" (Rom. 1: 18), though not yet executed, and as far as the nations are concerned it will fall at this time. Nations as such
are only found in this world; they do not exist beyond the grave, though the men composing them do.

There will be elect souls on earth during the tribulation for their sake it will be cut short, as verse 22 tells us: as it says in Romans 9: 28, the Lord will make "a short work . . . upon the earth," and this in order that a remnant may be saved. Today God is dispensing mercy through the Gospel, and He has made a very lengthy work of it, extending to nineteen centuries: when He dispenses wrath He will make swift work, cutting it short in righteousness. A brief three and a half years will cover it, as other scriptures show. Thus the goodness of God will be manifested both in mercy and in wrath.

At that time the devil will know very well that the coming of Christ is about to take place; hence he will aim at confusing the issue by raising up impostors and endowing them with supernatural powers, hoping to deceive the elect who are looking for Him. Verse 24 plainly indicates that not all miraculous signs are of God. There are two kinds—the Divine and the devilish. In the Divine kind there is a manifestation of the Divine character in grace and power; the devilish kind may often be more flashy and startling and attractive to unconverted men. People today, who have an itching desire for the miraculous should have great care lest they be deceived.

The coming of the true Christ of God will be marked by the greatest possible publicity, like the lightning. No one will need to penetrate to a remote desert or a secret chamber in order to see Him. Just as the vultures are found wherever the carcase is, so will He fall in judgment wherever men are found rotting in the putridity and pestilence of sin.

The tribulation will be followed by the breaking up and the overturning of existing powers both in heaven and on earth, and then the Son of Man will be manifested in His glory. Twice previously the Lord had spoken of "the sign of the prophet Jonas" (12: 39, 40; 16: 4) which was the Son of Man three days in the grave. Here, we have the sign of the Son of Man in heaven—The sign that at last God is about to assert His rights in this rebellious earth, and enforce them by the Man of His purpose and choice. Two great signs are these! Who shall say which of them is greater? Both are equally great in their season, and command our worshipful adoration.

Having appeared in His glory, He will gather together His elect, those for whose sake the tribulation days have been shortened. This gathering will be accomplished by angelic ministration and signalized by the great sound of a trumpet; it will be the fulfilment of the feast of trumpets (Lev. 23: 24, 25), just as the Passover has been fulfilled in the death of Christ, and Pentecost in the gift of the Spirit and formation of the church. This gathering of the elect is in view of millennial blessedness; there is no mention of any rapture to heaven, or even of resurrection, for it is the gathering together of living people on earth. In chapter 16 the Lord had revealed that He was going to build His church, but its heavenly calling and destiny had not been revealed, so the church must not be read into verse 31.

With verse 32 we commence a series of parables and parabolic sayings. The fig tree is a parable of the Jew; and when we see a reviving of national life with that people we are to know that summer time is at hand, but until all things are fulfilled and that moment comes "this generation" shall not pass away. The Lord has spoken a number of times of this generation—see 11: 16; 12: 39, 45; 16: 4. It is a very ancient and persistent generation, for Moses denounced it in Deuteronomy 32: 5 and 20—"children in whom is no faith." The unbelieving generation will meet its doom when Jesus comes, but not before. They will go, and the words of Christ will abide.
The exact time of His advent is a secret known only to the Father, who has reserved all times and seasons under His own authority (see Acts 1: 7); and because this is so it will come as a complete surprise to the heedless world. It will be just as in the days of Noah; men engrossed in their pleasures till the judgment falls upon them. Then an eternal separation for both men and women will take place. Zephaniah 3: 11-13, will be fulfilled; the transgressors will be taken away in judgment; the afflicted and poor people who trust in the name of the Lord will be left for millennial blessings, and these are “the remnant of Israel.”

Arrived at verse 42, we again see how the Lord brought these prophetic realities to bear upon the conduct of His disciples. Since they did not know the hour, they were to be marked by watchfulness and faithful service. The servant to whom rule is entrusted must fulfil his responsibility. Doing so, he will be blessed and rewarded. On the other hand it is possible for men to take the place of servants and yet be evil. Such will ignore their responsibilities and maltreat their fellow-servants, saying in their hearts, “My Lord delayeth His coming.” That is always the thought of the world. They listen to the prophecy and then say, “The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off” (Ézek. 12: 27). The true servant maintains himself in readiness for His Lord’s approach and diligently cares for His interests while he waits.

Verses 50-51 show that the “evil servant” contemplated is not a man grievously failing and yet true at bottom, but a man who is entirely false. His Lord will judge him and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites because he is a hypocrite. He is banished under judgment to his own company. When the hypocrite is unmasked and judged there is weeping and gnashing of teeth indeed.

The parable of the ten virgins opens chapter 25. This world presents a very tangled scene in every direction. The coming of the Lord is going to produce a thorough disentanglement. We have already seen this in the parables of the wheat and the tares, and that of the net cast into the sea, in chapter 13, and again in the verses we have just considered at the close of chapter 24. The same great fact meets us again in this fresh similitude of the kingdom of heaven. The Lord had already mentioned the church in an anticipatory way, but He does not here say, “Then shall the church be likened...” but, “the kingdom of heaven,” which is wider than the church, though including it. Hence the “ten virgins” do not represent the church distinctively, though it is included within their scope.

Hence we are surely right in applying the parable to saints of the present moment—to ourselves. The virgins “went forth” to meet the bridegroom, and we have been called out of the world to wait for the Lord. There did supervene a period of forgetfulness and slumber in the church’s history. A stirring cry as to the Bridegroom’s coming has been sounded forth, a cry which has said, “Go ye out to meet Him;” that is, revert to your original position as a called out people. So long as there was slumber there was little or no discernible difference between the true and the false, but directly they awoke and reverted to their original place the difference became manifest, and those who had no oil were revealed. The oil represents the Holy Spirit, and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. 8: 9).

This parable has been pressed into service to support the idea that only devoted, wide-awake believers will meet the Lord when He comes, and that believers of lesser merit will be penalized. We believe this to be a mistake. The point all through this passage is the way in which the coming of the Lord will make complete separation between those who really are His and those who are not. In this parable we see the
separation made between real and spurious in the sphere of profession, and the seal of the Spirit is only possessed by those truly Christ's. The shutting of the door sealed the rejection of the false. The foolish do not represent backsliders who once knew the Lord and were known of Him. The word is not "I once knew you, but now disown you," but rather, "I know you not." Now the Lord knows those who are His, but these were strangers to Him.

In verse 13 the Lord applies this parable to His disciples, and to us. We know not the time of the coming of the Son of Man, and we are to watch. Thus again and again does He bring His prophetic teaching to bear upon our characters and behaviour. He does not give us light as to what is coming just to inform our minds and satisfy our desires for us. So having exhorted us to watchfulness He proceeds to show in the rest of this chapter how His coming is going to affect us as servants, and indeed how it will affect the world. The disentanglement it is to produce will be complete.

“My Times are in Thy Hand.”

“’My times are in Thy hand, Whatever they may be, Pleasing or painful, dark or bright As best may seem to Thee.’”

A LL the concerns of those who believe are in the hands of Almighty God, now revealed to us as Father. “My times” are there: These change and shift, but they change only in accordance with unchanging love, and they shift only according to the purpose of One with whom is no variability or shadow of turning. “My times,” that is to say my ups and downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and wealth—all these are in the hands of the Lord who appoints everything according to His holy will. He orders the length of my days and darkness of nights. Whether times of refreshing are mine or clouds gather above me, all are in His hands who is Lord both of time and eternity.

David was in sore trouble when he uttered these words, as Psalm 31 in which they occur discloses. Not enemies only troubled him, but his iniquities caused him to sigh and cry, but in this was his confidence, his times were in God’s hand and how did they get there? He had placed them there with a simple trust, “Into Thy hand,” he had said, “Into Thy hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.” The words that our Lord Jesus used as He laid down His life, we use when we awake to the fact that He has redeemed us. We own His claim, He has rights over us because He is God and Creator, He has rights over us because He has redeemed us. He has brought us back from sin’s bondage and the power of death. We own His double claim and yield ourselves to Him.

“My times are in Thy hand.” It would be a hideous thought to us if any period of our lives was left to luck, to chance or to the vagaries of our own fancy. We fall back with joyful hope upon the fact that He is ordering our way. If our times were not in His hand we would beg Him that they might be. But they are there, and He loves us with a changeless love and works all things together for our eternal good. Sit still, O child, and let Him do as seemeth Him good. Cast away thy anxiety, cease to worry, for He will surely bring all these things to a successful issue. What peace it gives to see all things that concern us grasped by the hand of God. We may rest in the knowledge of this as quietly as a babe rests upon its mother’s breast.
BETHANY. No. 1.

"Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (John 11).

THERE is something very touching in this simple statement. Its power lies, I think, in its personal character. Intimacy and personal affection are suggested by the naming of the members of this family of Bethany. The word Bethany means, "the house of sweetness" and I have no doubt that the sweetness of the love of Jesus was enjoyed by the two sisters and their brother. Certain it is that when serious sickness threatened the sisters with the bitterness of sorrowful bereavement they sent for Him pleading His personal affection for Lazarus. "He whom Thou lovest is sick."

Requests for help are sometimes queerly worded and the identity of the person needing medical aid obscure, but surely this one is unique. It was just taken for granted it seems that Jesus would know to whom it referred. Such was the confidence they had in His love.

True they had confidence in Jesus' power too, for Martha was sure Lazarus would not have died if He had been there, and indeed her confidence seems to have survived the shock of bereavement for she said, "But I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."

Well may we sing with a like confidence:

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

Mary weeping in her sorrow had the same confidence in Jesus, and Jesus walking to the tomb with Mary wept with her. What a spectacle!

Some have attempted to analyse those tears. I decline. Looking on Jesus weeping I wonder and worship.

John who places these things on record gives the words of Jesus in the third chapter of his Gospel, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" but he also claimed for himself the personal love of Jesus as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

The apostle Paul too, although he writes to the saints at Ephesus "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it" felt the personal and intimate character of the love and ejaculates, "the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Notice that when it is a question of the Church all-glorious he speaks of Christ, but when it is a question of Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus in the circumstances of life with all its sorrows and tears, it is Jesus.

There are many tears being shed today by the Lord's people. Many are sick in body and perplexed in spirit.

Jesus is still touched by the feeling of our infirmities although He has passed into the heavens.

What a comfort to meditate on the personal love of Jesus and of His interest in each saint in his individual pathway. May we learn to walk with Him and to lean on His bosom.

We fail grievously because we think we can manage matters that seem small to us without reference to the Lord. Joshua thought that Ai would be easy of capture after his triumph over Jericho. He listened to the spies and did not seek direction from God, and though there were but a few men in that city, there Israel met with their first defeat. The same thing happened when the Gibeonites came to them; they judged by appearances and did not seek counsel of God. And these things were written for our admonition.
FIRST LOVE. Rev. 2: 4.

First love is not merely first in point of time, but first in quality; it is the same word as "the best robe," (Luke 15) and is frequently translated "chief."

First love has Christ as the supreme one in the heart, not self, nor even work and service, but Christ, as the true bride has no thought for any but the true bridegroom.

"The bride eyes not her garment
But her dear Bridegroom's face.

Things with us may appear all right outwardly as they were with the church at Ephesus, but if we have lost heart contact with Christ so that what we do is not the result of living impulse from Him, we have fallen.

"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it," His love is said to be "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge." Love seeks love that shall answer to it, and the stronger the love that seeks every failure to respond to it on the part of the loved one is the more keenly felt. How the loss of first love must grieve the heart of Him whose love can never change.

The "somewhat" in our Authorised version should not be there. It would make it appear as though it was a small thing. It is not small, it is the greatest thing of all, without it the bloom is off everything, the charm is gone, decline has set in. It is the beginning of the Laodicean condition.

The loss of first love affects everything. Then "the first works" are of necessity gone with it, and so the Lord says, "Remember from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

First love finds its full satisfaction in Christ, if He has ceased to be everything and all for the soul, the anchor of the soul has slipped, the drift has set in.

When Christ is all to the soul, there is full satisfaction. But Christ supplemented by something else, is Christ dishonoured, Communion is lost, for there can be no proper communion with a dishonoured Christ. And there is no true repentance for a soul until it has got back to the first condition.

Notice, it is "Remember from whence thou art fallen," not "to what." It is not, look down into the dark depths but look up into the bright heights. Think of Him whose love is slighted; Think of the time when your pearl-like affection suffered no rival to Him, and when He delighted in you, because your heart was undivided and your mind steadfast. "I remember," said the Lord of old, "the love of thine espousals."

The doctrine may be right, and you may be the most ardent of fundamentalists, but it is not here a question of the doctrine, but of the heart; you can no longer rightly or powerfully commend the doctrine when the heart is out of it.

"First love" will cherish everything that is precious to Christ. His word will be sought out and kept, His Name—what He is in His own Person, will be greatly loved and not denied, separation from whatever would grieve Him will be desired, and the desire for His coming again will be real.

"He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14: 21).

The only right measure of love is practical obedience. Emotional glow, warm feelings are all right and very desirable for those who know that they have been redeemed by the Saviour's blood, but they may easily deceive those who have them; obedience is the one test.
THE effort to make current events a fulfillment of the prophetic word is harmful to Biblical Study. The dictators who are spreading misery far and wide are not prophetic characters. Neither the Beast nor Anti-christ have yet appeared, nor will they as long as the true Church of God is on earth. The Nazi leader may be a foreshadowing of the Beast and his short-lived triumphs, he is like what he will be in many respects, but he is not him. Before the Beast appears there will come a falling away first—the complete apostasy of Christendom—then that man of sin will be revealed, the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2: 3). And again, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only He that now letteth (hindereth) will let (hinder) until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked (Anti-christ) be revealed" (verses 7 and 8). We do not hesitate to say that the one who hinders by His presence and power is the Holy Ghost now dwelling in the true Church on earth, when it is caught up to heaven, according to 1 Thess. 4: 16. He will go with it. Then the two devil-inspired men of whom we read in Revelation 13 will appear, and not till then. And if this is so it means that the church will not go through the tribulation, for that time of trouble will coincide with the activities of these men. In confirmation of this we have the Lord's word to Philadelphia. "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3: 10). Not out of the trial only, but out of the hour of it.

We have already remarked that the two God-given dreams (Daniel 2 and 7) give a summary of the four great world powers from Daniel's day to the fall of the Roman Empire and then its revival and final destruction in a day yet to come. While this has its place in prophecy, strictly speaking prophecy has the Jew as its chief subject and Daniel's seventy weeks, have an important place in their history (Daniel 9). It is generally understood that this period commenced when the commandment went forth to build Jerusalem as recorded in Nehemiah 2. The angel's words to Daniel as to the issue are impressive. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (verse 24). The seventy weeks are divided into three parts. The two first, making 69 weeks, 483 years, being the history of this people down to the cutting off of Messiah. "But not for Himself," "for the transgression of my people was He stricken" (Isa. 53). After this "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" which word was fulfilled when Titus the Roman destroyed Jerusalem. The remaining week is separated from the rest and awaits fulfillment.

There is evidently a gap of undefined length between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth. It is this period of grace that has continued since Pentecost until now, a period in which the church is being called out of the world by the gospel of the grace of God—called in (Romans 11: 25) "the fulness of the Gentiles." When this period is finished at the completion of the church, and no man knows when that will be, the prophetic clock, which was stopped at the crucifixion of the Lord or destruction of Jerusalem will start again, and great events will be crowded into the seven remaining years. In it the prince whose people
destroyed the city—that is the Romans, will confirm a covenant, as it should be, with the many for one week. This demands two preparatory moves. The Roman power must be revived by its prince—the first Beast of Revelation 13, who is the little horn of Daniel’s vision of the fourth beast (Daniel 7). And there must be Jews in Jerusalem with power to negotiate with him—these will be the "scornful men" of Isaiah 28—godless, unbelieving Jews. In the midst of the week the Beast will break his covenant with these men, and "Jacob’s trouble," the great tribulation will begin, and "that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

This period of intense suffering will be shortened, for "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24: 22). They will be brought to an end by the coming of the Son of Man, who is Lord of lords, and King of kings, who will overthrow the power of the Beast and Anti-christ, called the false prophet, and they shall be cast alive into the lake of fire, the devil who has deceived the nations from the beginning will be chained in the bottomless pit, and the Lord will reign in righteousness and bring peace to this groaning creation.

---

Christ’s Chief Interest on Earth.

Every one gets what he values. Mary Magdalene had simple and undivided affection for Christ, and neither disciples nor angels could satisfy or heal her broken heart, only Jesus her Lord; and she was the first to see Him on the resurrection day. He delights to manifest Himself to those that love Him (John 14: 21). And when He manifests Himself to any soul that becomes intelligent. It was so with Mary; to her the Lord committed a most wonderful message for His disciples, it was a new revelation of a new relationship. They were to know that they were His brethren, that His Father was their Father, His God their God. And Mary, not Peter or John, was given this message. The Lord highly honoured her devotion and love. If I have true affection for the Lord I shall soon become intelligent in His things, and He will make me the vessel of His service to others.

And Mary obeyed His commission at once; she had no longer any fear of losing Him, she had her part in this new relationship and she knew it. No power could now sever her from Him, and His interests became hers. She was not sent to scribes and pharisees, or, to the leaders of the Jew’s religion, but to a company of men whom He called, "My brethren." They were dear to Him; they were His treasure and she delighted to serve them for His sake and in serving them she was serving Him. That was the beginning, the nucleus of His own company on earth; it is still here, and if we love Him we shall not be ignorant of its value in His estimation. His saints, His brethren are here, they form His assembly, they are His treasure. What are they to us? Do we love them because He loves them? Do we delight to serve them because they are precious to Him? We can test ourselves and learn how far we are devoted to Him by our interest in them. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar” (1 John 4: 20).

The call of God separates us, but we need the Spirit of God to occupy the separate place according to God, and the loving devoted mind. “Salt is good,” the divine principle is the good thing. But salt may lose its saltiness. The right position or the divine principle may be understood and avowed, but there may be no power or life in it.
THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH.

J. A. T.

“Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blame” (Eph. 5: 25-2).

When the Apostle comes to instruct the saints as to natural relationships in this Epistle and touches the nearest and dearest of them, the husband and wife, the Spirit of God leads him out into the love of Christ to the Church (Assembly). He not only gave His life for it, shedding His blood, but gave Himself for it in all the inscrutable glory of His Person. It is the love of a formed relationship. He did not sanctify and cleanse it that He might love it, but He loved it as He found it, and with all the strength and devotion of the love that gave Himself for it. He is now sanctifying it—forming it like Himself that there might be nothing to hinder the enjoyment of this love—He does this by the ministry of all that He is to it; “cleansing” it goes along with this and is necessary because the evil flesh is still in us. All is in view to His presenting it to Himself that His heart may delight in it, and that we may answer practically to what we were chosen in Christ individually before the foundation of the world—“holy and without blame” (Ch. 1: 4). Even in this we do not learn all that the Church (Assembly) is to Christ. It is His “own body” as Eve was to Adam in God’s original institution of marriage, (verse 28) and it is “Himself” as Paul learnt in the first words addressed to Him by the glorified Christ. “Why persecutest thou Me?” And thus it is that the Body can be presented as His wife. In loving His wife (the Church) He loves Himself and no detail of tender nourishing and cherishing is wanting in that love of His Assembly, for we are members of His body.

“The mystery is great, but I speak, said Paul,” concerning Christ and the church (assembly).” Revelation 19 gives amid the celebration of the greatest joy in heaven, the result of the presentation, and His wife appears, having passed the judgment seat, arrayed in all that had been the fruit of His grace in her. Revelation 21: 9-22, 5 gives her display in the glory of Christ in the kingdom, while Rev. 21: 2 carries us beyond this into eternity, where it is no longer glory displayed to others, but what she is for Himself—as “a Bride adorned for her Husband.” Still in the freshness of His affections, though a thousand years have intervened since her marriage day, she is for His own life and heart alone.

“If a man love Me, he will keep My words” (John 14: 23).

To keep His words is to observe them in such a way that our practical conduct shall be governed by them. We cannot trifle with the words of our Lord and Master, nor set limits as to how far we shall obey Him. His words are not harsh commands, for He is not a taskmaster. Happy for us if we can say with the Psalmist “Thy law is now my delight.”

If we serve Him because of His love for us our hearts will be busy with all that interests Him. If He intercedes for His own on earth, our prayers will ascend to God for them. We shall also be in communion with Him about the going forth of His word in the world, and rejoice with Him as that word prospers. What a wonderful word that is “Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” If we love Him we shall have a share in that joy.
LOVE IS OF GOD.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9).

"Beloved, if God so loved us." What then? Naturally we would say that we ought to love Him, but it is not put that way here. "We ought also to love one another." Whom did God love? He loved us. He loved the brethren. What will that love do if it gets into my heart? It will do the same thing that it did in the heart of God. It will turn towards God's children. It does not say we ought to love God. The law said that. Here it says, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." That is our obligation, but it is a law of liberty. Every saint of God in the world is precious to our hearts. We may get under the power of the world, and the flesh may become dominant, so that this love may not be seen, but at the bottom of our hearts, and in the heart of every believer there is love to all the children of God. But here love is practical. "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." What is the good of secret love? "Open rebuke is better than secret love." What is the good if it lies only in my heart, and is not manifested towards anybody else? It is of no value to anybody. God's love was in deed and in truth.

The commandments of God in the New Testament are infinitely beautiful, and most encouraging. Take for instance what the Lord says to Peter. Peter says, "How often shall my brother trespass against me, and I forgive him—until seven times?" The Lord says, "I say not until seven times, but until seventy times seven." There is to be no limit to our forgiveness of one another. Is that a tremendous demand upon us? No, it tells me that what God is seeking is to make Himself manifest in us. Hence, if He says there is no limit to my forgiveness of my brother, that means there is no limit to His forgiveness of me. I have only to act towards others as He has acted towards me.

If we love one another, God is seen in us. We read in John 1: "No man hath seen God at any time." What is the answer to it? "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The answer to it in the Gospel was Jesus; the answer to it in the Epistle is the saints. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." If we love one another practically what will be the effect of it? Everybody will say, "These people are disciples of Jesus." Why so? Because nobody ever taught it but Himself. They have been in the school of Christ. Every avenue in which the love of God has run in Christ will run in you and me. If we love one another the saints will get their share of that love. If we are going on with God the saints get it, and the world gets it. The world hears the gospel, and we rejoice when the gospel is preached. We help those who preach it, if we cannot preach it ourselves. What is the spring and fountain of all that? All these energies proceed from the nature of God, which we have, for God is love. The love is perfected in us, and there is nothing lacking. Wherever you go saint and sinner are met by the love of God, for "we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Love is the spring of all true service. Much goes under the name of service which is only self-will and disobedience. "Lo, these many years do I serve thee" was the language of the elder son in the parable, and he had not a single thought in harmony with his father's thought. He was angry because of what his father had done.
"Calm Me, My God."

Calm me, my God, and keep me calm;
Let Thine outstretched wing
Be like the shade of Elim's palm,
Beside her desert spring.

Yes, keep me calm, though loud and rude
The sounds my ear that greet—
Calm in the closet's solitude,
Calm in the busy street.

Calm in the hour of bountiful health,
Calm in my hour of pain;
Calm in my poverty or wealth,
Calm in my loss or gain.

Calm in the sufferance of wrong.
Like Him who bore my shame;
Calm 'mid the threatening, taunting throng
Who hate His Holy Name.

Bonar.

All the Days of my Life."

"Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," Not has followed me, though that is true; but it does not require faith to say that, it is the simple statement of a fact; but shall follow me! Ah, that calls for faith. But while we praise Him for all that is past, we are surely ashamed to have any doubt about the future. We must not allow a grain of dust of doubt to get into the eye of faith. How old are you? Some of you are getting on, fifty years! sixty, seventy! How long do you think you will live? If God has been gracious to you all the years you have lived, will you fret about the few years that remain, and which may never come! Sir Francis Drake had sailed round the world, and when he reached the Thames he encountered a storm that threatened his ship. "What," he said, "Sail round the world safely, and then be drowned in the ditch? Never." So we ought to say God has brought us thus far. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and what He has undertaken He will complete. "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

Have faith in God! for He who lives on high
Knows well thy grief, and hears the suppliant's cry;
Now to His arms, thine only refuge, fly:
Have faith in God!

Fear not to call on Him, O soul distressed,
Draw near to Him Who gives the weary rest
He who is oftenest there is oftenest blest.
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, thy Saviour lives.
Have faith in God!
HAVE YE ANY MEAT?


It was evening and seven men might have been seen very busy on the shore of an eastern lake, often called a sea on account of its size. A boat was there with its tackle safely aboard, nets had all been cleaned up and made ready for use, and all prepared for the night’s trip, for were not these men fishermen?

Soon the boat pushed off, cruised about as was decided necessary, and the nets were lowered.

The hours gradually passed, night was at length ended, daylight broke through, and in due course the nets were hauled on board and the boat was turned for home, but the nets were searched in vain for any fish, for “that night they caught nothing.”

What a disappointment! What did it all mean? Ah, they will have to go back to the previous evening before the expedition set out to find the solution to that problem.

Their leader, a brave man, who at the same time was very warm-hearted and affectionate, had said, “I go a fishing,” and the other six had all followed. Their Lord and Master, who “reigned over the deep and the fish therein,” had not been even consulted. He who knew all had been left out of their reckoning that evening “and that night they caught nothing.”

Plans, quite legitimate in themselves, had been made, for there was nothing wrong in seeking to earn an honest livelihood. But the One who had called them, to whom they had given allegiance, to whom they owed everything, had been somehow, no doubt quite unintentionally, forgotten; so He let them take their way without Him, but “THAT NIGHT they caught nothing.”

When the question came from the Son of God’s lips, “Have ye any meat?” the sorrowful reply had to be given, “No.” They had nothing to offer Him.

Is it necessary to say anything further, beloved fellow-Christian? Have not all of us known, some of us more, some less perhaps, what it is to have gone in our own strength, with all our plans prepared, to seek the lost and erring ones.

We have taken good printed and carefully selected ammunition, chosen a needy neighbourhood, even looked up the Scriptures from which to obtain a few thoughts; and yet somehow sufficient communion and intercourse with the very One who would have us go forth and who has saved us, has been temporarily forgotten. Across our service on that occasion has been written plainly and distinctly in bold characters, “AND THAT NIGHT THEY CAUGHT NOTHING.”

In spite of the failure the Lord remained gracious, and He had something for His erring ones, for those disciples when they landed saw a fire with fish and bread laid thereon, and He said, “Come and dine.” They had nothing for Him but He had a meal for them.

How different a picture is portrayed in Luke 24. 36-43.

Two of the disciples had been thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ who had died, and had been conversing with the risen Lord. After He had left them their hearts were full of Him as they told others. “The Lord is risen indeed.” He came into their midst and their hearts were filled with joy. When He said to them, “Have ye here any meat?” they were able at once to give Him “a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.” No preparation was necessary, no waiting, but the food was all ready for the One they loved.

May we be so occupied with the Saviour that we are able to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13. 15).
We are not surprised that God should "now command all men everywhere to repent" for we know that the world is a prodigal world, gone far from Him, but we are surely shaken out of our complacency when the Lord Jesus "with a great voice, as of a trumpet" calls upon His churches to repent: His churches that He had called out of the world by the gospel, to be no longer of the world, but in it as witnesses for Him. Yet four times over this solemn and imperative word rings out: to Ephesus, and Pergamos, and Sardis, and Laodicea. Repent, Repent, Repent, Repent.

The Lord had commissioned John to write this Revelation that God had given to Him, and to send it to the seven churches which were in Asia, but it was not for them only but for all the churches. They were representative of all the churches; and not of the churches then existent only, the seven special messages cover prophetically the whole period of the Church's career on the earth. To four of the seven, the burden of the message sent to them was Repent; and none of us can escape this word; if we have "an ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" each one of us will be compelled to ask, How far does that solemn call apply to me?

It will be noticed that the Lord did not here appear to John as he had known Him, girded for loving service. "He was clothed with a garment down to the foot." Nor did He shew Himself as the great lover of the church—the love was there, as we learn from the message to Laodicea, but it was restrained; because of the fallen condition of the churches it could not flow out in its inherent fulness, He was "girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

Moreover His eyes were not like the eyes of the Bridegroom in the Canticles, "as doves eyes, washed with milk and fitly set," they were "as a flame of fire." They were eyes that searched out every hidden thing, nothing could escape them; they saw things as they were in the inner depths of the heart, so that He could say to each of the churches "I know."

Everything that He can commend He does commend, for there is no unrighteousness in Him, but we feel as we read His words that the things that He condemns cast their blight upon everything; they grieve Him to His heart; they are the flies in the ointment of the apothecary that make it stink: they are the little foxes that spoil the vine. The bloom is off the fruit, and the beginning of it all was at Ephesus. At Ephesus, the brightest and most intelligent of all the churches, the choicest flower in all the garden that Paul had planted, the blight had set in, for to that church the Lord had to say, "I have against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The "somewhat" of our Authorised Version should not be there, it makes it appear as though this first love is but a little thing and of no great importance, whereas it is the greatest thing of all—without it all else is tainted and spoilt. The meaning of Ephesus is, "desirable," but could that church be desirable when first love had gone and a rival had displaced the Lord in her affections?

"First love" is not first in point of time, but first in quality; it is the best—the same word is used in Luke 15 for the "best robe." Nothing but the best will suit the Lord. Who will dare to offer Him less than the best? His love passeth knowledge: many waters could
not quench it, nor the floods drown it. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it; and great love can only be satisfied with a full answer to it, and the stronger the love the more keenly is felt the failure of the response. "I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" Paul said to another church, and first love is the love of espousals, and this love is most precious to the Lord. In ancient days He said to Israel, "I remember thee... the love of thine espousals... Israel was holiness to the Lord." It was this that had waned at Ephesus; it is this that the church has lost; and this is the beginning of the drift that ends in the Laodicean state—the Lord outside a closed door. Therefore the solemn call, Repent.

The Lord saw nothing to condemn in the church at Smyrna. Prophetically the condition in that church covered the period from Apostolic days to the accession of Constantine to the Imperial throne in the third century. It was a time of great and continuous persecution, and the sufferings through which the church passed seem to have checked the decline that had set in in the Apostolic times. But when these persecutions ceased and the world smiled upon the church and her leaders were raised to posts of honour in the Empire, the descent was accelerated, and the Lord had to say, "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is... where Satan dwelleth." The Church had lost its heavenly hope, it was no longer a stranger and a pilgrim here, it had settled down to dwell in the world. In the freshness of first love the virgins had gone forth to meet the Bridegroom, but while He tarried they all slumbered and slept. It is but a step from leaving first love to settling down in the world; it is the inevitable consequence. The heart must have an object; and if it ceases to find its all in Christ and if the affections are not set upon the things that are in the world above where He is, it must seek satisfaction where it cannot be found, in the world where Satan dwells. Per-
gamos means "married." Here was the unequal yoke between the church and the world; its conscience became blunted and its vision blurred, and within it were tolerated teachings and practices that the Lord hated. Therefore the imperative call, Repent.

We pass by Thyatira. There the depth of Satan had been reached. It describes the Papal system in the dark ages at its worst. There is no call to repentance here. Space had been given to its Corruptress to repent but she repented not, and nothing but judgment awaits that evil system. At the Reformation God intervened in this great darkness and delivered many from the bondage and corruption of Rome. Sardis answers to the results of this. The name, it is said, means "a remnant," or "that that has escaped." It was a great deliverance, a mighty work of the Spirit of God. The Bible was put into the hands of the people and the Word of God was freely preached. And yet it stopped short of full recovery. As always men failed. Protestantism has fallen short of God's purpose, its works are not perfect before Him. Instead of a return to the full truth given by God in the Scriptures—to Christ as the living and all-sufficient Head of the church, and the recognition of the rights and power of the Holy Spirit in the church on earth, the arm of flesh was looked to and human wisdom trusted, and National churches was the result—the form of godliness but the power lacking; a baptised profession—the name to live, but dead. It has been said, "In Papacy the church ruled the world, in Protestantism the world rules the church." And, alas, it is true; and there could only be one result from this. Spiritual life thrives and grows vigorous in times of persecution and trouble, but it cannot breathe in the atmosphere created by the world's help and patronage. Therefore the Lord's word of warning and command, "Remember, therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and REPENT."
This union of the church and the world has brought into being the worst and last phase of the church’s drift from first love—the lukewarmness of Laodicea. It is total indifference to Christ. His Name is not discarded by the Laodiceans but He has no place in their counsels. His Truth is emptied of all that it means to His true church. His vicarious sacrifice and saving blood are spurned as relics of a bygone age—and having itching ears they heap to themselves teachers after their own hearts. The pride and self-laudation of Laodicea are nauseous to Him. How scathing is His condemnation of them. “Thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.” And yet He waits in patience even over Laodicea. They have closed their door on Him, but He holds open the door of repentance for them in words that should reach the most indifferent heart. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and REPENT.” His love had not changed; it could not “nourish and cherish” (Eph. 5) as it delights to do, but it would rebuke and chasten in order to win even a Laodicean to repentance.

This decline in the church from Ephesian devotion to Laodicean indifference is sad reading, but it is there in the Holy Word for our instruction and warning. It is written for those of us who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To be deaf to what the Spirit saith would be to partake of the Laodicean spirit. There are, thank God, bright gleams in the dark picture. In Thyatira, which with the following three churches runs on to the end, there are “the rest who have not known the depth of Satan,” and to these the Lord gives the “Morning Star”—Himself as the bright harbinger of the day, shining for them even in the darkest hour. In Sardis there are those who have not defiled their garments, and their separation of heart and life from evil delights the Lord. He says, “They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” And there is Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia the Lord sees nothing to condemn, but much to commend. The love of the brethren is there, for that is what the name means. They have a little strength, which would indicate their weakness cleaving to Him, their dependence on Him. They have kept His word, which would indicate their faithfulness to Him. They have not denied His Name, which would indicate their affection for Him, and they have kept the word of His patience—they are contented to have no place in the world and to be nothing in it because He is still the rejected Lord; which would indicate their suffering with Him. And in Laodicea, surely some heart would respond to the knocking at the door. I question whether there are words of greater pathos in the whole of the New Testament than these. “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 sup with him and he with Me.” There He stands, not in anger but in love, unrequited love; not with stern rebuke, but with tender entreaty. He does not knock with glittering sword, but with a pierced hand. Yes, there must be a response to such love as this, even in Laodicea.

“Love so amazing, so divine.”

But, brethren, how do we react to these seven letters? Where do we stand in relation to this downward, away-drift? Are we prepared to say unto Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; prove me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139 (N.T.)). First love finds its full satisfaction in Christ; if He has ceased to be everything to the soul, the drift has set in, and self will seek its satisfaction in the world in one form or another. Selfish motives and worldly principles will displace in our soul the word of the Lord which He has
given us to keep, and when we come under the domination of the world we are but a step from Laodicean indifference, and Christ outside the heart and life. Can a true Christian descend to that depth of unfaithfulness to Christ? Our answer is, God forbid it, but beware of the first step on the road to it; and if any one of us find himself on that downward plane may he hear the Lord's word REPENT. "Remember from whence thou art fallen," do not despair but repent, and repentance is not complete unless there is a return to the place from which we have fallen. Our attention has been called to the fact that the word is, "Remember from whence thou art fallen," not "to what." It is not look down into the dark depths, but look up into the bright heights. Think of Him whose love is slighted. He remembers the love of your espousals when your heart was undivided and you were holiness to Him (Jeremiah 2) and He would have you remember. To Israel of old the Lord said, "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely. Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them; for the ways of the Lord are right and the just shall walk in them."

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD." A. E. Booth

This name of Jehovah, Israel's Saviour God, is given in the opening verse of the Psalm, and then again in the closing verse, and He is referred to twelve times throughout its six verses, once for each of the Twelve Tribes to whom the Psalm was first given, and once for each gate of the Capitol city of the land of promise, and also once for each gate of pearl in the Heavenly City by and by. This special Name of Deity was given to Israel as a nation and has been held by them as a sacred trust throughout their long history. The name suggests His abiding, unchanging character. Men have been changeable, and so has that favoured nation, but we read "I Jehovah change not" (Mal. 3: 6). This Name is equivalent to the apostolic teaching, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13: 8).

This Psalm is highly personal throughout. In the six verses we do not get the plural, such as "we," "our" or "us," but always the singular number, "I," "Me," "My" and "Mine," and this about seventeen times. As we read the Psalm with devotion, the personal pronoun becomes unspeakably sweet. The Psalm begins "Jehovah is my Shepherd," and closes with "I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever." Thus each individual in contemplating the blessedness of these themes throughout the Psalm, carries with him a Divine assurance from the first verse to the last; from the beginning of the pilgrim way to the end of it.

"The Lord is my Shepherd." This corresponds with the new Testament teaching, where Jesus—Jehovah the Saviour—is called the "Good," the "Great" and the "Chief" Shepherd (John 10: 14; Hebrews 13: 20; 1st Peter 5: 4).

Abel, the first shepherd of the Book of Genesis, was called "a keeper of sheep." Then Joseph follows in the same calling and of him it is written that he was "feeding the flock" (Genesis 37: 1). Of Moses it is also written that he kept and led his father-in-law's flock (Exodus 3: 1). David who penned this Psalm was a special shepherd in the midst of the flock of Jesse, his father, and amid strong enemies he defended and saved the lambs and sheep. Psalm 23, and all New Testament teaching, show us how perfectly the Lord Jesus keeps, feeds, leads and saves the whole flock which He has purchased by His own blood, but He does it with an individual care; each member of the flock is an object of deepest interest to Him.
BETHANY 2.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard very costly and anointed the feet of Jesus" (John 12:3).

Let us go again in thought to Bethany, the house of sweetness. Jesus is there in an atmosphere of rest and tranquility. He is not active in any particular service of comfort or power although His very presence must have suggested power and ministered comfort to that family who had had such recent experience of both.

He is not weeping now. He is sitting at the table and Lazarus whom He raised from the dead is at the table with Him. There is no distress or discord in the hearts of the sisters. They have made Him a supper and Martha is serving Him and Mary quietly adoring Him. Truly they have discovered where the Shepherd makes His flock to rest—His own presence. Mary has taken ointment of spikenard and is anointing the feet of Jesus.

How beautiful these feet are! They are the feet of Him Who has brought good tidings from the very presence of God, of Him Who has published peace. They are the feet of the Man of Sorrows. No longer will they tread the shores of Galilee. Soon they will be halted on their mission of mercy to needy men and cruelly transfixed in death. And that other Mary will weep at another tomb—the tomb of Jesus. She wipes His feet with her hair and the Lord accepts the outpouring of unrestrained adoration and affection.

Every eye is on her. Her action fills the house with the odour of the ointment. The market value of her offering is understood by those present, the true character of it, only by the Lord Himself. "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this."

Have we any part or place in such an atmosphere of rest, affection and worship? Yes, through grace we can say, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste." "He brought me to the banqueting house and His banner over me was love" (Canticles 3:4). It is the work of the Spirit today to glorify Christ and to change us into the same image from glory to glory. He is worthy of all our affection, our highest service and profoundest worship.

"Sweet it is to sit before Thee,
Sweet to hear Thy blessed Voice,
Sweet to worship and adore Thee
While our hearts in Thee rejoice."

Let us meditate on this scene at Bethany—the house of sweetness—and in spirit say, "While the King sitteth at His Table my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof" (Canticles 1:12).

"God is love."

Who can set forth the love of God? Who can tell the blessedness that lies enfolded in the words "God is love." They are the greatest words in this or any other language. First we read, "God is light," and that because of the sinful condition of men, the light searches out and exposes that condition, but what does that light reveal to us? Simply, "God is love," that is what He is absolutely, in it is the nature of His being. It is the spring of all His activity towards us. And, behold the manner and the measure of it. "Herein is love. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). Our sins, our very rebellion against Him was the opportunity for the manifestation of His love.

"Notwithstanding all our weakness, shortcomings and misdeeds, there is no feeling of hostility in God’s mind towards us. Not even an impatient word, or look. ALL IS LOVE."
THE HOUSE OF THE POTTER.

R. McCallum

IN the days of Jeremiah, amidst topsy-turvy, perplexing and distressing circumstances for the nation of Israel and interpreted by Israel as proof that God was indifferent, impotent or inconsistent, the word of the Lord "came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house and there will I cause thee to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it " (Jeremiah 18).

And so today amidst our perplexities and trials let us resort to the potter's house for that instruction and reinforcement of faith which the Lord conveyed to Jeremiah of old.

Not the least fortunate element in this striking figure of the potter and the clay is the fact that the potters' art has changed very little since 600 B.C. There is still the man at work on material of the same kind, the clay; the only change being, probably, in the wheel, symbolic of the changing circumstances of life. The figure then is parabolic: the potter—fitting type of God, in the inscrutability of His ways—remains the same from age to age; the clay—symbolical of man whose nature has remained unchanged in spite of the advance of time, with only the whirling wheel of circumstantial events showing alteration. In the potter's house, then, Jeremiah saw an intelligent, capable worker, obviously neither indifferent nor impotent, but powerful, and deftly fashioning the clay which he raised by pressure of the foot to meet his skillful hand, tender and restrained at first, yet crushing the thing of his own making out of shape, but marring the vessel to reproduce a thing of exquisite beauty.

Well may we say with Isaiah, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Not in the presence of the potter shall we say it complainingly but in amazement and with astonishment at the wonderful ways of God. Indeed the potter exhibits a principle which is an attribute of God, it is the clear and unmistakable principle of Divine Sovereignty. In its own way this is magnificent. The noisy stage of this world is so often filled before our vision with Hitler and Mussolini, with the sinister figure of Stalin lurking in the background, that we fail to remember that God is Sovereign. Has it ever occurred to you that few of us would ever have heard of Pontius Pilate except for his ignoble part in the trial of Christ? Nero is well-nigh forgotten but for his part in persecuting the early Church. I suppose that even the horrors of the German concentration camp were greatly exceeded when girls were stripped naked and thrown to the lions: when men were crucified upside down in jest: when the bodies of youths were covered with pitch and set ablaze to illumine Nero's garden. Yet in the language of Pliny these Christians "sang hymns to Christ as God." Not with Nero were they obsessed but with the Sovereign God and His Christ.

I have said in its own way this picture of the Sovereignty of God, presented in the potter at his work, is magnificent. There is, however, in it, if this were the whole picture, an element of depression. If I only know that God is sovereign I may exhort you in days of trial to stick it out, to be strong and of a good courage, to grin and bear, in the spirit of resigned fatalism, but I shall have no comfort to offer you. Nor is it likely that you will appreciate as comfort any suggestion that your suffering is not so great as you suppose and that others are enduring still greater anguish. Thank God, we see in this figure more than the principle of God's Sovereignty—we see portrayed a Divine Purpose, for do we not read of the Potter that "he wrought a work on the wheels." In order that we may investigate God's purpose, let us consider the remarkable expression of confidence voiced by the beloved
Apostle as he declared, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."

Here is the introduction to a passage remarkable for its theology, round which controversy has raged as men have discussed these transcendent themes, foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification—but a passage as remarkable for the fulness of its comfort as for the depth of its doctrine. The point for us to appreciate is that real joy and comfort are based upon a true relationship to God, and that as Christians we are not promised an easy time in this world. Our outlook must be realistic, not romantic. We are to expect trials, tribulations and sufferings, and the Apostle in the face of these, lays emphasis not on what they can do to mitigate them but on what God has done, is doing, and will yet do for them. God uses our trials and tribulations to promote our good. His purpose is the ultimate justification of His ways—the ultimate answer to the question as to why God allows certain things to happen. We know that all things must work together for our good because it is evident that there is nothing merely fortuitous or accidental in the Divine purpose. Grace begun shall end in glory, for whom He justified them He also glorified." In the purpose of God the whole plan of blessing is complete.

Let us reflect again that in the figure of the Potter that we have been considering there is not merely a Principle and a Purpose in evidence, but behind these giving expression and effect to them there is a Person. Here lies the ultimate basis of our comfort and consolation. "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" But is He indeed for us? Here is the abiding witness, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" If God has used what we may call the most tragic wrong this world has ever witnessed, for our eternal blessing—designing it for blessing in eternal purpose—can we doubt His loving and gracious intention to make every other trial and tribulation minister to the good of those who love God? Our confidence is rooted in the character of God and in the declaration of His beneficent purpose.

Our confidence is reinforced by the personal testimony and persuasion of the Apostle, augmented by the experience of all who have trusted Him. The martyrs of old, our covenanting forefathers, aye, and saints in our day who have suffered the loss of all material possessions and have been bereft of earth's dearest ones, all unite in confessing that "neither death nor life . . . nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate, from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." May the Lord impress us with an increased sense of the Power, and Purpose of our God, so that we too may be filled with assured confidence in our God and our Lord in the distressing days through which we are passing. And may we in consequence spend our time in seeking to edify one another in love, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, while to the world we declare the riches of His grace.

"Abba, Father."

"I don't think that I ever enjoyed the two words 'Abba, Father' more than I did last night. They were a pillow of the softest down to a brain that had been surveying hopelessly the state of things in general. Yes, 'hopelessly,' and then came the 'Abba, Father' of heaven's repose. It was the fond 'cuddle doon' in the cradle of divine comfort, and the assurance of the help of everlasting arms."

(From a letter.)
A threefold cord is not quickly broken,” wrote the Preacher—King Solomon. How frequently we find in the Scriptures a threefold presentation of truth that is vital and abiding, bound together like a threefold cord! As striking examples of this, we have faith, hope and love in 1 Corinthians 13, and life, light and love in John’s Gospel. These precious things abide in contrast to things that are “quickly broken.” Good it is for us then when things that have the appearance of strength are being shattered to acquaint ourselves with these threefold cords of truth, “for the Scripture cannot be broken.”

In Peter’s first epistle, chapter 2, we are told three times that Christ is precious, in verses 4, 6 and 7. Here is a strong, threefold unbreakable cord, designed by the Holy Spirit to bind us closer to the Lord and to each other. It is a cord constructed so as to have a powerful effect upon three principal elements of our Christian life and testimony.

Firstly Our WORSHIP

“To Whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and PRECIOUS: ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (v. 4 and 5). The secret is here disclosed of His preciousness to God and the effect produced in those who coming to Him discover that He is gracious, that He welcomes them and is more than enough for all their miseries and needs. To learn that the One who is rejected by men as worthless, is the centre of God’s delight and precious to Him, leads our hearts to worship. The function of holy priesthood is stimulated and with this appreciation of Christ’s preciousness we are led “to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” So we sing. “By Thy grace Thou now hast called us, sharers of Thy joy to be, and to know the blessed secret of His preciousness to Thee.”

Secondly, there is that which affects our WALK

“Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, PRECIOUS: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded” (v. 6). In our Authorised Bible this quotation from Isaiah 28, verse 16, is rendered in three different ways. The phrase here translated, “shall not be confounded,” reads “shall not make haste” in Isaiah: and in Romans 9, verse 30, “shall not be ashamed.” The uniform idea in each passage is related to our walk as believers in the Lord Jesus and as having been affected by His preciousness. Here it is what we might call the intrinsic preciousness of Christ Himself. What a wonderful thought this is! His gracious, humble, obedient pathway in this world proclaimed His intrinsic worth and attracted souls to follow Him. It was “looking upon Jesus as He walked,” that John Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” and the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. What a power for our walk, to see how He walked in this world! Was He ever confounded? Did He ever unduly make haste? Was He ever ashamed? Never! And thus as we contemplate such preciousness in Him we learn how trustworthy He is and we become in our walk increasingly like Him.

Thirdly, our WITNESS is affected

“Unto you therefore which believe He is PRECIOUS!” (v. 7). Here is something we all know so well! How precious the Lord Jesus is to us and to every believer in Him! However conscious of our own ignorance and failure our hearts can appreciate this. All that He is to God, and all that He is Himself is precious to us who believe. This seems to be the force of the New Translation (J.N.D.) which renders the
passage, "To you therefore who believe is the preciousness." How would a deeper appreciation of this affect us? Surely in our witness before the world, as verse 9 would prove. All believers are priests in a dual sense; as before God in worship, they are holy priests (v. 5); and as before the world in witness for Him they are royal priests (v. 9). Under the law, God had indicated these thoughts for His people (see Exodus 19: verses 5 and 6), but broken responsibilities had prevented their fulfilment. Not under law were such thoughts to be realised, but under grace. The cross terminated all broken commitments under the law, and as the result of a perfectly accomplished redemption by Christ, every thought of God for His people is established in grace. So Peter is able to say to believers, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." Under grace, that was true of them and they could witness for God before the world, "to set forth the excellencies of Him Who hath called you out of darkness to His wonderful light" (v. 9, J.N.D.'s trans.). What dignity rests upon the royal priest, who sets forth a Saviour-God in this needy world! Christ is enthroned in his heart and he goes forth with the light of the gospel to banish the darkness of sin's reign in the souls of men, and to proclaim the power of grace in an exalted Saviour. All this results from the fact that "unto us who believe He is precious," and God is glorified in the effective witness to Himself so produced.

May this threefold cord of preciousness thus stimulate our worship, walk and witness in richer, deeper measure until we see Him Whom having not seen we love.

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

Faith and Unbelief.

"Faith judges justly of all. Unbelief judges the circumstances correctly, and the consequences of things visible; it forgets but one thing, God, who comes in and upsets all these combinations be they ever so wise. Faith pierces even to God across all circumstances and all difficulties. It does not stop to consider, it does not reason on the possibility of things because it only stops at God, and when man despair, faith is perfectly calm and happy. Faith has no need either of human reasoning or of human prudence. . . . The wisdom of faith is looking to God, doing His will, and troubling about nothing. When Christ comes, one then sees that the fear of God is wisdom and treasure."

"Live in peace." (2 Cor. 13. 11.)

My soul, where art thou planted? Do thy roots take hold of that which means tranquillity and comfort for others as well as thyself? or art thou dwelling where nothing Christlike can grow? There will be no fruit to perfection if we remain in bitterness and strife. Such things slay all fruitfulness and prevent development. We might just as well expect to grow wheat in ice, or grapes in snowdrifts, as holiness where anger, malice and envy abound. If we live in peace we shall grow in grace, but if we dwell in strife we shall become fruitless and unprofitable.

"Keep thy soul."

"Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently" (Deut. 4: 9). A Christian cannot help others where his own footing is uncertain. He cannot lead others to abide in Christ if he himself abides partly in the world. He cannot speak convincingly of joy and peace unless he has them steadily in his own soul. He can have power and value only by following Christ closely himself.
The parable of the servants and the talents is brought in to reinforce the exhortation to watch, given in verse 13; and it shows how the coming of the Son of Man will test all who take the place of being His servants, and lead to the casting out of all that is unreal. It is a thought calculated to sober us all, that during the time of His absence the Lord has committed His "goods" to His people. His interests have been placed in our hands, and we cannot avoid the point of the parable by saying, "I have no special gift and therefore it does not apply to me."

The master delivered his goods to his servants, "every man" of them, and he had the discrimination which enabled him to appraise the capacity of each, and so he apportioned to each "according to his several ability." We may distinguish therefore between the gifts that may be bestowed upon us and the abilities that we may possess, always remembering that the Lord adjusts the relation between the two things. Our abilities would cover our natural powers as well as our spiritual, and if these are not very large five talents, or even two, might be only a burden to us. If that be so, the Lord knows it and He only gives us one. We might connect this with the gifts spoken of in Romans 12: 6-15, which are of such a character as to cover all the people of God. Whether the gift bestowed be large or small, the great thing is to use it with diligence.

Equal diligence was shown by the servants who received the five talents and the two. Each succeeded in doubling that which was entrusted to him, and when their lord returned they both shared equally in his approbation and reward. Again in this parable, be it noted, the contrast does not lie between the more or less faithfulness and diligence, which may mark true servants, but between servants who were true, though their measure of ability differed, and the one that was no true servant at all. He that had received the one talent hid it in the earth instead of using it in his master's interest; and this he did because he had no real knowledge of his lord. He claimed to know that he was a hard man, exacting more than his due, one to be afraid of. His lord took him up on the ground of the knowledge that he claimed to have, and showed that his plea only aggravated his guilt, for had he been a hard man the more reason there would have been for diligent use of the talent entrusted.

In reality the lord was anything but a hard man as witnessed by his treatment of the servants who were good and faithful. The fact of the matter was that this servant had no true knowledge of his lord, no true link with him. In result he lost all that had been entrusted to him, and he was ejected into outer darkness to weeping and gnashing of teeth, as was the false servant portrayed at the end of the previous chapter. In the similar parable recorded in Luke 19, the distinction is drawn between the different servants with their degrees of zeal and faithfulness, and they are rewarded accordingly. The servant with one pound suffers loss but he is not ejected into outer darkness. It is worthy of note that in both cases the failure is seen with the man who is entrusted with the least. If we probe our own hearts, we shall recognize that when we are only capable of small things our tendency is to do nothing. The Lord will assuredly honour the servant who, though of small ability, does the small things with zeal and fidelity.

The closing paragraph of this chapter (verses 31-46) is not introduced as a parable. The parables began with verse 32 of chapter 24, and now that they are completed, verse 31 picks up the thread of the prophetic recital from 24: 31. When He comes, the Son of Man will not only gather together His elect, but He will summon the nations...
before Him, so that there may be a complete disentanglement right through the earth of the good and the evil. All the nations are to be assembled before Him, and the scene is one that takes place on the earth. In the final assize, when earth and heaven are fled away, predicted in Revelation 20, no nations appear: it is just "the dead, small and great," for in death all national distinctions disappear.

Other scriptures inform us as to the warrior judgments to be executed by Christ in person, when at Armageddon the mighty armies of the various kings of the earth will be destroyed. These judgments however will still leave multitudes of non-combatants, and all these must pass before the scrutiny of the Son of Man, for only He can discriminate and disentangle with unerring wisdom. He will do this as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats; and the issues depending on His judgment will be eternal, just as they will be in the judgment of the great white throne. Also here, as there, men will be judged according to their works.

The true state of every heart is known to God altogether apart from works; yet when public judgment is instituted it is always according to works, since they indicate plainly and infallibly what that state is, and thus the rightness of the Divine judgments is manifest to all beholders. These messengers, whom the King owns as "My brethren," had gone forth as his representatives, and the treatment they received had varied according to the view taken of the Son of Man whom they represented. Those who believed in Him identified themselves with His messengers, and ministered to them in their rejection and afflictions: those who did not believe in Him paid them no attention at all. Those who had faith declared it by their works. Those who had no faith equally declared it by their works.

Take note of the fact that the King does not charge the condemned ones with persecuting and imprisoning His servants, but only with ignoring them—treating them with neglect. It fits in with the great question of Hebrews 2, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" In that day it will be seen that if men treat Christ with neglect, by neglecting His servants, they came under eternal condemnation.

Who are "these My brethren"? If we consider the whole prophetic discourse, of which this is the concluding part, the answer is not difficult. In the opening of His discourse the Lord addressed His disciples personally and told them how they would be hated, afflicted and betrayed, but that the end would only come when "this gospel of the kingdom" should have been preached for a witness to all nations, and that those who endured to the end should be saved. He spoke as though the disciples before Him would be there at the end because He viewed them in a representative capacity. The "brethren" at the end of the discourse are the disciples of the last days, who were represented by the disciples of the first days, to whom the Lord was speaking. Now though these were a little later baptised by the Spirit into the one body, which is the church, as recorded in Acts 2, they were at that moment simply a remnant of Israel who had discovered the Messiah in Jesus, and attached themselves to Him. They represented a similar remnant of Israel who in the last days will have their eyes opened and pick up the broken thread of "this gospel of the kingdom"—broken when Christ was rejected on earth, and picked up and renewed just before He returns to earth to reign.

In the closing paragraph of chapter 25 the end is come. The Son of Man is King, the disciples who endured to the end are saved, the nations are judged, the disentanglement of the good and the evil is complete, the result of the judgment is eternal. Three times the word eternal occurs. The punishment of the wicked and the fire into which they go are eternal: the life into which the righteous pass is eternal. The
antithesis to life is not cessation of existence, as it would be if life merely signified existence as the result of the vital spark remaining in us: it is punishment, because eternal life signifies the whole realm of blessed and eternal verities in which the righteous will move for ever. The point here is not that the life is in them, but that they pass into it. On that happy note the Lord's prophetic discourse ended.

Chapter 26 brings us back to the history of the last few days of the Lord's life on earth. The opening verses give us a peep into the palace of the high priest, and we find it to be full of craft and counsels of murder. In verses 6-13, we turn from this most atrocious wickedness in high places to behold an action of love and devotion in a humble home, where some of the godly remnant dwelt. From John 12 we gather that the woman was Mary of Bethany. She evidently anointed both His head and His feet, but Matthew, emphasizing His kingly character, mentions that His head was anointed, as befits a king: John emphasizing His Deity, tells us that His feet were anointed, though a great servant like John the Baptist was not worthy to unbind His sandals.

The disciples were entirely out of sympathy with this act of devotion, regarding it as mere waste. Their complaint was instigated by Judas Iscariot, as John's Gospel shows us, yet it revealed them as thinking first of money and then of the poor, while ignorant and mystified as to His approaching death. The woman thought neither of money nor of the poor. Christ filled her vision, and He knew how to interpret her action. Very probably she acted more from instinct than from intelligence; but she was conscious that death now threatened the Object of her affection and worship, and the Lord accepted what she did as for His burial. Not only did He approve but He ordained that her devoted act should be held in continual remembrance wherever the gospel is preached. And so it has been.

The woman's devotion stands in the strongest possible contrast with the hatred of the religious leaders, related in the preceding paragraph, and the treachery of Judas, related in the paragraph that follows. Violence reached its climax in the leaders—they would slay Him at once without scruple. Corruption reached its climax in Judas, who having companied with Jesus for three years was desirous of making the paltry profit of thirty pieces of silver by His betrayal. A bond-servant in Israel was estimated as being worth thirty shekels of silver, as Exodus 21:32 shows.

Then again, if the second paragraph of our chapter (verses 6-13) shows us the devotion of a disciple to her Lord, the fourth paragraph (verse 17 and onwards) shows us the solicitude of the Lord for His disciples, and how He counted on their remembrance of Him during the approaching time of His absence.

The passover was eaten in the place of the Lord's choosing, and as it proceeded He identified the traitor and warned him of his doom. The going of the Son of Man by betrayal into death had been predicted in the Holy Writings, but this did not in any degree lessen the gravity of the traitor's act. The fact that God is omniscient and can foretell men's acts does not relieve them of responsibility for what they do. By his act Judas revealed his true self. Jesus was about to reveal Himself fully by His death.

When the men sent by Cornelius knocked at Peter's door he was ready to go down and open it to them, for they came at a time when he was in communion with the Lord. If we are not ready to answer the call of needy men and are not prepared unto every good work it is because we are out of communion with the Lord.
CONFESSION AND PRAYER.

Father, infinite, eternal,
Without whom no sparrow falls,
Where the roar of war infernal
Shakes creation, roof and walls.

Look upon Thy children's sorrows,
Succour when to Thee they cry;
And amid the battle's horrors
Be to them a fortress high.

Captain of our great salvation,
Overshadow all Thine own;
In their fear and tribulation,
Leave, Oh! leave them not alone.

Stop the march of the aggressor,
Check the ruthless foe's career,
Break the power of the oppressor,
Keep the tyrant far from here.

We have sinned—and greatly daring,
Thy most holy Word profaned;
Unbelief, with boastful bearing,
Has on faith confusion rained.

We have heard Thy people crying
Unto us for food and light;
We have seen the sinner dying
In the darkness of the night.

We have heard Thy truth denied;
We have seen it torn in pieces,
Him blasphemed who for us died.

Yet have we not rent our clothing,
Yet have we not humbled been;
Yet we have not turned with loathing
From those blasphemies unclean.

Therefore has Thy rod been lifted,
Therefore has this chastening come;
As we see where we have drifted
We before Thy throne are dumb.

But Thy clemency is boundless,
And Thy heart compassionate,
Thy deep love is shoreless, soundless,
Thy forgiveness, Father, great.

Hence to Thee we venture, owning
In Thy sight our sin and shame—
Hear our penitential groaning,
For our Saviour's sake and name.

Bring to war a termination;
Let the issue be for peace
To Thy people and creation;
To Thy Gospel great increase.

But food is to invigorate the body, and not be a cause of discomfort and disease, it must be welcomed by appetite. Appetite is nature's certificate that food will not be injurious. And if a soul is to be benefited by truth or grace, that soul must desire the blessing. No fact is more insisted on in Scripture than this, God withholds His best blessings when men do not seek them. 

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy 2: 21). The word here for Master is Despot, and signifies one who is absolute ruler. In separating from evil men and associations, and those who set aside the Word of God and substitute for it their own vain imaginations are such—one becomes a vessel unto honour—because faithful to the Master's Word—and is meet for His use who disposes of His servants as He sees fit, and who works all things for the glory of God.
NOTES ON THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD. J. T. Mawson

WHEN God at the beginning gathered His saints together unto "the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord," He was not experimenting as some seem to think but was displaying His manifold wisdom. That is plainly told in Ephesians 3:10. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." God does not experiment for He knows and sees all things from the beginning to the end. Men experiment and as experience teaches them they improve upon their work. The British "Hurricane" is a very different aeroplane to the one in which the Wright Brothers first rose above the earth. God is not like that. His work as it comes from His hand is perfect. It was 'so in Creation, it was so when the Church was launched on its career in the world. God's truth abides as He gave it at the beginning, and His resources which are at the disposal of those who walk in the truth do not fail, they are as great as at the beginning and our wisdom lies in abiding in that which was from the beginning, or in returning to it if we have departed from it. God will stand by that which He formed at the beginning and all those who abide in it will have His support and approval.

The subject is a great one and we see how Paul valued it as he wrote his God-inspired letters to Corinth and Ephesus and Colosse and to his son Timothy, but he was telling out the thoughts of the Lord concerning it. The assembly of God and especially its gatherings together are Christ's greatest interest on the earth. 1 Corinthians gives us these gatherings as God intended them to be and shews us also the way in which men departed from His perfect plan.

If we look at the Assembly when assembled, as ordained of God in the beginning, we see that it was not a voluntary gathering of believers, each claiming his right to be there because he was a member of the same body, or because he liked the way they gathered; much less was it a free assembly in which every one had the right to take part in ministry as his impulses might lead him. Nor was it a gathering together of a select or selected company, who had attained a certain standard of knowledge, or saw eye to eye as to certain lines of truth, or followed certain leaders, or adopted a certain system of teaching. The likes and dislikes and opinions and rights of men have no place in the assembly, when gathered according to God; to Him Christ is everything and He gathers to Him. Christ is God's Centre; and the Holy Ghost's power is the power that gathers His blood-redeemed people to Christ. No one can claim rights in the assembly but Christ, and the Holy Ghost has come to maintain those rights in it. This is fundamental to the truth of the Assembly.

At Corinth, as elsewhere, all sorts of people were saved by the gospel and gathered to Christ—Jew and Greek, bond and free, rich and poor, they were "sanctified in Christ Jesus" and called by God "unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ch. 1). They were made one, for one life—the life of Christ was in them, and they had been all baptised into one body by the one Holy Ghost who dwelt in them. But they soon forgot this. The flesh in them began to work and they began to act according to their own wisdom, which was folly and self will, so that Paul had to write, "There are contentions among you. . . . Is Christ divided?" (Ch. 1:11-13). "Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife and division, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (Ch. 3:3). "When ye come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you." (Ch. 11:18). He wrote by the Spirit's inspiration and we can clearly see that this carnal condition which shewed itself in the sects and
parties in the Corinthian assembly deeply moved him, and no wonder, it meant the destruction of the assembly in its true character. They were dividing Christ when they said, "I of Paul and I of Apollos," and thereby they shewed their carnality, and those who said "I of Christ" were as bad or worse than the rest, for they were making His sacred Name the badge of a party. We must have done with that sort of carnality if we would know the blessedness and power that is possible in God's assembly. And yet if we separate ourselves from it we need to heed the warning words of J. N. Darby: "If any one speaks of separation from evil, without being humiliated, let him take care lest his position becomes simply that which at all times constituted sects, and produced doctrinal heresy. 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."

There is blessed simplicity about the truth. I cannot forget how it came to me as a young Christian. A venerable servant of the Lord was addressing us, and he enquired, "Would you young Christians like to meet your Saviour?" You may meet Him, He has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Then he added, "When I go to the Lord's day morning meeting I say to myself, I'm going to meet the Son of God." Those words impressed me greatly and I have never forgotten them. I do not go to take part in a service, no matter how blessed, nor listen to ministry, no matter how true, but to meet the Son of God, to meet Him in His own circle, where He is supreme and where He shews Himself to "His own" as the One who loves them and gave Himself for them. In that lies the whole truth of the Assembly of God.

---

**Peace.**

Yes, it was love alone that led
Thy brethren, Lord, to seek Thy grave;
But every gleam of hope had fled,
For Thou, they deemed, hadst failed to save.

'Twas Thine own arm of power that broke,
Lord, ere they came, the grave's control;
'Twas Thine own blessed voice that spoke,
'Peace, Peace!' to each reviving soul.

Peace was their portion, peace is ours;
We, like our earlier brethren see
Our victory won o'er Satan's powers,
Our blessedness secured by Thee.

---

Our God and Father! may our souls repose
In the deep sense of Thine unfailing love!
Kept by Thy peace, in Him who died and rose,
Till we are gathered to Thy rest above.
The Jews and Their Sufferings.

That would be an unchristian heart in which there was no pity for the Jews and their perpetual suffering. The Lord Jesus wept over them and their city because they would choose the way of rebellion and sorrow instead of submission to God and peace, so blind were they, and if He wept for them we might well pity them. The great test for them came when "Jesus came forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe." Before that they had determined on His death, and they had cried: "Not this man but Barabbas." But now they saw Him the subject of the soldiers' ribald mockery. A King, but crowned with thorns! Will pity for Him who had done them naught but good stir in their hearts and will they relent of their determination? No, their hatred of Him deepens, their hearts harden, and they cry out for the most shameful of all deaths for Him.

"Crucify Him, crucify Him." Finally Pilate saith unto them, "Behold your King." "Shall I crucify your King?" Then they made their final, fatal and irrevocable decision, "We have no King but Caesar." And since that hour they have been compelled to learn the bitterness of their choice; for 1,900 years they have writhed beneath Caesar's iron heel. Yet still they reject their rightful King, who would soothe their sorrows, heal their wounds, and drive away their fears. And their greatest suffering lies yet ahead of them when the last of the Caesars shall appear and put them through such a tribulation as the world has never seen. That will be "Jacob's trouble." Then at last when disciplined with sorrow, He shall appear again for their salvation, and they shall cry, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord."
I WONDER what Gabriel and Michael and the hosts of mighty spirits that obey God’s biddings without question think of that sacrifice. We know that they desire to look into these things (1 Peter 1: 12), and that they see the manifold wisdom of God in the results of it (Eph. 3: 10), but how great must be their wonder at the sacrifice itself. But not unto angels but unto men, prodigals brought back to God in righteousness through that sacrifice, it is given to enter into its meaning and have communion with God about it; for to men who believe the Holy Spirit has been given, and “the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2: 10).

We are permitted to know what passed in the counsels of the Godhead before ever time began its rhythmic beat, or the need for sacrifice arose through the sin of man. Then it was written in the volume of the Book that the sacrifice should be; then the Son offered Himself to carry into full effect the whole will of God, whatever that will might mean for Him. It meant that He must become flesh; that a body must be prepared for Him, that when the fulness of time was come God would send Him forth, made of a woman (Gal. 4: 4), to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Our conception of this sacrifice will be mean and small unless we see the greatness of the One who offered it. Hence the Spirit of God when speaking of the sacrifice binds it up with the glory of Him who offered Himself. In chapter one of John’s Gospel He is declared to be “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” but who is this Lamb of God? The chapter answers our question. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” In Colossians 1 we read, “We have redemption through His blood,” but who is He through whose blood we have this redemption? Our chapter tells us. “By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” In Hebrews 1 we are told that He “had by Himself purged our sins,” but who is He that has done this great thing? He is the One “whom God hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.” He is the Creator, in that His power and wisdom have been declared; but He is more than that, He is “the Only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father” (John 1: 18). He is “the Son of His (the Father’s) love” (Col. 1: 13; N.T.). He is “the Son” (Hebrews 1: 1). He is the object of the Father’s delight, the worthy object of His infinite, ineffable and eternal love.

No creature being could have undertaken to fulfil all the will of God, which involved the putting away of sin, and the declaration of what God is. But the Son undertook to do it. He had the authority and the power to offer Himself for this, which He did when He said, “Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God.” Sacrifice and offerings, and the burnt offering and offerings for sin offered on Jewish altars could never put away sin; instead they kept it in continual remembrance, and God could have no pleasure in them. Then He stept forth to fulfil that which He had undertaken to do. The Word became flesh, He came into the world saying, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” He took the place of complete submission to the will of God, and obedience to every iota of it.
Consider Him, coming forth from the glory which He had with the Father before the worlds were made: see Him make Himself of no reputation and take the place and form of a servant in the body prepared for Him—a sinless, holy body; see Him among men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, not seeking eminence among men but humbling Himself to death, even the death of the cross. He came into the world having the full knowledge of the eternal counsels of the Godhead for God’s glory and the blessing of multitudes of men, and also He knew what sufferings He must endure that those counsels might all be fulfilled. His incarnation in the lowly surroundings of the manger in Bethlehem was not enough; His life and service amid the needs and miseries of men was not enough; His prayers, His tears, His works of mercy were not enough; even His agony and sweat of blood in Gethsemane was not enough—all these had their part in the unfolding of the heart of God, and in the making known of His own deep perfections; but only by the sacrifice of Himself could He put away sins.

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,” and only by man could that question be taken up and answered righteously for God’s glory, the overthrow of Satan and the deliverance of men from sin’s yoke and the power of death. To do this He came; He came voluntarily, in His own divine right, and took the body prepared for Him. “He was made in the likeness of men.” Yet, having offered Himself He was sent of God, as another Scripture states it, “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8: 3). But He must not only be a true man, He must be the sinless, holy man, or He could not stand in the place of men to bear their judgment.

Thank God, He was able, for every thought and word and deed of His was holy unto the Lord, His sinlessness is emphasised in passages that speak of His sacrifice. “God 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). And again, “Ye know that He was manifested to take away sins, and in Him was no sin” (1 John 3: 5). And yet again, “Who did no sin: neither was guile found in His mouth . . . who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2: 22, 23). Yet once again, “He through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9: 14). But if He had not been more than man, if He had not been God in His own eternal Being, His sacrifice would have had no atoning value. Who could measure and meet the claims of God’s eternal justice but God? Who could understand how sin had challenged the very majesty of God, and bear the penalty of that challenge, but God? Who could uphold the stability of God’s throne, put away sin, and declare at the same time God’s great love to man but God? JESUS has done all this, and we bow before Him with Thomas and with wonder and adoration cry, “My Lord and my God.”

We rejoice in a full atonement; a great peace fills our hearts as we consider it, for the value of that one offering will abide for ever. By “one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” and, their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more. All things in heaven and on earth will yet be reconciled to God through the blood of His cross; then from the throne of God and of the Lamb, rivers of life and blessing shall flow out to men who own the authority of that throne, and they shall for ever worship Him who has redeemed them to God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.

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).
"WHAT WAIT I FOR?"

At all times, and particularly in times of stress and trouble, men look wistfully into the future and hope for the advent of better days. Everybody seems to be doing so today, though apart from Christians nobody has a clear and concise idea of the things which the better days will bring, or of the basis on which they will be founded. Still, all men are waiting for—something!

It will be quite wholesome for us if we take up the Psalmist’s question and say, “Now, Lord, what wait I for?” Inevitably we share in the general longing for a cessation of the murderous hostilities that prevail, and also in the longing that certainly is found in the English-speaking world, that there may be a breaking of the power of the ruthless tyrants and warlike nations, which lies near the root of the miseries which darken countless millions of lives. But just because this is so we may easily drop into the habit of merely looking for things which are the object of the world’s desire and hoping that in some way, by the triumph of “democracy,” there may be produced a far more ideal condition of things than anything we have yet known. If our hopes sink down into expectations of this sort we merely lay up for ourselves a big disappointment.

The Psalmist not only asked his question but also supplied the only right answer in a brief sentence of just five words. The Apostle Paul has told us of the strong preference he had for speaking “five words with my understanding” for the help of others; and if we can really adopt the Psalmist’s five words as the sincere language of our hearts, we shall be happy indeed. Both question and answer occur in verse 7 of Psalm 39, and if we briefly survey the earlier verses of that Psalm we may be helped into more intelligent harmony with the Psalmist’s mind and answer.

The opening verses reveal to us a man who was making a very sincere effort to be what he knew he ought to be. The previous Psalm stands in contrast to this. David is the writer of both; but in Psalm 38 we listen to solemn and heart-broken confessions of iniquity coming from the lips of a man who had practised the iniquity and was reaping its distressing fruits. It is the language of a man who had learned his sinfulness by the practice of evil. Psalm 39 gives us the converse of this, and we listen to the confessions of a man who had learned his sinfulness, and more particularly his weakness, in the effort to be good. He made up his mind that he would rule his tongue and not sin with that unruly member.

Now James in his Epistle has told us that the mastery of the tongue is a matter of extremest difficulty. Almost the whole of his third chapter might be quoted in this connection, but we confine ourselves to verse 2 which says, “In many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” Evidently therefore thorough mastery of the tongue is no small attainment in proper Christian living, and one that was only partially reached even by one of Christ’s apostles, according to his own confession.

So when the Psalmist said, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue,” he evidently attempted more than he knew. When he added, “I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me,” he lifted the standard of attainment even higher, for nothing is more provocative of wrong speech than being occupied with those that are wrong. We have to learn that evil is terribly infectious. Wrong actions of others may soon reproduce themselves in us, both in action and in speech. So as he gazed at the evil he found it impossible to be silent. Were he silent, then he would appear to condone the evil. Did he speak, then the inward fire burned too fiercely for him to measure his words with due care, and so avoid sinning.
with his lips. Thus he learned his own weakness and realized the frailty of his life and the shortness of his days.

Confronted with the wickedness of the ungodly and conscious of the frailty and weakness of the godly, as exemplified in himself, what could the Psalmist say? He committed himself to the sweeping statement which concludes verse 5:—"Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." In his day as well as in ours MAN appeared very great, dominating the earth. But what is his true value? This is the Psalmist’s answer. Is it ours? Let us analyse it and see.

The statement is emphatic, for it is prefaced with "Verily." Its backbone is found in three words, "man . . is . . vanity." Multitudes there are that would contest that verdict as being too strong. Some men admittedly are vanity, they would say, but to condemn mankind thus on the ground of the folly or evil of some is going too far. But on the contrary the Psalmist went much farther, for he did not content himself with speaking of man in a general way. He made the thing personal to each without exception in saying, "EVERY man . . is . . vanity." Many would refuse this altogether. Do we with humility of mind accept it, saying, "Yes. That means me."

But he went further yet, for he said, "Every man . . is ALTOGETHER vanity." This allows no loophole of escape. It negatives the idea which many seem to entertain, of being good on the whole though permeated with streaks of vanity. The fact is that vanity is like that leaven which we read that it permeated the mass "till the whole was leavened." Vanity and nothing else characterizes every man.

Lastly he declares that this overwhelming, one-hundred-per-cent vanity marks every man "AT HIS BEST STATE." It is common knowledge that human life is a matter of ebb and flow. There are variations in the standard of our temper and actions. Even criminals surprise the world occasionally by rising to a standard, of which no one thought them capable.

Then let us not pass judgment on men in their blackest and lowest hours. Let us not even do so in their average moments. Let us take every man in his brightest hour and best, and scrutinize him then. And what is the verdict? In every case the same—"altogether vanity." This is a hard saying but a true one. Adam and his race are fallen sinners; the taint and virus of sin is their very constitution. We may select that specimen of the Adamic race, which to us seems fairest and best, and beneath the surface there will be found that sinful corruption which renders him "altogether vanity."

The Psalmist had reached this conclusion; hence his question, "And now, Lord, what wait I for?" He must have some hopeful expectation, if life was to be endurable; but in the presence of this solemn fact what can one legitimately expect? Men have always been prone to paint in their minds a rosy picture of a good time that is bound to come as the fruit of human effort, and they are doing so today, perhaps more than ever. Can we join them in doing this? Not for one moment if we have reached the same conclusion as the Psalmist. Since every man at his best state is altogether vanity, the individual who can set things right is not to be found, nor can that desirable end be reached by any combination of men. A world of vanity cannot be cured by the heaping together and multiplying of men who are vanity. There is no hope in man.

That negative conclusion had been reached by the Psalmist. Then in the five golden words he stated his positive conclusion—"My hope is in Thee." He lifted his eyes altogether from all the men of vanity and fixed them upon God, who dwells in eternity. Now he was able to entertain hopes that were not going to evaporate in failure and disillusionment.

We can go much further than the Psalmist. Since his day God in all His fulness has been revealed in Christ. We are entitled to live in the light of the redemption work accomplished at His first advent, and in the expectation
of all that He will accomplish when He comes again. The first man, Adam, and all his race are "of the earth, earthy." Jesus, who is the "last Adam," and "second Man," is "the Lord from heaven." To expect permanent good to be introduced as the fruit of the labour or wisdom of "the man of vanity" is vain and futile. Righteousness, peace, and glory can only be introduced by Jesus, "the Man of Eternity."

Do we know these things? Yes, probably we do. But let us beware lest we be in any degree seduced from our proper hope, and settle down into sharing the hopes of the world which are doomed to disappointment.

How a Christian may suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ.

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

"If any man's work be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15).

It is the Christian who stands at that judgment seat, not to be judged as to his person or tested as to whether he should be saved or lost, but that his works may be tested for rewards or otherwise, but how can a Christian suffer loss then? Two workmen are employed by the same master. They both receive full instructions from him on Monday morning for their week's work; the instructions are clear and definite, all the master requires is obedience to them. One works consistently and conscientiously to the master's plan and finishes the job to the master's satisfaction and receives a full week's wages as well as the master's commendation. The other spends half the week in pleasing himself, and when he does settle down to work he pays scant heed to the master's instructions and does the work as he thinks it ought to be done. It is not difficult to see how different will be his portion at the end of the week to his fellow-workman. His work badly done, he would have little to shew and he would not be approved by his master. So with the Christian, according to his faithfulness or otherwise, he will be rewarded or suffer loss.

"The Last Trump."

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

It is the Christian "we" that is the subject of this prophetic word, and none other, and this great event will take place at the coming of the Lord—"They that are Christ's at His coming" (verse 23). The last trump is a military allusion. In the Roman armies three trumpet blasts were given when they had to move. The first blast meant "Pack your baggage," the second, "Fall in," and the third, or last blast meant "MARCH." If this is the true interpretation of the last trump, how significant it is. The Christian is to be standing ready for the last blast. Already he has heard the call of the Gospel, and if he has obeyed its call, he has separated himself from the world, has packed his baggage and is looking for the Saviour. He is ready, waiting and expecting to hear the last trump. He is waiting for the Saviour's shout that shall gather all the redeemed into one triumphant company to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4).
GOD’S DWELLING PLACE.

A. J. Pollock

“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2: 21, 22).

In the previous part of the Ephesian Epistle, the Christians—Jew and Gentile—are looked at as the one body of Christ, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all”—that is to say, it looks at the Christians in their heavenly association.

But in the verses before us we have the Christians looked at as “an holy temple in the Lord” and “a habitation of God.” The figure is changed. This sets before us the great truth of God dwelling in the midst of His people on this earth. But not only does God dwell in this habitation, but the word temple carries the thought of a shrine, a dwelling place indeed, but connected with the thought of holiness, because of who it is that dwells. It is a sanctuary, a sphere of priestly activity, a place of worship—a place made by the persons who compose it, not by stones and mortar. “God . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts, 17: 24).

This truth is not recognized nor acted upon by Christians generally. The building is “fitly framed together,” that is, Christians are not so many individuals, who can pick and choose their associations, but God sets them in relation one to another with the view of being His dwelling place on earth.

The apostle Peter runs parallel with this when he writes: “Ye also as lively [living] stones are built up a spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2: 5). One stone cannot make a building, nor do stones choose their own place. Each stone in this spiritual house finds its place according to the mind of the Divine Architect.

This idea runs right through Scripture. Did God redeem Israel out of Egypt simply to relieve them of intolerable bondage? Nay, it was to bring them to Himself, and that they might prepare Him an habitation (Exodus 15: 2), and the tents of the “common” people had to be pitched in a certain order round the tabernacle where God dwelt, and holiness became them in their ways.

There is great energy as to appropriating personal blessings, if we may so put it, and great activity in serving others in gospel effort, whether in home or missionary spheres (would there were still more of this), but if Christians generally sought to enter into the sense of God dwelling in their midst, of taking up what is, after all, the highest privilege of the Christian, that of their priesthood, how different things would be. Service in other directions would not lose, but infinitely gain. It is this taking and maintaining of assembly ground that is of such vast importance.

We have no choice in this. The responsibility is ours, whether we like it or not, but, in taking it up we find that our privilege is so immense that responsibility becomes a matter of joy. A married man has responsibilities towards his wife, but if these are irksome and distressing it speaks little for his love. If love is as it should be his responsibility is his privilege, his joy, his delight. So with divine things.

Lastly the building “groweth.” Grow is a word that is only rightly applicable to that which has life. A child grows, a plant grows. In all its stages a child, a plant is complete; development may add size, and qualities latent in the child or plant become patent, but we never think of either at any stage as incomplete. So God’s temple is ever looked at as complete, yet growing; but surely the end is in view when the last stone shall be added, when the whole ransomed church of God, whether as we say triumphant or militant, whether the saints are passed away or living, shall be caught up by the summoning
shout in the air, and God shall be still in the midst of His people.

It is not a little remarkable that while the word “temple” is used in Rev. 21:22 in connection with the church in millennial display when we come to the fixed eternal state we get the word “tabernacle.” “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people” (Rev. 21:3). The last glimpse we have is that of God dwelling among His people for eternity. May we anticipate that day by seeking to take up the Divine thoughts even now, so giving God and His Word in this connection a true practical place in our lives. What a change in association this would make with multitudes of Christians.

“I shall not want.”

Our Shepherd is All-sufficient! Nothing can add to His satisfying nature; nothing diminish from His fulness. In Him we have repose, refreshment, and restoration; confidence, comfort and company; favour, feasting and overflowing mercies. Thanksgiving for the past, faith in view of the future, triumph in the presence of death, and the full assurance of eternal glory. His riches and glory are our wealth. Our wants are fathomless, but our help is infinite. None but God can tell the uttermost that God can do.

Comforted and Comforting.

We can render a service to our fellow Christians that no angel could render; having known no sorrow, they cannot sympathise. This is our privilege, and it is most honourable service to the Lord. Paul, the apostle, was afflicted that he might be comforted of God so that he might be able to comfort them that were in any trouble (2 Cor. 1). This is a most wonderful present recompense for any suffering. To take cups of consolation from the hands that were pierced for us, and carry them to His suffering saints is high honour indeed, but first we must drink of those cups ourselves.

Here are striking words, “This is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:39). If the Father has such confidence in Him, we might well confide in Him, and commit to Him, spirit, soul and body, and all our interests for time and eternity. Paul had learnt His trustworthiness when 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” (2 Tim. 1:17).

When a young bird is fully fledged and has not yet used its wings, the parent bird rises a little distance from it; the young bird, in its desire to reach the parent bird, makes an effort to rise, and discovers for the first time that it has wings. First the desire and then the power. If our hearts had a greater desire to know the Lord, if He were more to us than all below and to have part with Him where He has gone our desire, we should find that the power of the Holy Spirit was within us to enable us to realise our desire.

As every blade of grass shines with the splendour of a little diamond globe when the sun arises after a night of dew, far surpassing in beauty the grass at noon-day, so shall the tears of this night of sorrow throw a lustre over the believer, when the Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth.
SANCTIFICATION.

WHAT is sanctification? It is the setting apart of the soul for God. There are two aspects of it: one is, that it is done absolutely, once and for ever; the other is that it is progressive and practical. The latter is the one dwelt upon chiefly by those who seek after holiness, but the former is more often presented to us in Scripture and the knowledge of it is necessary if the latter is to be understood, and realised.

Sanctification in its absolute character is the setting of the soul apart for God from the very first motion of life in it. It is the hewing of the stone out of the quarry of nature and the world for God. The sculptor with a great work of art in his mind goes to the quarry and secures his block of marble, so the Spirit of God breaks out from the quarry of the world a stone—a precious soul—yours, for instance, and communicates to that soul a new life which is divine; it is born again and set apart for God and His purpose. That is sanctification, done once and for all, it is absolute and for ever.

But the work of the sculptor is not done when he has secured the stone for himself. He has to work skillfully and continually upon it, until the image that he intended appears. So the Spirit of God works in the soul, and the end in view is obedience to God and conformity to Christ; it must bear Christ's own image. The illustration may fail in many points but it will serve. We know that when we first believed there was much about us that was unsuited to God and His holy temple in which we have our part, and the Spirit has to continually work in us, exercising us as to this, so that what is of the flesh and self in us may be judged and left behind, and more room made within us for Christ, that His features whom we have come to admire and adore may appear in us. This is practical sanctification and will continue as long as we are in the world. We must hold fast both aspects of this Divine work, but we must not mix or confound them or we shall never know where we are.

Another thing that hinders souls from making progress is the confounding of sanctification with justification. We are justified by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ done for us. Sanctification is the result of the Spirit's work in us. The work done in us is indispensable in view of God's purpose for us, but it is on the work done for us that our salvation and peace with God rests. So we read, "Jesus our Lord, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 4 & 5). That is the foundation upon which everything rests; but all growth and progress in divine things is the result of the sanctifying work of the Spirit within us, which proceeds continually, unless He is a grieved Spirit.

The Scriptures that treat on this important subject are so clear that they scarcely need explaining. We will quote those that deal with the absolute aspect of it first. After describing what the Corinthians were when in the quarry of sin and the world, we read, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6: 11). Then in 2 Thess. 2: 13, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." And in Hebrews 10: 1, "By the which will (God's) we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all "; i.e., He offered Himself once, and unlike the Jewish sacrifices, that once is enough, He will not have to repeat the sacrifice. Again in 1 Peter 1: 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

The mode of Paul's address to the churches in his Epistles demonstrates the truth of sanctification in its absolute
aspect. He addresses the Christians as "saints"—i.e., sanctified ones, those set apart for God. His letters to the Galatians and the Thessalonians are the exception to this. The reason for this may be that he stood in doubt as to the Galatians, they were going back to the law for both justification and sanctification, which was giving up the gospel of Christ. While the Thessalonians were addressed as "in God the Father," they could not have been there without being set apart. These passages give us the truth of sanctification in its absolute aspect. God has set you, if a believer, absolutely apart for Himself.

It is this side of the truth that is most prominent in the Word and it presents to us what cannot be improved. We are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1: 2). He is the measure of it if we are in Him. "Both He that sanctifieth (Christ) and they who are sanctified are all of one" (Hebrews 2: 11). They stand with Him for they are His brethren. He has breathed His life into them and they are to share His glory. It is very wonderful and can only be grasped by faith. Now this being "sanctified in Christ Jesus is not a clean glove on a filthy hand. The filthy hand has been condemned, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8: 3). We might say it has been removed in judgment from before God, and the sanctified ones have been brought to Him in a new life which is as spotless as Christ is. So in chapter 6: 11, it is said, "Ye are washed" before "ye are sanctified." It is true that the old nature called the flesh is still in the believer, but he does not stand in it before God but in Christ Jesus.

Let us now see to whom this work of absolute sanctification is attributed. Hebrews 10: 10 shews that God the Father is the source of it, it is His will. "By the which will we are sanctified." God the Father wills it. But the last clause of that same verse shews us that it results from the work of God the Son—the One who came to do the will of God the Father, that is the foundation of it: It is on the ground of His sacrifice that God could claim us and set us apart for Himself. Then Romans 15: 16 states, "Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost"; and 2 Thess. 2: 13, already quoted, and 1 Peter 1: 2 shew that it is the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word that it is effected. By Him we are born again. It is a very great blessing, an opening of our eyes when we see that God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—Three in One—have had their part in separating us from the world and its doom and bringing us thus into a separate place to God. The Father willed it; the Son's work is the basis of it: it is by the Spirit's power that it is effected. The means used is the Word. "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth" (John 17: 17-19).

The other side of the truth is that God would have the believer set apart practically for Himself, and that involves exercise of heart and conscience, and intelligence as to His word and will. Our first passage for this is the Lord's own desire expressed to His Father in John 17. "Sanctify them through Thy truth ... for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." And here we might incidentally remark that sanctification does not mean make the old nature holy, for that could not apply to the Lord, He sanctified Himself, i.e., He set Himself apart with the end in view that His saints might be practically set apart for God's pleasure. Again in 1 Thess. 5: 23, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And a third passage from Hebrews 12: 14, "Follow peace with all men and holiness (sanctification, it ought to be) without which no man can see the Lord."

How is this practical sanctification worked into our lives, this separation from the world and self to God? It is by the word—the truth being brought to bear upon the heart and conscience;
and by the Father's chastening, and by the service of the Lord towards us; the word does the work. First of all it is by the Father's word. This we learn from the Lord's own lips in His prayer to His Father, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth." The Father's word is the revelation of Himself in His beloved Son. There we see the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And who that has seen and heard the beloved Son of God will delay to own that He is most attractive? "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." It is the Spirit of God who takes of the things of Christ, which are also the Father's things and shews them to us (John 16: 12-15).

There is a remarkable word in Jeremiah 3: 19. In the chapter we have Jehovah's lament at the backslidings of the children of Jacob, and He asks, "How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, and goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, "Thou shalt call Me, my Father, and shall not turn away from Me." God will secure them for Himself by laying hold of their affections. This is the way He has taken with us, He has revealed Himself to us as Father, and this relationship is not a theory but a fact, and the same love that rests upon His beloved Son rests upon us. It is this love, this new and wonderful heavenly relationship that will eclipse the best the world can offer and separate us practically from it.

For the love of the Father and love for the world cannot dwell in the same heart. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Moreover, the Lord Himself is there sanctified for us in heaven, He has set Himself to serve us, and to be the Object of our faith and love. He claims our affections and is worthy of them. Christ in glory is made unto us sanctification. Where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Father and Son in glory are enough to satisfy the heart. Therefore "set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3: 2).

The passage quoted from Hebrews 12 follows on the subject of chastening. (child-training). God conducts Himself towards us as a father to his sons; correction, training, education are involved in this, and even scourging. "Whom the Lord loveth He chastens, and scourges every son that He receiveth." It has in view our being partakers of His holiness, our wills being made subject to His. "How can two walk together except they agree?" We must be partakers of His holiness if He is to have the joy of our walking with Him apart from the world as Enoch did, and if we are to have the joy and strength of His company. The conscience is brought into exercise by the application of the word and the sanctifying and cleansing work goes on by the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5: 26). This is the Lord's work, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and washes our feet that we may have part with Him.

Here then we have briefly the subject of sanctification. There is first its absolute aspect; we have been set apart for God; He has set us in the relationship of children with Himself, and nothing can change or improve this side of the truth; but it is through practical sanctification that we come into the joy of the position and relationship. We do not seek practical sanctification to reach that which is absolute, but knowing the absolute we seek the practical that we might be consistent with it. We do not act as children of God in order to become His children, but because we know through infinite grace that He has called us into this relationship and has bestowed this manner of love upon us.
I HAD made my plans for the day, which would have taken me out of the town where I was staying. But on my way to the Railway Station I felt an inward urge to visit an aged servant of the Lord just entering on his 89th year who lived in the town. So strong was this impression that I decided it was the Lord’s will for me and I had better abandon my own plans and follow the Lord’s. Arriving at his door it was opened by his daughter, who, when she saw me standing there, broke down and sobbed, “Oh, you’ve come. Father has been asking for you all the morning, he’s very ill.” I went to his bedroom and he stretched out his hands in welcome and said, “I want you to speak at my funeral and to take charge of all my papers in that drawer; you’ll find my will there.” I assured him that I would do anything and all that he wished me. Then he put his hands together and repeated, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits . . . who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.”

He had been taken suddenly ill and his doctor had said that morning that it was just a question of hours with him. It was my privilege to sit at his bedside the following night and to hear him communing with his God, apparently oblivious of my presence, but several times during those sacred hours he opened his eyes and turned to me and said each time, “Care for the saints.” It was all he had to say to me, and they were the last words I heard from his lips.

The saints are the children of God; this is the name that is given to them many times in the New Testament: the youngest child in God’s family is a saint equally with the oldest and most revered. Knowing this, I knew of whom my aged friend spoke, and his words impressed me the more for I knew how much he had cared for the saints for many years; it had been his very life. Not more than a fortnight before I had seen him tramping through a storm of wind and rain to visit a sick Christian, when he seemed more fit to be in his own bed, or at least in an easy chair by a warm fire.

His dying words reminded me of the Lord’s final commission to Simon Peter: He said to him, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?” then “Feed My lambs,” “Shepherd My sheep.” I remembered also Paul’s words to the elders at Ephesus, “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock . . . feed the church of God, which He hath purchased by His own blood.” My aged friend was in the true Apostolic succession; he loved and cared for those who are precious to the Lord, those for whom He gave Himself. Let the Lord’s question to Simon come home to everyone of us. “Lovest thou Me?” Can we answer as Simon did, “Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee”? Then how can we shew our love to Him? Not by our talk or by our knowledge, but by loving and caring for those who are dear to Him. Our love to Him can be measured by our willingness and readiness to serve “His own.” “Care for the saints.” That’s the test.

The hireling neglects them, “he careth not for the sheep” are the Lord’s own words concerning him. The wolf scattereth them (John 10), “grievous wolves not sparing the flock,” Paul calls them; and men professing to be shepherds divide them, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20), and Peter who faithfully fulfilled the Lord’s commission has warned us that the adversary of the flock, “the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5). Many are the foes of the saints, many are the dangers that beset them, but the good and great Shepherd cares for them, and all who love Him will care for them too. Yes, that’s the test. Do I do you, care for the saints?
As the Passover meal drew to its close Jesus instituted His supper as the memorial of His body given and His blood shed for us for the remission of sins. In the wording of verses 26-29 there is nothing that definitely states that the institution is to be observed until He comes again: for that we have to turn to 1 Corinthians 11. The fact is inferred in verse 29, for the cup speaks of blessing and joy, and of that the Lord will drink in a new way when the kingdom comes: meanwhile the cup is for us and not for Him. Today He is marked by patience: in the day of the kingdom He will enter into blessing and joy in an altogether new way. Meanwhile we have the memorial of His death, for in it His body and blood are presented to us not conjointly as though He were a living Man on earth, but separately: this bread, His body, and that cup, His blood, poured forth; thus symbolizing His death.

On their way to the Mount of Olives Jesus foretold how His death would mean their scattering, as the Scripture had said, but He pointed them to His resurrection and appointed a meeting place in Galilee, where He would regather them. Peter, however, filled with self-confidence, resisted the warning to his own undoing, and also to his missing the fact and import of the resurrection. All the disciples were marked by the same thing, though not to the same degree.

They were very soon put to the test in Gethsemane. There Jesus entered in spirit into the sorrow of the death that was before Him, but wholly in communion with His Father. His very perfection caused Him to shrink from all that was involved in suffering and death as the judgment of God, yet He accepted that cup from the Father's hand. Further, it was a tribute to the perfection of His manhood that He should desire sympathy from the chosen disciples, but the prophetic word was fulfilled—"I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psa. 69:20). Peter and the others, who were so sure that they never would deny Him, could not watch with Him one hour. Their flesh was too weak, but as yet they knew it not. Neither did they know that the treachery of Judas was coming to fruition, and the crisis was upon them.

Yet so it was; and in the rest of this chapter we see the amazing contrast between the Christ of God and all others who in any way came into contact with Him. All display their own peculiar deformities: His is the one serene figure in the centre of the picture.

First there comes Judas, the traitor; masking his treachery with such hypocrisy that nineteen centuries after the event "the traitor's kiss" remains a proverbial expression of disgust. In the language of Psalm 41:9, here was "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of My bread," and he had "lifted up his heel against Me." Hence Jesus addressed him as "Friend," but asked him the searching question, "wherefore art thou come?" He had come to betray his Master so that he might gain thirty paltry pieces of silver.

The sickening hypocrisy of the false disciple is followed by the fleshly zeal of a true one, whom we know to be Peter from John's Gospel. The self-confident man sleeps when he should be awake, and he smites when he should be quiet, and when his action would have been to his Master's discredit, had it not been disallowed. A time is coming when "the saints" will be "joyful in glory," when "the high praises of God" will be "in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance" (Psa. 149:5-7); but that is at the time of the second Advent and not the first. Peter's action was entirely out of place and inviting a sword-stroke upon himself.
It was also entirely out of harmony with his Master’s attitude, who had irresistible might at His disposal and yet suffered Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, as the Scripture had indicated.

When God would blot out from under heaven the cities of the plain He sent but two angels to deliver the blow. If twelve legions had been launched at the rebellious world what would have happened? The prayer that would have launched them was not uttered, and Peter’s blow, that was struck as much for himself as for His Master, was simply ridiculous. When we are content to suffer as Christians we are spiritually victorious; when we take the sword we lose the spiritual battle and ultimately perish by the sword. One of the main reasons why the Reformation of four centuries ago was so badly arrested and defaced was that its chief promoters flew to the sword in its defence, and thereby turned it into a national and political movement rather than a spiritual one.

Next we see the Lord calmly dealing with the rough mob who, led by Judas, had come to arrest Him. He showed them the unsuitability and even folly of their doings. Yet in the presence of this mob the fortitude of all the disciples collapsed, and they forsook their Master and fled. Such are even the best of men!

The mob deliver Him to the leaders of Israel, and these men who claimed to represent God, had thrown away any pretense of seeking righteousness. We are not told that they were misled into accepting false evidence, nor that they were tempted into receiving it because it was thrust upon them. No, it says, they “sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death.” They SOUGHT it. Has there ever, we wonder, been another trial upon this earth where the judges started by hunting for liars, that they might condemn the accused? Thus it was here; and in the presence of it Jesus held His peace. Judgment being utterly divorced from righteousness, He met them with a dignity that was Divine, and He only spoke to affirm His Christhood, His Sonship, and to affirm His coming glory as the Son of Man.

On this they condemned Him, but the high priest broke the law by rending his clothes as he condemned Him, thereby only condemning himself. This was the signal for a pandemonium of insults, in the midst of which stood the serene figure of our Saviour and our Lord. The calm brightness of His presence helps us to see the dark degradation in which they were sunk.

Lastly, in this chapter, Peter reaps what he had sown by his self-confidence. We read of his following afar off in verse 58, now we find him amongst the enemies of his Lord and unable to stand. He proves himself to be weak just where he had appeared to be strong, inasmuch as impetuosity is not the same thing as courage. Fleshly energy had impelled him into a position where he never ought to have been, and he fell. We cannot throw stones at him. Rather let us pray that if we find ourselves in a similar case we may be granted repentance similar to that recorded in the last verse—a repentance that started directly the fall had been consummated.

Inspiration.

There was a servant of the Lord, who was much used of God as a preacher of the Gospel to the blessing of men. It was remarkable how in preaching the word he would look down as though scanning some Notes and whenever he did so he seemed to get fresh inspiration. He had no notes in the pulpit, but simply printed large so that he could always see it one word—JESUS. It was in that Name, above all other names, that he found his inspiration and his zeal for souls.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Israel and the Eternal State.

Having read Mr. Pollock's paper on the Eternal State (Nov., 1940), I should like to ask about Israel. Does not Scripture teach that Israel is to be blessed on the earth as distinct from all nations? How can the Scriptures be fulfilled if what Mr. Pollock teaches is true?

DOUGLAS.

The Scriptures that describe what the blessings of Israel will be, will be fulfilled during the Millennium—the thousand years of the Lord's reign over the earth. Throughout that period of righteous government and consequent peace Israel will be the head of all the nations, and Jerusalem the centre and metropolis of all the earth. But that period will come to an end, when the Lord shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father (I Cor. 15: 24-28). Creation as we know it shall perish and be changed (Hebrews 1: 10-12), the earth and the heavens shall flee away (Rev. 20: 11), they shall be burnt up (2 Peter 3: 10-13).

Then there shall be new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness shall dwell. That will be the Eternal State and nothing is said as to distinct nations. The word is "The tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. 21: 3). Then will be fulfilled the word in Proverbs 8, "My delights were with the sons of men." The only distinction that will abide for ever is that of the church which will come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband. It will be God's tabernacle. It is this that is taught in the paper in question.

Transgressions, iniquities and sins.

I was asked as to what is the difference between these words which are used in Scripture for sin. Will you please explain?—BATH.

These words are not mere synonyms that could displace each other and nothing be lost, each one has its own terrible meaning; they define what we generally speak of as sin, in its various phases. Transgression is revolt, it means a tearing of oneself away: it is the self-willed determination to do one's own way in defiance of God's declared will. Iniquity is what is twisted, wrong, perverse—it is turning aside from the straight path marked out for us by God, it is going astray. Sin, the meaning of the word is missing the mark. God has set up His mark at which every man should aim—God Himself was to be the end and aim of his life, but self has been substituted for God and that is the essence of sin. The Bible definition of sin is "lawlessness"; for 1 John 3: 4 should be:—"Whosoever practises sin practises also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." And that covers all that sin is in all its phases; it is the refusal to be subject to God.

The Lord's knowledge.

"Mark 13: 32 is a difficulty to me. If the Lord is God the Son, knowing all things, how are we to understand this statement that He knew not the day or the hour of His coming?—ANXIOUS.

We are not surprised that you do not understand this word of the Lord. Great is the mystery of the Incarnation, and things in the Word that often seem contradictory to us are a proof of their greatness. Perhaps these few notes will be a help in removing the difficulty. "The Word
became flesh" to be the Servant of the Father's will and this meant absolute subjection and obedience. He was entirely dependent at all times and in all things on His Father's direction. So He said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for whatsoever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me. He gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak" (John 12:49). It is deeply affecting to see in the Gospel in which there shines His divine glory this perfect dependence on the Father, so that the words that He spoke and the works He did were the Father's words and works. He was simply the sent one, and in this He gloried. But take another passage that speaks of Him. "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned (learner) that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned (learner)" (Isaiah 50:4). Here is the perfect Servant and the perfection of service. Rising up a great while before it was day, morning by morning, He waited on His Father for direction for the day and went forth to do His bidding no more and no less, and above all to speak the Father's words to weary men, and every word was fitly spoken and in due season. He had received no word from the Father as to the hour or the day when the events of which He spoke in Mark 13 would be fulfilled, and as the true Servant He could say nothing as to it. It is only in Mark's Gospel that this statement occurs and the subject of his Gospel is the Lord as the Servant. The words cast no shade on His true Deity but they do shew out His complete consistency with the place He had taken as the Servant of His Father's will.

A bird never sings until its flies; its true instinct has not been fulfilled until it flies; and if a wing be wounded, there is no singing. The Spirit dwells within us to carry us above the world and its burdens and worries and vanities, and to make us free in the heavenly atmosphere which is our true element; then we sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord. "Be filled with the Spirit" is an exhortation that comes to all in Ephesians 5:18, but it is not in order to perform some great exploit—but to "speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

It is a wonderful favour from heaven to anyone who has a desire to know and have the company of the Lord Jesus; if such a desire is yours, treasure it and cultivate it. What an object of interest to heaven Mary Magdalen must have been as she stood outside the sepulchre weeping and saying, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Every desire of her emancipated heart centred in Him, and when He revealed Himself to her, and sent her with a message to His disciples, was there a happier heart on earth than hers? I think not. She had found Him whom she desired, and her heart was satisfied.

We may be saying true things in prayer and in testimony, but if we are not aware of our own weakness and continually dependent on God we shall fail in the day of trial.

First be peaceful and happy in the sense of the grace that has brought you to God, then go and pour out of your full cup that peace to others.
I held a conversation with the wick of my lamp. For long it had served my purpose, silently ministering as I read beside it. I felt ashamed that I had not before noticed its unobtrusive ministry. I said to the wick:—

"For the service of many months I thank thee."

"What have I done for thee?"

"Hast thou not given light upon my page?"

"Indeed, no; I have no light to give, in proof whereof take me from my bath of oil, and see how quickly I expire. Thou wilt soon turn from me as a piece of smoking tow. It is not I that burn, but the oil with which my texture is saturated. It is this that lights thee. As for me, I simply mediate between the oil in the cistern and the fire on my edge. See this blackened edge. It slowly decays, but the light continually burns."

"Dost thou never fear becoming exhausted? See how many inches of coil remain. Wilt thou be able to give light till every inch of this is slowly charred and cut away?"

"I have no fear so long as the supply of oil does not fail, if only some kindly hand will remove from time to time, the charred margin; trimming me, and exposing a fresh edge to the flame. This is my twofold need: oil and trimming. Give me these, and I shall burn to the end."

"I thank thee, gentle teacher," I said, as I turned away; "thou hast greatly encouraged me. I, too, shall endure and shine, so long as I abide in Him, in whom God has stored the measureless supply of the Spirit; and so long as the Divine hand, with delicate thoughtfulness, uses the golden snuffers, removing the debris and decay that the light be not obscured; prizing that I may bear fruit; piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, that I may enter into His rest."

After Samson had gained a great victory over the Philistines with the jaw bone of an ass, and sung of his exploit, "he was sore athirst" (Judges 15:18), great services will not supply the soul's necessities, which can only be supplied from the Lord. However great our services our own souls will famish unless directly sustained of the Lord, mere service never sustains. On the contrary, the greater the service the more shall we be conscious of our own necessity and dependence on God for personal support. From God alone must come relief to the weary servant; all refreshment comes from Him. Every true servant has often proved this. So Samson called on the Lord, and the Lord answered him, giving him water out of "the rock which is in Lehi" (N.T.). And he called the name of the place En-hakkore—meaning "the well of him that called." He commemorated not his service but his dependence upon God and God's faithfulness in answering his cry of need.

The law begins with you and ends with God. It says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." The Gospel begins with God and ends with you. Paul's answer to the law teachers was a triumphant one, "The Son of God loved me." If we love, it is because He first loved us.

The time was when every day the book of my life was filled up with transgressions, thus it appeared before God. Sin, sin, sin, covered every page. But now those pages are covered with the blood, the precious blood of the Lamb, and that blood is to me the pledge and token of infinite love, the love of God.
THE NEW ORDER.

HERE never was such unanimity of thought and speech in this land as now. Statesmen, celebrated authors, leaders of political parties, bishops and ministers of religion are all agreed about one thing: from pulpit, press and over the air sounds the same voice. There must be a new world when Britain and her allies have crushed this hateful Nazidom; a cleaner, happier, better world, from which tyranny and force shall be driven; in which individuals and nations shall be allowed to live according to their bent; democracy is to triumph and dictators be a discredited thing of history. The same things were said during the last war, only now they are being said with more assurance and greater resolution.

We do not question the sincerity of those who are making these promises, and we most heartily share their indignation against those evil men whose unbridled ambition has laid nations in chains. We also are looking for the age of peace, and that age shall most surely come, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. But will the overthrow of Hitler bring it in? A multitude of voices answer Yes. But—

Hitler also has a new order in view for Europe and the world, and what of that? His order would be the order of the coming Beast (Rev. 13). He is not the Beast, but he approximates more nearly to him than any other man who has ever arisen to oppress his fellows. The Beast when he does appear on the scene will be devil-inspired and devil-empowered, and will suffer no check. He will be so successful and brutal in his fight for world power that the lesser peoples will say, 'Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?' (verse 5); he will persecute and endeavour to exterminate what saints of God remain on the earth (chiefly Jews) and will overcome them (verse 7); he will have power over all kindreds and tongues and peoples, they will acknowledge him as their overlord and leader (verse 8); none will be permitted to buy or sell except those that receive his mark in their foreheads and hands (verse 17); he will banish the worship of God from his realm, and compel men to render divine homage to himself (2 Thess. 2: 4), and unite the nations to fight against God and His Christ (Rev. 17).

It is not difficult to discern all these features in a shadowy way in the Nazi leader, only now the Holy Spirit of God dwells on earth in the Church of God and He restrains the full development of this evil order of things; but when He is taken out of the way, as He will be (2 Thess. 2: 7) at the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Church (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17), then this "new order" will be revealed in all its satanic subtlety and power, and men will accept it and glory in it, believing it to be the coming triumph of man over God. "Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God will send them this strong delusion, that they should believe this lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2: 10-12).

The Beast will continue forty-two months only, then his end will come with catastrophic speed, for the Lamb against whom he will finally match his power will overcome him, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17: 14). The Beast and his ally the Anti-christ, shall be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Rev. 19: 20). And that will be the end of every order for mankind but God's.

It must not be forgotten, for God has not forgotten it, that when He sent His Son into this world to reconcile it to Himself and to save it, He was rejected and murdered. The Stone, 'chosen of God and precious,' was cast out by the builders of this world's proud edifice. They could find no place for Him in their schemes for the
world's advancement. There was room for Romans, Greeks and Jews, for Pharisees and Sadducees, for Pilate and Herod and Barabbas, but no room for Jesus in their world. And since then every effort to put the world right has failed, and will fail and must fail until He returns to judge the world and to reign in righteousness. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is: I will give it to Him" (Ezekiel 21: 27). That is a word that should cause men to think. We await His coming and should with greater earnestness pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

But how will that Kingdom come? Let us first consider what it will be like when it does come. The last words of David, the son of Jesse, describe it. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain" (2 Samuel 23: 2-4). This word is confirmed in Isaiah 32, "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness... and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (verses 1-17). The New Testament tells us who this King is who shall bring in righteousness and rule with justice. There we read, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereby He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17: 30, 31). He is the once despised and rejected Jesus of Nazareth.

There are many glowing passages in the prophets that describe His Kingdom when it shall appear. Let us consider first of all Isaiah 2: 1-5.

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, let us walk in the light of the Lord."
wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3: 17-19).

The earth still groans under that curse, but when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings, creation will be delivered from its bondage by His beneficent rays: it will cease to groan, the morning without clouds shall break, and toil and the sweat of the face and the fear of death will give place to security, contentment and rest. The prophet Micah tells us this in a refreshing word which he adds to Isaiah's prediction. He says, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (chap. 4: 4). No words could more fitly describe the change from the old order to the new. Every man will have his own holding, whether small or large matters not, and each will be contented with his lot. I say contented, not satisfied, for no earthly good can satisfy the human heart. They will be satisfied with the knowledge of God, for in that day "they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8: 11; Jeremiah 31: 34). It is when a man is satisfied with God that he will be contented with his lot, and "godliness with contentment is great gain."

Individual ownership will be the order of that day, for the individual will never be lost in the mass. Every man will be responsible to God for the use that he makes of his life and possessions, even as he is today. "For it is written, 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). But every man in this new order will be contented with his own holding; each will sit under his own vine and fig tree, no one will cast covetous eyes upon his neighbour's plot, and because no one will covet or desire to steal, they will not sin against each other and there will be no need for locks and bars, and watch dogs and police; all will dwell securely and none shall make them afraid. The word is sure, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.

But while there will be individual ownership the state will be thoroughly and truly social. Zechariah, the post-exile prophet, adds this beautiful colour to Isaiah's picture and fills it out. He says, "In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree" (chap. 3: 10). Clearly each one will love his neighbour as himself, with the utmost sincerity, and not in word only, but in deed. There will be no agricultural shows in that day to shew how much better one man can cultivate his land than another, but the successful agriculturist will place all his experience and skill at the disposal of his less fortunate neighbour and will not be satisfied until his neighbour's fields yield as well as his own. Peace, security, contentment, rest and brotherly love are the features of God's new order for men. THERE WILL BE PERFECT SOCIAL CONDITIONS UNDER AN ABSOLUTE MONARCH.

I will quote another of Isaiah's glowing prophecies:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but 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, And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins, The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."
The former passage tells of all the weapons of war being beaten into instruments of peace, of all hostility between nations ceasing for ever; in this passage we learn that there will be an inward change in men. The wolf, the leopard, and the young lion will cease to raven of course, but there is more in the passage than that; these fierce beasts represent the lust for blood and power in men, the cause of all the strife, they picture the inhumanity in them "that makes countless thousands mourn," and the unbridled passions that drive them to brutal deeds. But all that will be changed. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." This will be done by the power of God. Men will be born again. He says of His own people in that day, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh . . . and they shall be My people, and I will be their God" (Ezekiel ii: 19).

"A little child shall lead them." It is an interesting fact that the Gospel of Matthew, in which the Lord Jesus is presented as King, there is more said about little children than in any other, and to be converted and become as little children is the only way of entrance into the true Kingdom. The Kingdom will take its character from the King; He was meek and lowly in heart; He never strove for His rights, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and was dumb before His foes as a sheep is dumb before her shearers. There never was such apparent weakness as that which was seen in the lowly Nazarene when men rose up against Him; and they despised Him for it, for He was not only rejected but despised of men. If He had defended Himself, or even made an effort to do so, they might have respected Him. But He did not use His power, and the bitter taunt that they cast upon Him as He hung in His last agony upon the cross was, "Himself He cannot save." That was the jest of Jerusalem on that day.

But that which they despised as weakness, was the very might of God; there and then omnipotent love secured salvation for men, overthrew the dominion of the devil, and gained a signal, overwhelming and eternal victory.

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

Thrice blessed Victor. He went down into the lowest depths, for He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 9-11).

What a change, and how completely new for men, when meekness and lowliness, gentleness and trustfulness, the qualities of the little child, lead in every department of state and relationship of life, when the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" is sought after in every land instead of power and wealth and place and fame.

But how shall this longed-for new order come into being? Not by the triumph and united will of the great democracies, not by benevolent legislation for the poor and afflicted, not by the friendly co-operation of all classes and nations who are sick of war and tyrannies, not even by the worldwide preaching of the gospel. There is only one way by which this change shall come, and that is by the righteous judgment of God upon evil men and evil systems, and the regeneration of the rest. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly
among men of all their ungodly deeds’’ (Jude 14: 15). ‘‘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’’ (Revelation 1: 7). The blessing will most surely come, but it will follow the judgment. ‘‘He shall come down like rain.’’ That surely means blessing. Yes, but it will be ‘‘upon the mown grass’’ (Ps. 72). The scythe of judgment will have first swept the field.

‘‘The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire.’’ The tares shall be gathered together and burned (Matthew 13: 40, 41). ‘‘And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for Thee to reap . . . And another angel . . . thrust in his sharp sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God’’ (Revelation 14: 14-20). The Son of Man will reap a harvest of golden grain and gather it into His garner for His glory and everlasting joy, the fruit of His suffering and death; and His angels shall gather from that same world the godless Christ-rejectors, those who loved the lie and had pleasure in unrighteousness, for the winepress of the wrath of God.

The gospel is being preached throughout the whole world to take out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation a people for God (Acts 15: 14). All these—all who have received the gospel in living faith—are redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb that has been slain, and they form His true Church, and before the Lord comes to judge the world in righteousness they will be caught up to heaven out of the world. As Enoch was taken up before the flood, and as Lot was taken out of Sodom before the fire of God fell upon it, so shall the Church be delivered from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1: 10). We read of this in 1 Thess. 4: 15-17, and words could not be plainer, ‘‘And this we say by the word of the Lord . . . The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’’

Following that great event, affairs will go ill with the world. Satan will be cast down out of the heavens, from whence he now rules and deceives the whole world; he is its ‘‘god’’ and its ‘‘prince,’’ ‘‘the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience’’ (Eph. 2: 2). Then will be fulfilled the solemn word of Revelation 12: 12, ‘‘Woe unto the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’’ Then will the world feel the bitterness of having turned the back upon God and His gospel and listened to the devil’s lie and served him. The devil can only fight against God through men and with this in view he will give ‘‘his power, and his seat, and great authority to the Beast’’ (Revelation 13), who will be supported by the Antichrist, the false prophet, and the Rome-Jerusalem axis will operate, as inspired and empowered by the devil, to hold the kingdoms of the world against God and His Christ. But who can fight against God and triumph? The doom of these men and all who follow them is certain, as we have already seen, and the devil himself will be taken and cast into the bottomless pit and shut up there, ‘‘that he should deceive the nations no more for a thousand years’’ (Revelation 20: 1-3), and finally he will be cast into
the lake of fire where the Beast and false prophet are, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (verse 10).

Then “the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another; as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25: 31-46).

Thus will be answered the prayer that has gone up to God from His Church for more than 1,900 years, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In that day the Lord shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, and shall save the souls of the needy. His Name shall endure for ever, and all nations shall call Him blessed. And blessed be His glorious Name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory: Amen and Amen (Ps. 72).

“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM” (Ps. 2).

Repentance.

There are two kinds of sorrow—the one to death and the other to life. The first considers the penalty of the wrongdoing: the second the Person against whom the wrong has been done. The first is largely selfish, dreading only the scorpion whip and the stinging flame; the other is altogether regardless of the consequences, but bitterly laments the dishonour done to God, who is patient and long suffering.

Some sinners think that if they could only repent enough and weep enough for their sins, that would be a price they could pay for God’s mercy. But the Saviour’s tears could not secure God’s mercy for us, only His blood, and that blood was the proof that mercy was already there for us, that was the price paid. To postpone coming to the Lord until the tear bottles are full is to postpone coming for ever. God, who is rich in mercy, sent His Son to pay the price that we might come just as we are without delay.

We shall never get the right sorrow for sin unless we come. It is coming to the Lord and having a revelation of His love that produces it. The tears that are precious in the sight of the Lord are after conversion. It was when the sinful outcast of the city had been silently welcomed to the feet of Jesus that she washed His feet with her tears. It was when Jesus turned and looked upon Peter that he realized the enormity of his denial, and went forth and wept bitterly.
BETHANY. 3.

"He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them" (Luke 24: 50).

HERE the Lord is leading His disciples to Bethany—the house of sweetness.

When He allowed men to lead Him they led Him from Gethsemane to the house of the high priest, where they mocked Him and spit upon Him and smote Him. There was no sweetness in that house either for man or God. Rather had it assumed the character of Bethaven—the house of iniquity. They then led Him to their council where they unanimously and unjustly condemned Him, then by way of Pilate's Judgment Hall to Golgotha where they crucified Him.

Such was man's leading.

When He, raised from the dead, assumes leadership He leads to the place of rest and joy and blessing.

He is

"Now come forth in resurrection
Passing onward to the throne;
Having suffered all the judgment,
Borne the storm of wrath alone."

He who was led from Gethsemane to Golgotha has now become the Leader and He leads His disciples away from the scene of His sorrow to Bethany. No record is left to us of the words of blessing He spoke as He was parted from them, but they produced great joy in the hearts of the disciples. The last that His enemies saw of Jesus was with His hands outstretched on the Cross. The last that His disciples saw of Him was with His hands reaching towards them in blessing. It seems to me that He intended that the memory of that attitude should remain with them. True it is that He maintains that attitude of benediction for His people today.

He is the Leader of our Salvation and He is bringing many sons to glory. His leadership will eventually take us to the Father's House but day by day whilst still on earth we may experience in our souls the joy of His Presence, His leading and His blessing.

May we learn to say with the psalmist:

"He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Press this thought to your heart, child of God, that in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and all for you. He is the ocean-basis of God's infinite resources, and you may for ever draw on His stores, and be replenished continually from His fulness with grace upon grace.

We are often menaced by apparently unsurmountable difficulties, which extort from us the groan, "O great mountain." At other times we are oppressed with a sense of our impotence, and of the weight and weariness of life. How can we always obey the heavenly vision and maintain our testimony for God? We are told that Daniel continued unto the first year of Cyrus. Ah, this patient endurance and continuance in well-doing. If we are to live for twenty or thirty years yet, or even a month in this world of shocks and perils and demands which will not diminish as time wears on, shall we endure to the end? Can we? Hear Paul say, "As the outer man perishes the inward man is renewed day by day." Ah, that's it. "Day by day." We have a mighty Intercessor in heaven: He ever liveth to make intercession for us. We have an unfailing Comforter who is to be in us and with us for ever. There is the daily Throne of Grace for help in time of need. Be of good cheer. Your God will perfect that which concerneth you; He will not forsake the work of His hands.
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH. A. J. Pollock

AMES tells us that the body without the spirit is dead, referring to the human body and the human spirit. In the same way the Spirit of God is necessary for the life, activity, and manifestation of life in the Body of Christ. But the body of Christ is likewise spoken of in Ephesian Epistles as the household of God, a holy temple in the Lord, God's dwelling place and shrine, His church or assembly on the earth.

The church or assembly is not a machine, but a living intelligent organism, made up of the intelligence and life of each member of it; it is as response is made to the Spirit that God's mind for the assembly can be carried out. How vastly important our subject is, and how feeble must our best attempts be to state it.

It is by the Spirit that the assembly was brought into existence, and by the same Spirit the assembly is maintained.

SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE (ch. 1: 13)

The Lord in those memorable chapters in John's Gospel—chapters 13-17—spoke much to His loved disciples, ere He left them, of the coming of the Holy Spirit consequent on His going to His Father. In Acts 1: 4 we are reminded that the early disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit one by one, but that they were commanded to assemble themselves at Jerusalem there to await the promise of the Father, the blessed Holy Spirit of God. It is of the utmost importance that it should be seen how the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, as it clearly proves that our individual responsibility as Christians flows from our corporate position as part of God's assembly. The Spirit came and formed the believers into one body—Christ being the Head in heaven, the believers, the body on earth.

Once the assembly is formed individuals are added one by one, but they are added to the assembly, and not merely indwelt as individuals. That we are indwelt is blessedly true, and consequent on believing on Christ, receiving the gospel of their salvation, believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; sealed, claimed by God for ever for Himself; the Holy Spirit betokening what character He would impart to those sealed, the earnest of our inheritance, the living proof, the taste for the believer of what will be his portion in God's presence for ever.

ACCESS BY ONE SPIRIT TO THE FATHER (ch. 2: 18)

In this Epistle we need to follow carefully the 'we' of the Jewish believers and the 'ye' of the Gentile believers. It was no new thought to the Jew that he was in relation to God. The tabernacle and temple services constantly kept this before him in typical fashion. But it was a new thing for the Gentile to be brought into blessing equally with the Jew.

That the Gentile believer should be blessed equally with the Jewish could only be brought to pass in and through Christ, and that by an absolutely new range of blessing affecting them both. Christ's death brought the law to an end as a MEANS of life. No one ever maintained life before God on the law principle. Yet the moral law is never set aside, and in Christianity love is the mighty controlling power, "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13: 10), and it is by the Spirit's power "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." But the believer is not under law, though as led of the Spirit he fulfils its righteousness. So great is the breakdown of the flesh, that only in NEW creation can man be blessed, and in new creation "there is neither Greek nor Jew" (Col. 3: 11).

In Christianity we come into new creation and therefore with new relationships. Not the least of these is that of sons to the Father. To have access to the Father means that those who
have access are sons. If I have access to the King I have access to him who is a father, but to have access to him as father I must be his child. So in Christ Jesus all—Jew and Gentile—are brought nigh by His precious blood. He is our peace, not only settling every question that lay between us and God, but doing it in such fashion, and blessing us with such blessings that go far beyond settling variance between us and God, blessings of an entirely new and positive nature and connected with the purpose of God, that the middle wall of partition is broken down, and of Jew and Gentile in Christ one new man is made.

It is said there was a wall of partition in the court of the temple, pierced with gates, which admitted a Jew, but which meant death to a Gentile, if he ventured to pass through. How sweet that all restraint is gone, and that Jew and Gentile are lifted into heights that are outside of every feeling of racial animosity and pride, so that we read, "Through Him [Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT (ch. 3: 5)

Again is emphasized the wonderful place the Gentile has as well as the Jew in Christianity. This mystery was not made known in other ages, and was revealed by the Holy Spirit to the holy apostles and prophets. Judaism was exclusive, and treated the Gentile as an alien from the commonwealth of Israel and stranger to the covenants of promise, which indeed he was. But Christianity has altered all that; no longer will the Jew in this dispensation enlightened by the gospel look to Jerusalem as the centre, and earth as the sphere of his blessing. The believer looks to Christ in glory and finds his true home in the assembly on earth. Consequent on Christ taking His place on high and sending the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, believers are fellow-heirs of these spiritual blessings, members of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. But stress in this passage is laid on the fact that Gentiles (see Eph. 3: 6) were admitted to these privileges as much as the Jew.

How formative must these thoughts have been in the souls of the believers, and as they met in the exercises of the assembly how they must have put a deep mark on their worship. No wonder that the Apostle Paul glories in his commission to proclaim "among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3: 8).

"STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT BY HIS SPIRIT IN THE INNER MAN" (Ch. 3: 16)

Here we find the Apostle bending his knees in prayer to God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the believers might according to the riches of God's glory, "be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3: 16). Evidently the Apostle realized that the presentation of the truth in set terms would not effect God's purpose, that only as the Holy Spirit in mighty power gives perception to the believer through deep exercise of soul can such be attained.

And for what did the Apostle desire this strengthening of the inner man? It was that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith—wonderful truth—that rooted and grounded in love they might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Mark that expression, "with all saints." How the Spirit throughout the Word emphasizes that Christianity is not an individual thing! It puts the believer into relation with the whole, and spite of failure this is still true, though failure renders the expression of it very difficult.

We are not told what the breadth and length and height and depth are. They define that which is indefinable. They measure that which is immeasurable. When we have said what we can about them we have said very little. We are on the edge of a vast ocean of divine purpose and love.
Breadth—it takes in ALL saints.

Length—it stretches back to distant ages when God, before time began, purposed us for blessing in Christ; it stretches forward to coming ages, when throughout eternity the saints will be in all the blessing and fullness of these purposes in Christ.

Depth—this reminds us of all the distance and shame and suffering the blessed Lord went through in order to open up all this righteously and give effect to God's wonderful scheme of blessing.

Lowliness and meekness and long-suffering and forbearance in love are qualities the Spirit would produce in us to this end. How happy if the seven ones in Ephesians 4: 1-6, have a large place in our thoughts, and we adjust ourselves by the Spirit's power in relation to them.

"GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD" (Eph. 4: 30)

We must refrain from lengthy comments or else the space at our disposal will not nearly suffice. There is so much fullness in the Word, and the theme is tempting.

Suffice it to say that once the doctrinal part proper of the epistle is passed the Apostle puts right practice before the believers on the ground of their having put off "the old man, corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and having put "on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and holiness." These exhortations to truthfulness, industry in providing means for sustenance and the help of others, purity of speech, are based on the ground that the believers were members of each other (see Eph. 4: 25). Let it be observed the believer is "sealed unto the day of redemption," that is, till Christ comes to claim His own at His coming. We cannot grieve the Spirit away—what a comfort and stay!—but we are exhorted not to grieve Him. May we pay heed to this.

"FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT" (Eph. 4: 15)

To be "filled with the Spirit" does not mean that one believer has more of the Spirit than another, but that the Spirit has more of one believer than another. That is to say, one believer may be walking carelessly, going on in a cold worldly state, and the Spirit of God is grieved, and not free to fill the heart with the blessed things of God. On the other hand, a believer may through yielding to the Lord in his life have such a filling of the Spirit that it can only find expression in praise and worship, "making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5: 19). Here we get the Spirit of joy and praise.

There is a teaching abroad that makes this filling to be a subsequent thing to the gift of the Spirit to the believer, and to be brought about by a special act of surrender and faith, and that the believer who has thus, as they say, received the baptism of the Spirit, lives on a higher plane than the ordinary Christian. We are assured that this teaching, whilst it is often the outcome of a sincere desire to be heavenly minded, is mixed up with erroneous teaching that in the end fixes the attention of the believer upon his attainments instead of on Christ and His glories.

"PRAYING . . . IN THE SPIRIT" (Eph. 6: 18)

Note the earnestness of this exhortation. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication FOR ALL SAINTS." And, further, that Paul might make known boldly "the mystery of the gospel.""

Doubtless we are right to pray about our temporal needs and difficulties, but those who get no further than that don't touch this. This is expressed as the heart sees the vast field of truth concerning Christ and the Church, the Head and the Body, the heavenly relationships of the believer with the Father, that such prayer for oneself and "for all saints" is made. Do we know anything of it?
THE closing scenes of the Lord's life are told by Matthew in a way that emphasizes the excessive guilt of the leaders of Israel. This feature has been noticeable all through, and we specially see it in chapter 23. The opening verses of chapter 27 show us that though His official condemnation had to come from Pilate, yet the animus that hounded Him to His death was found with them.

The sequence of the story is broken by a parenthetical paragraph giving us the miserable end of Judas. It looks as if he had expected the Lord to evade His adversaries and pass from their midst as He had done aforetime, but now seeing Him condemned and submitting to their hands he was filled with remorse and horror at what he had done. His was not the genuine " repentance to salvation not to be repented of," for that goes hand in hand with faith. Now faith was what he lacked, for had he possessed it he would have turned to his Master as did Peter, who also had grievously failed. His eyes were opened to his sin and he confessed it, while also confessing the innocence of Jesus, yet he flung himself out of life and into a suicide's grave. The very man who was instrumental in handing the Saviour over to His foes had to confess His innocence. God so ordained it; and this is very striking.

The very name, Judas, has become a byword for iniquity, but Annas and Caiaphas were worse than he. Verse 4 shows this. Judas betrayed innocent blood and they condemned it. He at least had some feeling of remorse for what he had done—sufficient to drive him to self-destruction. They had no feeling whatever. What was innocent blood to them? They had no compunction in shedding it, nor had they any fear of the God who requites evil. They were prepared to "murder the innocent," saying in their hearts, "Thou wilt not require it" (Psa. 10: 8, 13). Had they the smallest fear of God they would never have said, "His blood be on us, and on our children," as recorded in our chapter.

Judas never profited by his thirty pieces of silver. Seduced and ultimately possessed by the devil, he threw away everything for nothing. That is always the end of the story when silly little men attempt to drive a bargain with the giant spirit of evil. The silver was now again in the hands of the priests and became the occasion for them to crown their other sins with supreme hypocrisy. With legal scrupulosity they could not put it in the treasury because it was the price of blood. But who made it such? Why, they themselves! So they fulfilled the scripture by buying the potter's field. Their act became public, and thus the field acquired its name. The irony of Divine governmental judgment can be discerned in the name, for that land has been a field of blood and a burial place for strangers ever since that day; and will be yet in larger measure, and until the day when at last the Redeemer shall come to Zion.

The religious authorities had now handed Jesus over to the civil governor, and verses 11-26 relate what transpired before him. When examined by Pilate before the multitude Jesus only uttered two words, "Thou sayest," the equivalent of one English word, "Yes." He confessed that He indeed was the King of the Jews, which was the specific charge laid at His door in the presence of the Roman power. The three Synoptic Gospels agree on this point. John records other questions raised by Pilate and answered by the Lord in the comparative privacy of the judgment hall, and three times he records Pilate going out from thence to the people. As far as the public examination was concerned Jesus "answered nothing," for there was really nothing to answer; as Pilate very soon perceived, though he marvelled greatly. He was well versed in the subtle ways of the Jews and his acute legal mind soon discerned that
envy was at the bottom of the prosecution. On the other hand he feared the people and wished to stand well with them.

Hence Pilate had a strangely disturbed mind. To condemn Jesus he must violate his judicial sense as well as his wife's dream and intuition. He was evidently agitated as the subterfuge failed, by which he hoped to extricate himself from the dilemma. The accusing multitude was agitated by the cunning priests and elders. The only serene figure in the terrible scene is that of the Prisoner Himself. We see Pilate virtually abdicating as to his judicial function in the case and throwing the responsibility on the people. He did not really absolve himself of course, but it did lead to the people putting themselves under full responsibility for the blood of their Messiah. In verse 25 we find the explanation of the sorrows that fell upon the people, and that have continued to dog the footsteps of their children to this day. They have yet to face the great tribulation before the account is settled according to the government of God.

Barabbas was released and Jesus condemned to be crucified, and next (verses 27-37) we see Jesus in the hands of the Roman soldiers. Here we see vulgar mockery, brutality, and at last the act of crucifixion. To complete His humiliation they numbered Him amongst the transgressors by placing a thief on either hand. There was no justice, no mercy, no ordinary compassion whether He was in the hands of the religious, the civil or the military authorities. Jew and Gentile alike condemned themselves in condemning Him.

Verses 39-44 show us how all classes united in reviling Him as He was dying on the cross. Deep-dyed criminals have had to listen to stern words when they have been condemned to death, but we have not heard of even the most atrocious and depraved being mocked in their death agonies. Yet this is what happened when He who was the embodiment of all perfection, Divine as well as human, was on the cross. There was no difference, save in the type of language used. "They that passed by" were the ordinary folk on business bent. "The chief priests . . . with the scribes and elders" were the upper classes. "The thieves also . . . cast the same in His teeth." They represented the lowest, the criminal class; but they only followed the fashion in their crude and vulgar way. He was the Son of God and the King of Israel: He could have displayed His might then as easily as He will display it in judgment very shortly. Then He was displaying Divine love by remaining where men had put Him with wicked hands, and bearing the judgment of sin Himself.

Matthew does not develop this in a doctrinal way, but he does pass on to record the solemn three hours of darkness, about the end of which time the holy Sufferer uttered with a loud voice the cry that had been written by the Spirit of prophecy in the opening words of Psalm 22, a thousand years before. The answer to the cry is supplied in the third verse of the Psalm, "Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." A holy God can only dwell in the praises of sinful people if atonement be wrought by the bearing of sin's judgment. The forsaking was the inevitable result of the One who knew no sin being made sin for us. The onlookers knew nothing of this: indeed they did not seem able to distinguish between God and Elijah.

After this there was, as verse 50 records, a last loud cry, and then the yielding up of His spirit. The actual words of that last cry are given us partly in John and partly in Luke. It was loud, showing that His strength was not impaired, and so the yielding up of His spirit was His own deliberate act. His death was supernatural and it was at once followed by supernatural signs, indicating its significance and power.

The first of these acts of God touched
the veil of the temple, which typified His flesh, as Hebrews 10 tells us. Under the law "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (Heb. 9:8); but now it is made manifest, for the death of Christ is the basis of our approach to God. The second act touched the material creation, for the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, and graves opened. The third touched the bodies of sleeping saints, and after His arising they arose and appeared to many in Jerusalem. A threefold witness was thus rendered in most striking manner. The first concerned the presence of God, but it took place in the type of the veil, which was seen by the eyes of the priests alone. The second in the realm of nature must have been felt by everybody. The third, doubtless, was for the eyes of true saints alone. In addition to these signs the sun had previously been darkened. There was ample witness to the wonder of that hour, yet we do not read of any being impressed save the centurion on duty and those with him. In his heart was wrought the conviction that here was the Son of God—the very thing that His own people denied, and still deny.

As is often the case, when the men fail in courage and devotion the women supply the lack. The disciples had disappeared but many women lingered round the scene though standing afar off. One man, however, came forward and had the courage to identify himself with the dead Christ, begging His body from Pilate, and he an unexpected one. He was a disciple of Jesus but hitherto a secret one, as we are told in John's Gospel. Here was the rich man with the new tomb, who so acted that Isaiah 53:9 was fulfilled. We know of nothing that Joseph of Arimathæa did save this one thing. God never fails to have a servant of His will who shall fulfil His Word. Joseph was born into the world to fulfil that one brief prophetic statement and so, though men would have appointed His grave with the wicked, He was with the rich in His death.

The women who were witnesses of His death and His burial were marked by devotion but not by intelligence. It was His bitter enemies who remembered that He had predicted that He would rise from the dead. Their hatred sharpened their memories and their wits, and led to their deputation to Pilate with a request for special precautions to be taken. His achievements in life they repudiated, regarding them as the first error. They dreaded lest His resurrection should be established, realizing that it would have far more potent effects. It would to their minds be the last error and worse than the first. It would inevitably vindicate Him and condemn them, as they saw very well.

As with Joseph so with these men Pilate was in an acquiescent mood. Their request was granted: the watch of soldiers was set, but it does seem as if there was a touch of irony in his words, "Make it as sure as ye can." They did all they could, and in result accomplished nothing save putting the fact of His resurrection beyond all reasonable doubt when once He was risen, and their elaborate arrangements were all brushed aside. God turned their wisdom into folly and made their scheme serve His own purpose and overthrow their own.

Verse 1 of chapter 28 tells us that the two Marys who had watched His burial were back at the sepulchre immediately the sabbath day had ended. They came "as it was the dusk of the next day after the sabbath" (New Trans.). The day according to Jewish reckoning ended at sunset, and their devotion was such that directly the sabbath was over they were off the move and visited the grave. It is not easy to piece together the details given us by the four Evangelists to form a connected narrative, but it would appear that the two Marys made this special visit and then returned at daybreak with Salome and possibly others, bearing spices for embalming. Mark and Luke tell us about this, and we should judge that verse 5 of our chapter refers to this second occasion, so that
what is recorded in verses 2-4 took place between the two visits. Be that as it may, it is clear that by sunrise on the first day of the week Christ was risen.

An earthquake signalized His death, and a great earthquake, though apparently a very local one, for it was connected with the descent of the angel of the Lord, heralded His resurrection. The authorities of earth had sealed the tomb but a vastly higher authority broke the seal and flung back the stone door. At his presence the guards trembled and were smitten into death-like unconsciousness. The sealed tomb was the challenge of daring men. God accepted their challenge, broke their power, and reduced their representatives to nothingness. The Lord Jesus had been raised by the power of God, and the tomb was opened that men might see that without a doubt He was not there. The angel not only rolled back the stone but sat upon it, placing himself as a seal upon it in its new position, that no one might roll it back until an ample number of witnesses had seen the empty tomb.

Matthew tells us of one angel sitting on the stone. Mark tells us of one sitting on the right side, but inside the tomb. Luke and John both speak of two angels. Yet they all show us that though the women feared in the presence of the angels they were not smitten as were the soldiers. They were seeking the crucified Jesus, so "Fear not ye," was the word for them. His resurrection was announced and they were invited to see the spot where His body had lain, and where, as we gather from John's account, the linen wrappings lay all in their place and undisturbed, but out of which the sacred body had gone. One had only to see the place where He lay to be convinced that the body had not been abstracted or stolen. A supernatural act had taken place; and they were to go as messengers to the disciples, telling them to meet Him in Galilee.

Though filled with the conflicting emotions of fear and joy, the women received the angel's word with faith and consequently they set out in obedience. The obedience of faith was quickly rewarded by an appearance of the risen Lord Himself, and this brought them to His feet as worshipers, and sent them on their way as messengers of the Lord and not merely of the angel. On the occasion of the last supper the Lord had appointed Galilee as the meeting place, and He confirmed it to them.

The parenthetical paragraph, verses 11-15, furnishes us with a striking contrast. We pass from the bright scene of resurrection with joy, faith, worship and testimony, to the dense darkness of unbelief with hatred, plotting, bribery and corruption, resulting in a lie of so flagrant a kind that its falsity was carried on its face. If they were asleep how could they know what had transpired? Money and the love of it lay at the root of this particular evil. The soldiers were bribed, and we should suppose that the pursuing of the governor would be achieved in the same way. Anything to stop the truth as to the resurrection coming out! They realized how it would wreck their cause while establishing His, and the devil, who moved them, realized it far more keenly than they did. They only gave thirty silver coins to Judas to encompass His death, but they gave large money to the soldiers, endeavouring to suppress the fact of His resurrection.

The Gospel closes with the disciples meeting their risen Lord in Galilee, and with the commission He gave them there. No mention is made of the various appearances in Jerusalem or the ascension from Bethany. While pointing forward to the establishment of the church, this Gospel has in the main traced for us the transition from the presentation of the kingdom as connected with the Messiah upon earth as foretold by the prophets, to the kingdom of heaven in its present form; that is, in a mysterious form while the King is hidden in the heavens. Jerusalem was the place where they were
to receive the Spirit and be baptized into the body, the church, not many days hence: Galilee was the district where was found the great majority of the godly remnant of Israel who, receiving Him, entered the kingdom whilst the mass of the people missed it.

So the Lord resumed links in resurrection with that remnant, the eleven disciples being the most prominent members of it; and though we do not hear of His being caught up into heaven yet He commissions them as though He were speaking from heaven, for all power was His, in heaven as much as on earth. The time had not yet come to reveal fully the Christian enterprise of gathering out of the nations a people for His name: the terms here are more general. They were to go and make disciples and baptize them, and this is a commission which can be taken up by the believing remnant of Israel after the church is gone. As Israel were baptized to Moses their leader, so the disciple is to be baptized to the risen Christ as coming under His authority, and the baptism is to be in the name of God as He has been fully revealed. It is not plural but singular—not names but name—for though revealed in three Persons, the Godhead is one.

The closing word is, "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age," so that in this closing word we have "all" no less than four times. Our exalted Lord wields all power in both spheres, so that nothing is beyond His reach. If anything adverse happens to His servants it must be by His permission. All nations are to be the scope of their service, and not in the midst of Israel only as heretofore. Those baptized from the nations are to be taught to observe all the Lord's commands and instructions, for the servants are to be marked by obedience, and to bring those that they reach into obedience also. Then all the days to the finish they can count on the support and spiritual presence of their Master.

Such is the commission with which the Gospel ends. As we travel on into the Acts and pass through the Epistles we find coming to light developments which furnish us with the full gospel commission of today; yet we do not lose the light and benefit of what the Lord says here. We still go to all nations, baptizing in the Name. We still have to teach all the Lord's word. All power is still His. His presence will be with us all the days till the end of the age, no matter what may betide.

Here are three beautiful things. The exhortation of Christ, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." The example of Christ, "I am meek and lowly in heart." The encouragement of Christ, "Ye shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

---

Eternal in the heavens
Is our prepared abode;
Radiant and pure, in light divine,
There shall we dwell with God.

No more the aching head
The weary pilgrim feet,
The toil to win the daily bread,
But rest—divinely sweet.

Rest, Lord in serving Thee,
As none have served below;
And through that blest eternity,
What tides of praise shall flow.
The Lovingkindness of the Lord.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" (Psalm 107:43).

No matter what sort of trial a man may be in, if he cries to the Lord he will be heard. This is the theme and witness of Ps. 107. First, we are told of men who were hungry and thirsty and faint. There was no sin in that, it was just ordinary need in a world of trial. What was their resource? "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble." And He heard them, and not only delivered them, but took charge of them and led them forth by a right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Let us be wise and observe that, and learn that it is good to be wholly in God’s hands, and that He does not turn away His ear from a cry of need.

Then there comes under our observation another sort of trouble: "They rebelled against the words of God and contemned the counsel of the most High." Darkness, bondage and affliction could only result from that; but, what then? "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses." Yes, He shows His lovingkindness to the rebellious when they cry to Him, for there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared.

The third case is the worst, for these fools not only despised the counsel of God, but were deliberate transgressors of His command, they had departed from His ways and brought themselves to the very verge of destruction. Then they cried unto the Lord and He pitied them and by His word He healed them and delivered them. No man can sink too low in the mire and sin of this world for the mercy of God. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The fourth case shows us men who in the battle of life were worsted. In their own power they had made a fight of it but were beaten. Had they a resource? Yes, "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He heard them" and brought them to their desired haven.

What a resource men have in God, and how great is His lovingkindness! All men might prove this if they would, but it is the joy and comfort surely of the redeemed of the Lord, and if men refuse to observe His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men, yet let the redeemed of the Lord say, "His mercy endureth for ever."

It is when Israel looks upon Him whom they pierced that they shall repent and mourn; they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and as one is in bitterness for his first born; and the mourning shall be personal and individual (Zechariah 12). "Repent and be baptized, every one of you," cried Peter. This is something that cannot be done by proxy. Repentance and faith are individual matters, as judgment at the great white throne will be. "They were judged every man according to his works."

Love there will crown what love began,
Its wondrous ways of grace to man
In its sweet home above;
All, All, O Lord, will there proclaim,
Through endless years, Thy blessed Name,
Supreme, almighty love!
SUBJECTION, HOPE, TRUST

ISAIAH 24 graphically describes a state of things such as is being brought about by this ruthless "total war." And those who know God and are through grace His children, are more and more convinced that He has allowed it because He has lessons to teach us that we have failed to learn in happier days and circumstances. He is placing us on a new form in His school, and it is right and fitting that we should ask, what are these lessons that He would teach us? I suggest that the first of them is given in a few words in verse 15, "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires."

What does this mean for us? It surely means, hear His voice. bow to His chastening; own the wisdom of His ways; let His Name be hallowed. Say "Blessed be the Name of the Lord," and "Though He slay me, I will trust Him." Let us lift up our souls above all murmuring and questioning and doubt. Let there be with us all subjection to His holy will; even though the furnace of affliction be heated seven times let us not faint, for the trial of our faith is precious. Yes, the first lesson seems to be SUBJECTION to the holy will of God.

Having considered that chapter and learnt the lesson of subjection to the will of God in the midst of these trials, let us go on to chapter 25, for in it there shines the light of a sure and wonderful word. "He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces... for the Lord hath spoken it" (verse 8). Here is the second lesson. It is the lesson of HOPE. The Christian's career does not end in disappointment and gloom, but in triumph and glory. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." What a prospect! What a hope! Our great and glorious God will celebrate His triumph over death, and we shall have our part in that triumph. Death —dark king of terrors—will be swallowed up, will utterly disappear in God's victory. In that the power of God, His greatness and glory will be demonstrated, but what of His tenderness of heart? Could any words more beautifully describe this? "The Lord God will wipe away all tears from all faces." It is a wonderful word, a consoling word, for what our God will be then He is now, and in lowly subjection to His will we may learn the tenderness of His heart. Like a mother when she gathers her weeping child to her bosom and gently wipes his tears away, so is our God, and though our brightest earthly hopes have crashed about us, and "the earth is empty and waste," we have this "God of all comfort" as our God and the sure and certain hope of the fulfilment of this great word.

We pass on to chapter 26, and there our third lesson lies plainly before us. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee, Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (verses 3, 4). Here the lesson is TRUST: a needed lesson if we are to be kept quiet and confident in the turbulent waters of sorrow and loss. We must trust in the absolute goodness and wisdom and love of God. We have no hope but in Him, and we need no other. We must put our whole confidence in Him and rest in His strong hand and tender heart. We must trust Him even when we cannot understand His way, and go on trusting—walking by faith and not by sight—this is the way of peace—perfect peace, of "peace, peace" as the margin reads. We put these three words together, they give us a completed course in the school of God —SUBJECTION, HOPE and TRUST.

But there is more, the day is most surely coming when we shall take up the words of ch. 25: 4. "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, and strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the beat, when the blast of the terrible
one is as a storm against the wall." We may say that continually, it is surely our daily experience, but what will it be when the storms of life are over and past, and we review all the way that God has led us, and how He has sustained us and brought us through when our way seemed utterly closed. Then we shall without a falter in our praise sing forth, " O Lord, Thou art my God: I will exalt Thee. I will praise Thy Name; for Thou hast done wonderful things: Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." But we can sing it now, for we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose.

A STABLE THRONE

THE tremendous events of these days do greatly affect us all. We are all shaken out of our easy-going placid lives and faced with perplexities and problems, and we cannot but ask sometimes, What next? Is there any solid comfort for the saints of God? Any anchor that will hold firm in the storms? There is. The Word of God speaks peace to us, as it has ever done to those who believe in God and the word of His grace. Consider Isaiah 6: 1. Uzziah the king had died; for fifty-two years he had reigned in Judah, and God had prospered him, for he had trusted in God. " He was marvellously helped," we read, "until he was strong." His administration of his kingdom had been good for his people and they had lived securely and prosperously. But now he was dead and the patriot-prophet mourned his king, and probably looked with apprehension to the future. What would happen now? It was a time of crisis and uncertainty. Then it was that God gave His servant a vision. " I saw," said he, "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." That sight must have steadied the prophet's faith. The earthly throne might be filled or vacant, God was on His throne. Things might all appear to be against him and his people, and trouble everywhere; no event, no change can affect the throne of God.

And these things were written for our learning and we need them. There is peace in looking upward; God's throne abides in its eternal integrity and strength, and His interests and activities are towards His people in these times of distress. They may safely trust in Him to bring blessing out of evil and make all things work together for good to them that love Him. " The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to shew Himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him " (2 Chron. 10: 9).

"Our Father."

Comfort for deserted, bereaved and betrayed hearts which lies in that name has been beautifully described in the following words. " The christian says our Father as one who knows and feels that he can never be an orphan. Life may move on to its end; he may experience with a haunting and indescribable sadness in himself what all too indifferently, perhaps, he has long seen in others, the inexorable deepening of life's solitudes, by alienations, by the numberless changes and decays which the mere process of the suns must bring, not least in a time of altogether abnormal alteration like our own. But he who has the Father and the Son, the Father in the Son, he who knows and believes the love of God to the many brethren of the Firstborn, this man lives to the very last in a home, in a circle of supreme family love, which can never break up. So to the very last, keeping close to the Lord Jesus, the heart of the loved and loving child of the hearth-side shall be His" (Moule).
THE PERSON OF THE CHRIST

God and Man in One Person

A. J. Pollock

THERE are statements and incidents in the Gospels which could only be true if Jesus were God, and others which could only be true if He were Man. There is a wide range of statements in the Gospel of John that illustrates this. When our Lord told the Jews that Abraham rejoiced to see His day and was glad, they replied in astonishment that He was not yet fifty years old, and how could He have seen Abraham? He quietly replied, "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8:58). In the same chapter He had said, "Ye seek to kill Me, A MAN who hath told you the truth." "I AM" is equivalent to the sacred name JEHOVAH, the designation of God in covenant relation to His people. This is the full assertion of Deity. But we find this Name in association with certain ideas that could only be true if our Lord were Man—God and Man in one Person.

First, "I AM the Light of the world" (John 8:12). Could a man who was no more than a man have made a statement like that? Impossible. John the Baptist, the greatest man born of woman, was a burning and shining light, yet he was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness to it, as the moon shining in the night bears witness to the sun.

God absolute dwells in light which no man can approach unto, unseeable and unapproachable. How was He to be known by men, and seen by them? Only by the Word becoming flesh. If Jesus had not been both God AND Man the sentence, "I AM the Light of the world," would never have been uttered. If no words had been added to "I AM," we should never have known the saving grace of our God, nor have had the revelation of His Person, His heart, His love. The added words imply the way the blessing has come; the light of God shines in Him for the salvation of men—by the incarnation of the Son, and the death and resurrection of Him as the Son of Man.

The next statement we wish to draw notice to is full and glorious. When Martha, sorrow-stricken at the death of her brother, Lazarus, said to the Lord that if He had been with them her brother had not died, and that even when death had supervened, whatsoever the Lord asked of God it would be granted: our Lord assured Martha that her brother would rise again, she replied that she knew that he would rise in the resurrection at the last day. Then our Lord answered, "I AM the resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

He does not assert here in so many words, as in other places, that He would rise from the dead, but that He was in His own Person the resurrection and the life. Note the order of the words, Resurrection and the Life, showing that He is the One through whom believers enter into life by death's overthrow.

We have not to wait until the last day when the resurrection of the wicked dead will take place. But our Lord tells us that when He comes the believer, though he has died, will live, and the believer living and believing on the earth when Jesus comes will never die. The dead shall be raised, the living changed at that blessed moment when our Lord shall utter the summoning shout. No wonder when this revelation reached Martha's soul that she responded, "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God that should come into the world" (John 11:27).

Take the scene of the marriage feast of Cana of Galilee. As Man on earth He went to the feast as one of the invited guests and partook of the bounties of the festive board. His mother was with Him. All this an
ordinary man could have done. He was a true real Man on earth, mixing with men in their joys and sorrows. But He was more: He was the Creator, the only begotten Son of God from all eternity, the eternal Word. His mother tells Him "the wine has run out." She tells the servants to do His bidding whatever it is. There were six water-pots of stone. Fill them to the brim, were the instructions of the Lord. They did so. They were then bidden to carry the contents to the governor of the feast. Better wine had been provided for the feast at the end of it than at the beginning. He was astonished at the quality of it. It was the act of the Creator.

Sceptics have not been wanting to throw doubt on this narrative. But our Lord did in a moment what is done in many a smiling vineyard where the slower process is performed by natural growth and fruitfulness. The nutrition of the soil, the sunshine, the drinking by the vine of the rain from heaven in due quantities, and lo! water is turned into wine. If the Creator can do the one miraculous act, He can do the other. Both are beyond the power of man. The miracle was performed to convince the Jews that here indeed was their Messiah, none less than the Son of God, the mighty Creator.

Not only so, but saints for all time have been learning that when natural joys have run out, there are better and spiritual joys that last for ever. It has been said that there are three great events in a man's life—his birth, marriage, and death. He has nothing to say to his birth. He has little to do with his death. But on his marriage day he does the very best for himself. Alas! on this occasion how soon the happiness may evaporate. Every marriage of joy ends in tragedy when death separates the partners thereof. But the joy the Lord ministers knows no cessation. Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God. Death has no power in this realm. So this miracle was a sign. May we learn its significance and put first things first.

Take the incident of the storm on the Lake of Galilee. The disciples are in their boat, and they have the high honour of the company of their Lord and Master. Tired out, He lay in the hinder part of the ship, and fell asleep. In this we see the reality of His manhood. God does not sleep, and Jesus was God. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121: 4). Both statements are true. How could they be? We cannot explain.

A storm swept down from the mountains, and the lake was lashed to a fury. The ship was filled with water, and the little craft was in jeopardy. The disciples cried to the Lord that they were perishing, as if any ship could founder with the Son of God on board. He arose and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the sea, and there was a great calm.

The disciples were afraid and said, one to another, "What manner of man is this! for He commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey Him" (Luke 8: 25). The form of their question truly implied that He was more than man. What man could control the elements? He was God, and they evidently recognised this. We see in this scene the blending of Godhead and Manhood.

Another striking incident comes before us. The Lord had been speaking to a mighty throng. He had healed their sick. He had healed the lame, and the blind, and the dumb. The evening had come. He would test His disciples. He had compassion on the multitude, and would give them to eat. Philip replied that two hundred penny-worth of bread (worth between six or seven pounds), would not suffice, even to give each a little. Andrew speaks up, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: what are these among so many?" (John 6: 9).

One has often pondered over this passage. Here is the Lord of life and glory, God omnipotent, yet a real Man, with all power to do without human
agency, yet condescending to take this handful of loaves and two small fishes from a stripling to use them in feeding this great multitude. "There is a lad here." How good it is to be on the spot, to be available for the Master's use. It is something like Isaiah of old, who heard in vision the words of Jehovah, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6: 8).

The prophet replied, "Here am I; send me" (verse 8). The Lord can do without anyone of us, but in Romans 10: 14, 15, we read, "How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" How good it is that the mighty God deigns to use "a lad here," or to send the preacher to tell forth the glad tidings of salvation.

The Lord took the loaves and fishes into His sacred hands, and giving thanks for them, He distributed them to His disciples. The loaves and fishes were multiplied in His hands. Just as we saw the Creator turning the water into wine, so we behold the same blessed Person multiplying the loaves and fishes, an act of creation that only God could do.

Again we learn a lesson that may stand us in good stead in the small things of life. Our Lord gave instructions that the fragments should be taken up that nothing be lost. Twelve baskets were taken up. Surely there was no necessity for this. The hand that could multiply the loaves and fishes had no need to care for the fragments. He could multiply food at will. Why care for the fragments carelessly dropped by the thousands who thus partook of our Lord's bounty? The Lord would teach us a lesson in this. We should be careful not to waste. The Lord was rich, in that He could create. But He never exercised His power to encourage waste.

Another happy lesson we can learn from this. The Lord was the Source of the supply. His hands multiplied the fruit of land and sea. The Lord is the truth, He is the Fountain of all divine teaching. In Him is all the wisdom and the knowledge. In Him all fulness resides.

But He deigns to use servants to minister the Word. They hand out to others what they have received from Him. What have such got? Only what they have received, a basket of fragments. If that be so, it is our wisdom to accept ministry from all the gifts that God the Lord, the Great Head of the Church, which is His Body, raises up. One servant will have one line, another servant will have another line. One will look at things as the Spirit gives him impressions of the truth. Another, with different impressions. There will be no clashing or confusion when things are right, and the servants do their Lord's bidding. All will be in blessed harmony, and His household will be fed.

In this interesting incident we see actions and words telling out in beautiful harmony the character of Him, who was then and is God and Man in one Person, yet the incident moves on in great naturalness, as in one part His Manhood shines forth, and yet in another His Godhead. There is nothing disjointed or inharmonious in the narrative.

We see how truly His Manhood was real and true. He did indeed partake of flesh and blood. He took on Him the seed of Abraham. We read, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2: 52). This could only be said of Him as Man surely. There was nothing inharmonious about Him. He was natural as a boy. He grew naturally. His wisdom increased with His stature.

We know nothing of His early days with one exception. When He was twelve years old His parents took Him to Jerusalem to the Passover feast. Returning, the parents missed their Son. Searching for Him they found Him in the Temple in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. See how natural was His conduct. He was not teaching them, but hearing, and asking questions.
Sure are we that He showed the proper respect and attitude towards men of age and position. How perfect was He in all this. But they evidently asked Him questions, for they were astonished at His answers and His understanding.

Then the veil of silence falls, save that He was subject to His parents. Till He was thirty years of age we hear nothing of our Lord. Those wonderful years, to God—that hidden life so pleasing—are well called the hidden years. There have been attempts to imagine what happened in these years, but the attempt is wanting in reverence.

Then when our Lord stepped out into public testimony we find His Manhood perfect. Never did He withdraw a word, or say that He blundered. Never did He make an apology or express a regret, all His words and ways were perfect. He claimed equality with God. He was ever in communion with His Father. The Holy Spirit was not given by measure to Him. The common people heard Him gladly. They wondered at the gracious words that fell from His lips. Miracles in larger numbers and more striking forms were performed by Him. He raised the dead, He cleansed the leper, He fed the thousands by the hill side.

And when He came to die even the Roman centurion that watched the scene cried out, “Certainly this was a righteous MAN” (Luke 23: 47).

“Truly this was THE SON OF GOD” (Matthew 28: 54). God and Man, one blessed Person, inscrutable mystery. Our adoring souls bow before Him, like Thomas of old, and say with deepest reverence, “My Lord, and my God” (John 20: 28).

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.

The Threefold Cords of Scripture—2

J. Stoddart

AND now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity (1 Cor. 13: 13). Here is surely a striking example of Solomon’s axiom that “a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccles. 4: 12). Things that abide are things that remain unbroken, unmarred by the ravages of time, things that remain strong when the weak things have failed and changeless when the transient things have changed or vanished. How we ought to value the secret of abiding things in a day when we are witnessing so many swift and sweeping changes in the world! Here is a veritable realm of permanency for us to explore while the world itself and its trusted institutions crumble around us.

What threefold cord would Scripture present to us when even the divinely given external order of the Church has proved capable of failure in the hands of men? Is this not precisely what we find in the verse we have quoted? Faith, hope and love are said to abide, they are untouched by the external ruin which had begun to rear its head already in the Church at Corinth. Ecclesiastical, moral and doctrinal evil had all made their incipient appearance inside that Christian circle, but wisely and faithfully the apostle deals with these in this epistle, first presenting the truth of the Cross to enable the evil to be judged, and then the place and power of the Holy Spirit to enable holiness to be sustained. Their departure too from the ordained order of the Lord’s Supper and the spiritual function of gifts and members of the body of Christ necessitated the inspired instructions regarding these (for which we may be deeply thankful) given by Paul in this letter.

But was this all that the Holy Spirit, through the apostle would say to them—or to us? “Yet show I unto you a more excellent way,” he says at the close of chapter 12; and in chapter 13 we learn just what that is (Oh, that we knew it much better than we do!). “Love never faileth, but whether there
be prophecies they shall fail: whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away (verse 8). How permanent, how strong, how abiding then is love: indeed how like God Himself are all the excellent ways of love here defined! And so it must be as John's Epistle tells us, "he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." Therefore in our threefold cord of faith, hope and love, the greatest of these is love. It is eternal and will remain when time itself shall cease to be. How many sad failures would be averted, how many problems would be solved, how much more for the glory of Christ would there be in our lives if we were more actuated by the power of love. The writer of this epistle himself was a shining example of it, for his exalted resolve was this, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. 12: 15). Do we not often fail here by expecting love from others and complaining if we do not seem to receive it? The abiding quality of love is that it gives itself and is not deterred by lack of response. If we knew more deeply the love of God in the gift of His Own Son, we would exhibit that love in greater measure, "for we love, because He has first loved us" (1 John 4: 19, J.N.D.'s trans.).

And what of faith and hope? They, too, are said to abide as well as love! Yet, clearly, they will not be needed when time shall be no more, for as we often say, faith will give place to sight, and hope to realisation. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known" (verse 12). Until that perfect day, how good it is to know that faith is an abiding thing. "It is the gift of God" and that by which we live in the present reality of unseen and eternal things. "The just shall live by faith," is an unvarying principle in the ways of God with men for all time. So for himself, Paul could say, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2: 20). To Simon Peter the Lord said, "I have prayed for Thee that thy faith fail not," in view of Satan's sifting which was about to prove to that ardent disciple that he could fail. So when the moment of testing came, Peter failed, but his faith did not fail. Then at Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended from an exalted and glorified Christ to confirm and seal the faith of all believers, of whom the apostle Peter later could say that they were "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation" (1 Peter 1: 5). The trial of faith is permitted that it "might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," and that, thank God, will be faith's triumphant destination!

Hope, too, is an abiding thing. One of our poets has penned the well-known line, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." But how often hope that is centred upon some earthly object is dashed to the ground and as Scripture says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. 13: 12). Is this the kind of hope that abides and which belongs to our threefold cord? Most certainly not! We are told in Hebrews 4: 19 that our hope is, "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Indeed, writing to Timothy the apostle Paul says the Lord Jesus Christ is our Hope (1 Tim. 1: 1). So completely are all our highest blessings and deepest desires bound up in His Blessed Person, that it can be truly said that He is our Hope. If we appreciate that truth then we can understand that Hope abides; yes, abides until we "see His face and hear His well-known voice," for that will be the consummation of hope.

What a strong threefold cord then is given in Faith, Hope and Love! But, it might be asked, are these simply abstract things or do they affect our practical ways in Christian life? The answer to such a question is clearly given in Paul's first epistle to the
Thessalonians, chapter I, where this remarkable triad again presents itself. "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (I Thess. I: 2 and 3).

Although comparatively young in Christian experience, the Thessalonian assembly had certain marked characteristics which were the subject of the apostle’s thanksgiving to God. These characteristics were faith, hope and love, as may be easily seen from the passage quoted. It might be said that these are the vital elements of normal Christianity; but if so, they had a practical quality at Thessalonica, which would provide an answer to our question. Firstly, there was the work of faith. This was not an academic creed, but an active pursuit, which gave them to take up the rigorous path of discipleship, entailing suffering and persecution, although compensated "with joy of the Holy Ghost" (v. 6). Their labour of love was not a sentimental theory, but a very practical service which, without the ostentation of gift seen at Corinth, made them exemplary gospel preachers "for," says the apostle, "from you sounded forth the word of the Lord." Their patience of hope was not some vague wishful thinking, but a sure and certain prospect, for had they not "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven"?

In the apocalyptic letter to the church at Ephesus the apostle John had to write commending their works, labour and patience; but it is noticeable that these had not the Thessalonian quality; works, but not the work of faith; labour, but not the labour of love; patience, but not patience of hope. Alas, they had left their first love and had fallen, having lost the vital spring of all true service. In a negative way this emphasizes the importance of the threefold cord of faith, hope and love. Without this, there may be external correctness of bearing and even a keen ecclesiastical exclusiveness as at Ephesus, but the Lord’s approval is restrained, for the things that abide are not in evidence.

May we learn increasingly the value of these precious, abiding realities of faith, hope and love, and truly find in them amidst the ruin of these last days a threefold cord that is not quickly broken.

Arise, my soul, arise and sing,
Be not as bird with broken wing;
Approach the throne of grace in prayer,
Thy living Lord shall meet thee there
And thou shalt have of life the light,
And walk by faith and not by sight.

Arise, my soul, arise and sing,
And to thy doubts no longer cling.
For thee God sits upon His throne,
Let thy requests to Him be known;
For all His ways are just and right,
So walk by faith and not by sight.

Arise, my soul, arise and sing,
Thy God is the eternal King.
And who against thy good can be
If He with love encircles thee?
Arise! be valiant in the fight,
And walk by faith and not by sight.
The Gospel of John was evidently written some time after the other three Gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke had each told, in their divinely appointed way, the story of the birth, early years and entrance into ministry of Jesus Christ, and John takes their record for granted, since without it his opening paragraphs would be hardly intelligible. As the first century drew to its close, sufficient time had elapsed for the launching of attacks on the Person of Christ, as being the very citadel of the faith, and there were philosophic, semi-pagan notions floating about and attaching themselves to the doctrine, which would have been disastrous if they had not been met in the energy of the Spirit of God. Hence that energy was put forth in the writings of the Apostle John, about a quarter of a century, it would seem, after both Paul and Peter had finished their course.

The early Christians were much troubled by the so-called "Gnostics"; that is, the "Knowing-ones." We have been made familiar with agnostics, that is, people who deny that any certain knowledge of God and His things is possible. The Gnostics were at the opposite pole: they claimed to be initiated and have the superior knowledge, but their theories denied both the essential Godhead and the true humanity of Jesus. Then there were those who separated Jesus from the Christ. The Christ was to them an ideal, a state into which man might graduate; whereas Jesus was the historic Man who appeared at Nazareth. The Gospel that John wrote meets these errors, and was designed to do so.

Before considering the opening words it may be well to read the two verses that conclude chapter 20, for in them the design before the mind of the Spirit in inditing this Gospel is stated. The miracles recorded are all "signs" that prove Jesus to be the Christ—so that there is no separation between the two—and the Son of God; thus establishing His Deity. In the faith of these things life is found; while to refuse them is to abide in death. This is the objective of the Spirit of God in this Gospel and we shall need to keep it continually before us as we travel through it. We shall find it a very important key to the unlocking of its treasures.

The opening words of the first verse carry us back to the most remote moment that our minds are capable of conceiving: the moment when there began the first thing that ever had a beginning: the moment on the further side of which there was only—GOD. In that moment of "beginning" the Word "was"; that is, existed. He did not begin then; He existed then. His eternal Being is proclaimed, and we are carried back before the opening words of Genesis 1. Further He was "with God." Our minds are still back at that remote moment, and we discover that then He was possessed of distinct Personality. The Word is not a title of the Godhead in a general way, apart from any special distinction, for in being "with God" a special distinctive place is definitely stated.

This being so, the reasoning mind would be inclined to argue: then we cannot speak of the Word as being God in any full or proper sense; even if He is not exactly a creature, seeing He existed before creation. Such reasoning is flatly contradicted by the closing words of verse 1, "the Word was God." Essential Deity was His. Attempts have been made to weaken the force of this great statement, and translate it, "the Word was Divine," based upon the omission of the definite article; i.e., it does not say, "the Word was the God." But we are told by those who know the Greek that the word translated "God" is a strong one, denoting proper and absolute Deity; and had it stated that the Word was the God, it would have confined Deity to the Word, and excluded therefrom the other Persons of
the Godhead. The words are chosen with Divine exactitude; the Word was properly and absolutely God.

Then verse 2 carries us back to the first and second statements of verse 1. This distinct Personality which characterises the Word is not something assumed at some subsequent point of time. Eternal Personality was His. In the beginning He was thus "with God," for this distinction of Personality lies in the very essence of the Godhead. Thus we have had four things stated of the Word: His eternal Being; His distinct Personality; His essential Deity; His eternal Personality. Whatever else we may have to learn about the Word, here are four things that should bow us in lowly adoration.

A fifth thing confronts us in verse 3: He is the creatorial Originator, and that in the fullest sense. Now we come to things that were made; that is, came into being. In verses 1 and 2 a different word is used. The Word did not come into being: He was, for His being was eternal. But He originated all that came into being, for He created "all things." To leave not the smallest loophole for an error this is emphasised in the second part of the verse. The language is remarkable in view of the modern "science falsely so called," so widely popularised, which endeavours to account for everything "without Him." Unbelieving minds cling to the theory of evolution, in spite of a pathetic paucity of facts to support it, and what supports there are being of the most fragile description, because while glorifying man it eliminates HIM. But in truth He cannot be eliminated. Of all the untold things that originally received being not one received it apart from Him.

Ponder this fact; for here we have the explanation of the heavens declaring the glory of God, and of the fact that God has been made known to some extent in creation, as is indicated in Romans 1: 19, 20. The Word created all things and hence in creation there is a true expression, as far as it goes, of God Himself and of His mind. We give expression to our thoughts in words; and the import of this great name, WORD, is that He who bears it is the expression of all that God is; and, as verses 1 and 2 show, He Himself essentially IS all that He expresses. Creation, as it sprang into being through the Word, was not a meaning-less jumble but a declaration of the power and wisdom of God.

We reach a sixth great fact in verse 4. The Word has essential vitality. In Him life is not derivative but original and essential. Coupling this with all that has gone before, we perceive how fully the proper Deity of the Word is stated and guarded. The words used are of the utmost brevity and simplicity—every word in the first four verses except three is a monosyllable—yet they are charged with a Divine fulness of meaning, and like the sword of the cherubim in Genesis 3: 24, they turn every way to keep inviolate in our minds the truth concerning the One who is the Tree of Life for man. This Gospel will presently show us how truly the life of the believer is derived from Him, but the point in verse 4 is not that but rather, "the life was the light of men." This is the point which is taken up more fully in the opening verses of John's first Epistle. The life has been manifested, and consequently the God who is light has come forth into the light, and in that light the believer walks.

The light in which men are to walk is not merely that of creation—wonderful as that is—but in that which has been displayed in the actions and words of the Word. When the Word was manifested, the light shone, but the scene, wherein the manifestation was made, was one of darkness. In Genesis 1 we read how by the Divine word the light of creation burst upon the darkness; and, lo! the darkness vanished. Here we have light of a far higher order and it appears amidst moral and spiritual darkness, which could only be dispelled by a true apprehension of the light. Alas! that apprehension was
lacking. Yet though the darkness remained there was no other light for men than "the life." There is no contradiction in these statements for, as so often, John is speaking here of things according to their abstract nature, and has not yet arrived at the historical relation of events.

But how came it to pass that the life in the Word did actually shine in the darkness and become light to men? The answer to this question is in verse 14. Before we reach that verse we have the important paragraph, verses 6-13, where we do begin to view things from an historical standpoint, and John the Baptist is introduced in order to throw into relief the supreme importance of "the true Light." This John was just a man who came into being as sent from God; his mission being to bear witness to the Light. It is true that he is spoken of as "a shining light" in verse 35 of chapter 5, but the word used there is "lamp" rather than "light." John shone as a lamp and bore witness, but the true Light is He who, "coming into the world, lightens every man" (New Trans.). It is not that every man is enlightened, or verse 5 would be contradicted, but that He was not a partial light, but rather like the sun which sheds its beams universally. No one nation could have a monopoly of the true Light; so at once this Gospel carries our thoughts beyond the narrow boundaries of Israel.

In the remainder of this paragraph (vv. 10-13) we have further statements of an historical nature which amplify and clarify what we have been told in verses 4 and 5. We have already learned that the Word is a Person in the Godhead, that His life shone as light for men, though in the midst of darkness; now we find that the world was the seat of that darkness, that He entered it, and that, though He had made the world, it had become so alienated that it did not know Him. In this verse again it is not Israel or the Jew, but the world. Such light as was shed through the prophets might be confined to Israel, but not the shining of the true Light.

The Apostle John often mentions the world in his writings, and he always uses a word which we have adopted in English when we speak of the "cosmos," meaning, the universe as an ordered whole, or sometimes, in a more restricted sense, just our world as an ordered whole. That is the sense of the word in this verse. As Creator He had made the universe as an ordered whole, and a wonderful moment arrived when He was found in that cosmos in a special way. He was there by entering this smaller restricted cosmos, which sad to say had become perverted and alienated by sin—so perverted that it did not even know Him.

Then, further narrowing down the point, He came actually to a rather obscure corner of that cosmos, where were found His own things such as had been indicated by prophecy, and His own people—Israel—with whom those things were connected, did not receive Him. He was rejected, for the darkness could not apprehend Him. But though that was so there were exceptions, as this Gospel will proceed to show us. Some did receive Him, believing on His Name. They were not of the darkness. Their eyes were open and they apprehended Him, as seeing and believing the glory of His Name. As a consequence these received from Him authority to become children of God, and not better and more enlightened Jews. The word here is definitely "children" and not "sons"; another word that John uses habitually, rather than the word for sons, which is used more by Paul. There is a shade of difference between the two. The same blessed relationship with God is in view, but as sons our maturity and position in that relationship is more in view: as children the emphasis seems laid on the fact that we have been truly and vitally born of God.

That is the emphasis here, as verse 13 shows. The Jew boasted of having Abraham's blood in his veins, just as
today a man may boast of being born of aristocratic or even royal blood. Those humble souls, who as exceptions to the rule received Christ when He came, were born of God. The will of the flesh never would have produced it, for the flesh is altogether opposed to God. The will of man, not even of the best of men, could have produced it: it is wholly beyond man’s powers. Their birth was of God; as a Divine act; and the One whom they received in faith gave them the right to formally take the place that was thus vitally theirs.

How came it that the pious souls, of whom we get a glimpse in Luke 1 and 2, received the Christ the instant He appeared? Not because they had Abraham’s blood: not because the flesh in them was of so superior a type that it urged them to do so: not because they were influenced by the powerful will of some good man. Simply because they were born of God. It was a Divine act. When we reach chapter 10 we shall find the same basic fact stated in another way. When the Shepherd came to the fold He found there some who were “His own sheep,” who heard His voice and were led out by Him. Many there were who were His sheep nationally, who were not His own sheep in the sense in which Mary Magdalene and the disciples and the Bethany family and Simeon and Anna were. These people born of God were the ones that received Him.

Now, in verse 14, we pick up the theme from verse 5, and find a seventh great fact as to the Word. He became flesh and tabernacled among us. Verses 1 and 2 tell us what He was essentially and eternally. Verse 14 tells us what He became. He became flesh: that is, He assumed perfect Humanity; and thereby all the other six great facts are revealed to us and become available for us. Only when in this manner He put Himself into relation with the creature could this absolute and self-existent One be properly known by men.

The fact that the Word became flesh guarantees not only that He possessed a real human body (which was denied by some of the earliest heretics), but also that having passed by angels and “taken hold of the seed of Abraham,” He had become in every proper sense a Man. It is significant that it is in this Gospel, which starts with such a full assertion of His Deity, that He speaks of Himself as “a Man” (8:40). At last all that God is was revealed to men in a Man. He dwelt among us “full of grace and truth.” The basis of all truth lies in the knowledge of God. Had that knowledge reached us apart from grace it would have overthrown us; but here was One full of both grace and truth, and dwelling among us.

In verse 14 there is a parenthesis, placed in brackets in our Bibles, but verse 15 is also a parenthesis, though not placed in brackets. The first tells us that the Apostles, and as many others “as received Him” (v. 12), beheld His glory, and it was “as of an only begotten with a father” (New Trans.), and not like the glory of Sinai. That was glory attached to Majesty and righteous demand; this the glory connected with a dear and intimate relationship.

The second parenthesis briefly brings in John’s witness, which is referred to more fully a few verses later, to show that he discerned the pre-existence and therefore the Divine glory of the One to whom he bore witness. Historically He came after him, both in His birth and in His entrance upon ministry, but He existed before him, and so took the first and supreme place.

Eliminating in our minds the two parentheses, we get, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and of His fulness have all we received.” Again here is stated the result for the believing “we.” Only “as many as received Him” can truly say, “we received” of His fulness; but such can say it, and all of them can, thanks be to God! Fulness of grace and fulness of truth are the
portion of each, even of the feeblest, though they will never have explored all the fulness thereof. Grace is specially emphasised. We needed it, piled mountains high—“grace upon grace.” Through Moses the law was given, formulating God’s demands but establishing nothing. Grace and truth came into being down here and were actually established by the advent of Jesus Christ.

At last John has definitely identified the Person, known amongst men, who is the Word. The Word was made flesh, dwelling among us, full of grace and truth: and, lo! this fulness is in Jesus Christ. This magnificent preface to the Gospel has led us straight to JESUS.

Having arrived there, we are given a further glimpse of His glory. He is the revealer of the God whom no man had ever seen. As the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He could fully declare Him as the Father. In the word, “bosom,” we have a human figure, but we must not use it in a human way. The figure is used elsewhere in Scripture as indicating closest union and completest intimacy. The Son is so wholly one with the Father and in the intimacy of His mind, that He can declare Him to perfection.

Our verse does not say that He was, as though it were a place that He might have left, but that He IS. It is an eternal is;—He ever was, He is, He ever shall be in the Father’s bosom. So the Word becoming flesh meant the coming of grace and truth, and the full declaration of God as Father.

Verses 19-28 give us John’s testimony, rendered while he was baptising in Jordan; a wholly different side of it from that recorded in other Gospels. There was first the negative side, since the religious leaders were curious about him and wished to know if he were the Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet of whom Moses had spoken. His testimony was steadfast; he was none of these but only the voice crying in the wilderness, of whom Isaiah had spoken. Then, when they questioned his baptism, came his positive testimony. There was One already among them whom they did not know, so much greater than himself that he was not worthy to unloose His sandal. By the use of this graphic figure John expressed his sense of the supreme glory of the One about to be manifested.

This was the beginning of John’s witness. It increased in definiteness and intensity as the succeeding verses show.

This results from the knowledge that the death of Christ has fully satisfied every claim of God’s justice. He has raised Him from the dead. God has nothing against me, for He has nothing against my substitute and Saviour. Christ raised from the dead and in the glory is the abiding proof of this.

Peace of God. (Phil. 4. 6, 7).

This is ours as we confide wholly in God, we carry our cares to Him and He gives us His peace instead of them.

“My Peace” (John 14. 27).

This is Christ’s own peace, it was His amidst the confusion of the world and the contradiction sinners. We have it as we consider Him and rest where He rested in His Father’s perfect love and will. “Learn of Me” He said.

“Peace one with another” (Mark 9. 50).

This may be, but only as we maintain self-judgment and walk in the Spirit. The preserving salt of truth is necessary. In Pentecostal days the multitude of them that believed were one heart and one soul. They had one object, Christ; they were led by one Spirit, the Holy Ghost; and great grace was upon them all.”
"CERTAIN WOMEN."

Some of the women whose acts and words are recorded in the Old Testament story far outshine the men in wisdom and faith and courage, and they have their place in the Record for our learning. There was Jochebed, the wife of Amram, who entrusted her child to an ark of bulrushes and placed him by the great river, evidently without fear or anxious care, for she had learnt that he was "beautiful to God," and if so, God would take care of him. It was confidence in God that made her so wise and calm and deliberate.

And what a remarkable lassie was Miriam, the child's sister. I gather that it was not mere curiosity that made her stand afar off to see what would happen to her brother; she knew she had a part to play in his safety and God's plan for him, and how well she played it. Her courage and speed and shrewdness were far beyond anything that could have been expected in the child of an enslaved nation; she too was guided of the Lord.

There was Deborah who stood for God in a day of trouble, when His chosen people "chose new gods and there was war in the gates." Leaders there were none, even Barak was faithless and afraid and would not move without her company. In her song she sang, "The villages (leaders) ceased in Israel, ceased until that I, Deborah, arose, that I arose a mother in Israel ... Bless Jehovah" (Judges 5: 7-9. N.T.). We can with confidence take up the closing words of her song and sing "Let all Thine enemies perish, Jehovah. But let them that love Him be as the rising sun in its might." She was strong in the knowledge of the Lord.

There was Hannah, who teaches us how to pray when troubled and burdened. When her husband had gone about his own business she lingered alone at the sanctuary in the presence of the Lord, pouring out her grief to Him. We are told that "she spoke in her heart, only her lips moved but her voice was not heard." And Eli, the easygoing, unspiritual priest rebuked her for drunkenness, so shortsighted was he. But she drew nigh to God, and He heard her cry, and we read, "The woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad." Her faith anticipated God's answer to her cries, and she was content and at peace; and He did more for her than ever she had asked.

There was Abigail: how wisely and with what dignity she talked to David, keeping him back from what would have been an angry and vengeful crime. Her words are moving words revealing a deep knowledge of God's purposes in which she had complete faith. She was a queenly woman, and would have graced the throne of David. Certainly she deserved a better fate than that of being one of many wives. Though David must have disappointed her, we may be sure the Lord whose mind she knew so well did not.

There is the story of one woman whose name is not given, whose simple trust in the faithfulness of God is most refreshing. She was the nameless and barren wife of Manoah, a Danite. Judges 13 is an instructive chapter. No unbelief marred the woman's confidence; she rose up to the word that was sent to her. But the true beauty of her faith shone out most when her husband's failed. They realised that they had been in the presence of God and Manoah said, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God."

Thus he reasoned in his ignorance of God, but not so his wife. She knew better than that, and she answered his fears by her faith. Said she, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would He have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these." Happy woman, she could speak of an accepted sacrifice and a spoken word; and she knew that God who had accepted the
one and spoken the other had thoughts of good and not of evil towards them. She must have known how the Lord had spoken to Moses, saying, "If any man of you bring an offering to the Lord... he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1). These pious Danites had brought their offering and she had no doubt that the Lord had accepted it at their hand, and had accepted them because of it according to His word. And He had spoken good words to them and would fulfil them. She was content; they would not die but live. Happy woman; and her confidence was not misplaced.

Where do we stand in this matter?

The burnt offering was a type or figure of the offering up of Christ for us upon the cross, and the fine flour offered with it was a type of His holy life on earth. We read, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:1). And again, "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14). That great sacrifice was an atonement for us; if we have believed we have been accepted according to the value that God sees in it, and it was accepted for us. That sacrifice is our perfect and only plea before God, and He never has and never could refuse it. Because of it we shall live and not die.

And we have the spoken word also. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified... And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10); and again, "He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we can boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13). And yet again, "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Romans 8).

Surely we are in full fellowship with the wife of Manoah who honoured God by her faith in Him in those ancient times, for we can speak of an accepted sacrifice and a spoken word, and we have the full assurance that God will deny neither. He will honour the sacrifice and fulfil His word, for both are of infinite moment to Him and to us. He is revealed in both, and having seen Him by faith thus revealed we shall not die but live, and live superior to the circumstances that threaten to crush us now; we shall live to praise Him in His glory for ever and ever.

Low at Thy feet Lord Jesus,  
This is the place for me;  
Here I have learned deep lessons;  
Truth that has set me free.

Free from myself, Lord Jesus,  
Free from the ways of men;  
Chains of thought that have bound me,  
Never can bind again.

None but Thyself, Lord Jesus,  
Conquered this wayward will;  
But for Thy love constraining,  
I had been wayward still.

J. N. D.
Reconciliation.

In Romans 5 we read, that "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." I should like to understand better what is involved in reconciliation, and why, if we are reconciled, does Paul say in 2 Cor. 5, "We pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God"?—PERTH.

YOU know, of course, that the words of the hymn, "My God is reconciled," are a sad misconception of this great truth. God did not need to be reconciled for there never was any enmity in His heart towards us—the enmity and alienation were in us. To remove this and bring us to Himself He had to move towards us, and this He has done. But there seems to be more in our being reconciled to Him than the removal of the enmity; it involves our being brought to Him according to His own thoughts and nature, so that instead of our being a grief of heart to Him He might find His pleasure in us. This we see in Col. 1: 21, 22, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable and unreprovable in His sight."

His movement towards us began when He sent His own Son into the world. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5: 19). But we are not reconciled by the incarnation, it is by the death of His Son that God has accomplished His purpose. That death was the proof beyond all question that His thoughts toward us were thoughts of love. The enmity arose in the heart of Adam when he believed the devil's lie in the garden. That lie was that God did not love him as He seemed to, that in forbidding him to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil He was withholding something that would be good for him and that would increase his happiness and glory. God's answer to that lie is the death of His Son, He would give the very best that He could give that the truth might shine out to secure the love of men for Himself. It is when this great fact is brought home to a man by the Holy Spirit that the enmity in the heart is removed, and instead of the enmity the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit given unto us. The result is that God has now got those that love Him (Romans 8: 18; 1 Cor. 2: 9).

But more was necessary than the manifesting of God's love if God's holiness and glory were to remain uncompromised, and no reserve or question left in our hearts. It is "through the body of His flesh through death" that we are reconciled. The offering of the body of Christ for sin has blotted out our sins and purged our consciences and at the same time has glorified God about the whole question of our state and conduct. Sin in the flesh has been condemned and we are, as a result, brought to God without blemish and without blame.

The prodigal's reception and blessing is the best illustration of it. He knew what his father's feeling towards him were when he was received with kisses, but he did not suit his father's thoughts and feelings until he was clothed with the best robe, the ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. nor would he have been at rest and happy in his father's presence without them. Then the reconciliation was complete. What answers to that for us is, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 21).

In 2 Cor. 5: 20 the "you" should not be there. The Apostle was not beseeching the Christians to be reconciled to God, but stating his mission to men in the world, but he does proceed to beseech the Corinthians that they receive not this grace of God in vain. He wanted it to have its true force in their lives.
"Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him; if God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (John 13).

"Now is the Son of Man glorified." It did not look like it. One of His disciples had gone out to betray Him to His foes; the most ardent of them would deny He ever knew Him with oaths and curses before the dawn of another day, and all of them would forsake Him. He was to be crucified as the worst of criminals, and that at the special desire and determination of a people whom He loved and whose King He was by every right. If He had said, "Now is the Son of Man defeated and dishonoured" He would have been more easily understood. But, no, He said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified," and He said it knowing all that He had to face and pass through.

What did He mean? He was the Son of Man; let that great fact have its due weight with us, for only thus can we understand His words. The Word had become flesh. He, the Eternal Son, had taken the place of subjection to God; He was sent forth by the Father to accomplish one great obedience. He was a true and proper Man, and a man's greatest glory is to fulfil in perfection the reason of his existence, which is complete and continuous obedience to God. Adam was crowned with this glory in Eden, but the crown was struck from his brow when he disobeyed God and the shame of that disobedience fills the world today. But the Son of Man came to prevail where every other man had fallen. He came to obey, to manifest the true glory of manhood by the absolute surrender of Himself to the will of God.

He had always obeyed, since He came into the world saying, "Lo, I come, to do Thy will, O God." Morning by morning His ear had been opened to receive His Father's commands and to do them, but He had not faced hitherto such a test as this. Death as God's judgment upon men because of their sin lay before Him, death in all its unrelieved bitterness. He was to be lifted up as the sinless substitute for the guilty, to endure the stripes that their sins demanded. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, He was troubled in spirit. What should He say? Should He evade that terrible hour? No. He set His face as a flint, He would obey, whatever the cost to Himself. He had received a commandment from His Father to lay down His life, and He would do it. And this was His glory. When at last He cried with a loud voice, "It is finished," and gave up His spirit He was glorified. His cross was His coronation. Then and there in the very hour when the shame that men had heaped upon Him had reached its utmost limit the full glory of His true and proper Manhood shone out before God and heaven. He had finished the work that His Father had given Him to do.

"And God is glorified in Him." But there was more at the cross than the glory of the Son of Man. God's glory was there and God was glorified in Him. There was only one way in which God could be glorified and that was by the full revelation of what He is in His nature and attributes, and that was done by that lone and suffering Man. He was God's unspeakable gift for the world, a world that hated Him, for He was not Son of Man only, but the Only-begotten Son of God, and so the supreme revelation of God's love. The lie of the devil that had filled the heart of the human race with enmity against God was there exposed. But in that gift of love God's justice was not compromised; His throne was upheld in its eternal rectitude and His Majesty magnified. Mercy and truth met together there, and righteousness
and peace kissed each other. God’s inflexible judgment upon sin fell upon the holy sin-bearer without any mitigation, “He was made sin for us,” and “Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” God’s glory shone forth in the darkness as the Saviour-God and yet wholly just, and He is now just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The glory of the cross shall never waver, it shall fill eternity with its light, and because of it and in the unclouded joy of it countless myriads shall glorify God with never-ceasing praise.

“God shall glorify Him in Himself and shall straightway glorify Him.” It has been rightly said that the women that brought their spices to the sepulchre on the morning of the first day of the week were not the first visitors to that sacred spot. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” (Romans 6). When the Scripture had been fulfilled that He must lie three days in that tomb, the Father’s glory descended and brought Him forth triumphant over death.

Where in the wide Universe of God could a place be found worthy to receive Him who had so perfectly glorified God? There was but one place and that was the Father’s right hand, above all principality and power, and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come.” And yet though crowned with glory and honour—“straightway glorified”—in that supreme place He is not more glorious than He was when “crucified in weakness.” The diamond has been put in the golden setting. The glory of the diamond is not increased by the golden setting, but it is the only setting suitable for it. The Father’s right hand was the only place worthy to receive Him, because of who He is and what He has done.

Other glories shall be His in due course, the Universe shall be filled with His glory, but more precious to Him than all is that which is given Him by His Father now, for therein is the Father’s approval of all that He has done declared, and He has glorified Him in Himself.

Our business in life is not to keep the world a going, but to manifest the effect of the Christian’s glorious hope which is outside the world.

A day spent in prayer is a truly profitable day; its usefulness ceases not with the day.

His power is ours—none shall pluck us out of His hands.
His wisdom—for all things shall work together for our good.
His holiness—for sin shall not have dominion over us.
His justice—for He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.
His faithfulness, because it secures the fulfilment of all His promises.
His eternity—“because He lives, we shall live also”; “so shall we ever be with the Lord.”
WHAT IS HIS NAME?

Of Agur, who asks this very striking question, nothing further is known. He prefaches his remarks by calling it a prophecy, or, as the word is more generally translated, a burden.

It is the only place in the Old Testament where it is stated that the One, who gathers the wind in His fists, and binds the waters in a garment, language only attributable to God, the Creator, has a Son. This implies that God is Father, for Father and Son are correlative terms. It is remarkable that this statement should be found in the Book of Proverbs.

In the face of such a pronouncement, so utterly new and strange in the inspired writing up to then, Agur might well describe himself as "more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy" (verses 2, 3). We print the word, Holy, with a capital H, for it clearly refers to God. The word in the original is in the plural, and not in the single or dual, clearly pointing to the fact that God in all His fulness is alluded to—Father, Son and Spirit; Three in One and One in Three.

Then Agur asks, "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?" These words are well worth studying carefully. The allusion to the wind and the waters does not refer to the origin of creation, but to the present place that God has in controlling the vast elemental forces of nature before which man is utterly puny and powerless.

When, awakened by His frightened disciples as He lay asleep in the hinder part of the ship, the angry waves threatening the fragile vessel, our Lord arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. His disciples cried out, "What manner of Man is this! for He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him" (Luke 8: 25). They could not fit Him into the category of any man, for what man in all the history of the world had power over the elements of nature, compelling obedience? Their amazed enquiry really amounted to a declaration of His Deity.

Agur asks, "Who can ascend to heaven?" What man can do this? It is beyond the power of man. "Who can descend from heaven? What is His name, and what is His Son's name?" But why bring in the Son's name? Why bring in the names of TWO? The Creator is ONE. Why bring in, we ask again, the name of TWO?

The answer is that the light is bursting forth, soon to be seen in all its effulgence, when the Child is born in Bethlehem, named truly by Heaven as "The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." Let us follow the gleam till it bursts forth into full expression.

It begins with the prophecy that when sin came into the world, and the question of good and evil would have to be solved, that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. Why the seed of the woman? Moses knew as well as we do that procreation is through the agency of the male. Yet he puts on record a statement like this without any explanation. Inspired of God, Moses prophesies the virgin birth of our Lord. All Scripture points to Him.

The prophet, Isaiah, carries the thought on a good deal further. We read, "Behold, a virgin (literally THE virgin) shall conceive and bear a SON, and shall call His name Immanuel (meaning God with us)" (Isaiah 7: 14). Again Isaiah writes, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a SON is given: and the government shall be upon His
shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9: 6).

Here is indicated a very great advance in knowledge. We learn that the seed of the woman was to be a SON. Nay, further, that the SON was “The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father.”

No wonder that the first name that Heaven gave was “WONDERFUL”! When we come to the New Testament, where the light shines at its fulness, we find the mystery of the Person of our Lord is unknown to any but the Father. These are the words of our Lord, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father” (Matt. II: 27). Attempt to pierce this impenetrable mystery and confusion and blasphemy are the results.

The Holy Child lay in His mother’s arms in the stable in Bethlehem, and yet that Child was “THE MIGHTY GOD.” What marvellous truth, too high for our understanding, but not for our faith. How the truth of it solves many questions. He slept as a wearied MAN on the hinder part of the vessel as it battled with the raging elements: as GOD He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

When the band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees arrived with lanterns and torches and weapons to take the Lord a prisoner. He uttered the words, designating His Godhead glory, “I AM,” and these rough, evil gangsters fell backward to the ground. They had no power to carry out their wickedness. They were in the presence of God. What could they do? Yet presently, allowed by Divine power to do so, they bound the Man, Christ Jesus, and led Him away to be crucified.

We come now to a very important point in our study of Agur’s prophecy. He asks the question, “Who hath ascended up to Heaven and who hath descended?” Note the order, ascending first, descending second. If it were a question of narrating the historical story of our Lord, surely His descent to this earth would come first, and His ascent to Heaven second. Ephesians 4: 9, 10 follows that order. “Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended FIRST into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended [first] is the same also that ascended [second] up for above all Heavens, that He might fill all things.”

But on searching the Scriptures we find that Agur is not the only person who puts the matter in this order. When Jacob robbed his brother, Esau, of his birthright, and fled from his wrath, he was found one night asleep on the hard ground with harder stones for his pillows. We read, “And he dreamed a dream, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it” (Genesis 28: 12). What a remarkable ladder was this that could span the distance between Heaven and earth! One would have thought that angels being denizens of Heaven would have been found descending to carry out the commands of Jehovah, and then be found ascending as they returned from their errands. But no, it says, “The angels of God ascending [first] and descending [second] on it.”

We are, however, left in no doubt as to what this dream signified. When Nathanael confessed the Lord as the Son of God and the King of Israel, our Lord responded, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon THE SON OF MAN” (John 1: 54). Here we have the same order, “angels of God ascending [first] and descending [second] upon the SON OF MAN.”

How remarkable is the inspiration of Holy Scripture. Moses could not have foreseen what Agur and John would write, nor could Agur foresee what John would write, and yet Moses, Agur
and John all fall into line in this particular. One Divine mind is seen behind it all. But again we ask what is meant by the order in which the words ascending and descending occur?

It surely means that we must begin with our Lord's ASCENT to glory. At that point our Lord had behind Him, His entrance into this world, all His public ministry, and above all His death on Calvary's cross with all that that means. He went back to Heaven as the mighty Conqueror over sin and death and hell. But remember He did not die for Himself. His death was vicarious, atoning, sacrificial, and had wonderful and marvellous results flowing from it. His words to His disciples at the end of His life in this world show what was involved. Sorrowing as His disciples were at the prospect of their Lord leaving them, He said many comforting and wonderful words, showing the way His ascent, and all that it meant, would affect them. He said, ‘Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also' (John 14: 1-3). How much is involved in that glorious ascent will be seen at the summoning shout of our Lord, soon expected, when all that are Christ's will rise to meet Him in the air, the sleeping saints raised, the living changed. His heavenly saints will be with Himself for ever.

But stay! The One that ascends will descend. The Lord does not forget His promises to Abraham. He does not forget His ancient people. He does not forget this sin-scarred, blood-and-tear drenched earth. He is coming again to reign. The sorrows of this present time are but the birth-throes of a glorious future. Days of judgment must come first in the righteous government of God. Seals, trumpets, woes, vials must run their course. Wars, rumours of wars, earthquakes, pestilences, famines must bring the pride and wickedness of man low. The Great Tribulation must purify God's ancient people, and prepare them for His descent, for His coming to reign on this earth.

Then will the Lord intervene. The many diadems shall grace His once thorn-crowned brow. His names, Faithful and True, The Word of God, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

What a contrast to these totalitarian despots, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and their brood, men with no fear of God before their eyes, cruel, ruthless murderers and despoilers of other men's lands. Their doom is fixed by Scripture. 'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints (Rev. 13: 10).

Having put down all opposition and lawless authority, our Lord will fulfil Psalm 72. Read the whole Psalm. It comes as a sweet, gracious balm to the spirit in these troubled and anxious times. The sceptre of universal rule is held securely by the nail-pierced hand. Hallelujah!

Listen to a few extracts of this beautiful Psalm to be fulfilled by a far greater than Solomon. 'He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. . . . They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth . . . He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth . . . His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed . . . And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen.'

Why then does Agur speak of TWO, "What is His name and what is His
Son's name?" Surely it is because there must be the Ladder between earth and Heaven, there must be the great Mediator, the Daysman, THE SON OF MAN, who ascends to glory in the power of the work of redemption to which He will bring His heavenly saints at His coming, and who in time will descend to this poor earth, and bring in a reign of peace and righteousness.

How we rejoice in the contemplation of such a glorious Person, and await His summoning shout, just as the war-weary world will await His coming to reign over His ancient people, and the establishment of His power and authority over the whole earth. Then "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14).

CREATION AND NEW CREATION

The word creation is often used in Scripture for the vast universe of which our Lord was the maker and is the upholder (John 1: 3; Col. 1: 16; Heb. 1: 2), but it is sometimes used to describe the earth only. Proverbs 8 speaks of the creation of the earth in some detail, and it is evident that it was one of the later works of God, for certain spiritual intelligences were there, as we read in Job 38: 6, 7. When the foundations of the earth were fastened and the corner-stones thereof laid, the stars of the morning sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. We do not hear of singing over any other part of the universe, and of no other creature than man do we read of consultation within the Godhead as to his creation (Genesis 1: 26).

We must mark the difference between the physical creation and the moral order of life placed therein. The first gives the sphere in which God's eternal counsels are worked out and the latter those whom those counsels concern. The higher intelligences—angels—are purely spirit beings, but man is complex in his being, partaking of both spirit and matter. Immortal in his spirit and mortal as to his body, he joins in himself both the moral and the physical parts of creation. Man is unique in the creation of God. As a spirit being he is the lowest in the scale of the moral order, the higher intelligences being much greater in power and glory. As to his physical being he is above the whole range of the animal creation.

These things excite our interest and lead to enquiry, and we have not far to go for answer. The whole creation was the necessary outcome of the thoughts and feelings within the Holy Godhead which appear throughout the pages of the New Testament, as the eternal purposes of God, and these purposes shew that man, the feeble creature of the earth, the being created last, and come into the scene but yesterday, was to be the first and highest in the spiritual and eternal order. The simple proof of this being the coming of THE SON into manhood.

An important point was reached in the activities of God at the creation of man. Great ranges of intelligences had been created long before and certainly great and important questions had been raised. This we know from the fact that the conflict between good and evil was raging at the time. But in Adam, as he came from the hand of God, we see the type of the Man destined of God to settle every question that had arisen or could arise. It is written that Adam was "the figure of Him that was to come" (Romans 5: 14), and we learn that all was foreseen and that the Incarnation of the Son and His death upon the cross was before God as the settlement of the sin question long before sin began.

Revolt against the Creator had taken place before man had being. Satan had been the first to challenge the supremacy of God, others were in league with him, or followed him, and
the moral creation was divided into two camps, the unfallen and the fallen. How long man remained in the condition of innocence in which God created him we do not know, but by disobeying the one Divine prohibition he joined the ranks of the rebels. This brought the conflict of good and evil into the human race, and in the purpose of God made way for the Redeemer—"The woman's Seed," the Eternal Son, who in Manhood would take up the whole question of sin and all it involved, not only on man's behalf but for the vindication and glory of God in the whole creation.

By His Incarnation the Son stood in direct contact with man, but the whole creation was also in view, for all things are to be made subject to Him as Son of Man (Ps. 8: 7; 1 Cor. 15: 27, 28; Heb. 2: 6-10). By His death He glorified God about the whole question of sin, going beyond the fall and need of man, and reaching out to the whole creation, laying the basis for its redemption and deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and putting it finally beyond the reach of the defilement of sin in the power of the Holy Ghost (Romans 8: 21; 2 Peter 3: 13).

Though man came last in the first creation, he takes the first place in the new creation. Our Lord linked Himself with the first order of man when He took part in flesh and blood, in Him without sin. After glorifying God in that state He brought it to an end in death and began in resurrection a new order of Man entirely. This new order is called in Scripture "new creation." But before we could be brought into it in Christ the judgment that lay upon us had to be borne and removed. This was done at the cross. There, not our sins only, but our sinful state also, was dealt with according to God's own righteousness. His Name, His throne, His majesty were vindicated in the Son. This accomplished, He rose up from the dead and ascended on high and sent down the Spirit, who in His operations transfers us from Adam—the fallen head—to Christ, the new Head of a new race, and sets us before God in Christ. In this way the believer is said to be created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2: 10).

This reflects on man's first created condition as contrasting him with the higher created intelligences. Angels, however glorious, ever remain units. Adam was set up as head of a race and his moral state, fallen and sinful, was transmitted to all his posterity. This though seeming to work for ill is far more than compensated for in the wisdom of God in the new creation. In it Christ the Head communicates His life to the new race, they become a new generation in Himself. Well may we adore Him who has planned and wrought out such wondrous things for His own glory and our eternal blessing.

As brought into this new creation the believer is one with Christ and therefore heavenly in character and origin. "As is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15: 48). And this stands in contrast to what we were as having our part in the first created state. Man was created for the earth and as such is earthly. This wonderful transfer is therefore not only from our fallen condition, but goes back to the original creation. "If any one be in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5: 17 (N.T.). Man is not only recovered from the place into which he fell, but is brought to a new place marked out for him in the eternal purposes of God.

As set in Christ before God the transmission of moral qualities, namely, the features of Christ are reproduced in him by the Holy Spirit who dwells in all who believe, so that the once despised and rejected Christ is now continued in His body on earth. So divinely true is this new thing, this new creation, that believers are seen linked up in the life of Christ organically as His body, that glorious organism to which the Head gives impulse and in which His life circulates and radiates in its beneficent sweetness in this poor world.

(To be continued)
SO ALSO IS CHRIST

“...So also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12: 12).

We cannot today see, in actual form, our Lord Jesus Christ, as did the Apostles and others when He was on earth, because He has gone to the Father, but, though He is personally invisible, we are aware of His presence on earth in that wonderful structure called HIS BODY.

This we know is composed of all the children of God (and only such), who believe on Him during the time of His rejection by the world, to the moment of His coming again. These have been quickened by the Spirit of God, by whom also they are united to Christ in glory as members of His body, and thus formed into one perfect and divine unity; so united that in describing its absolute completeness the Scripture says, “...So also is Christ.” The two, Christ in heaven, and His members on earth, in this mystic unity are so identified as that one name, that is “the Christ,” covers and denominates both.

Now this, though spiritual and mystic, is surely not invisible. Each of its members, great or small, has its own place to fill in the whole, each is a “member in particular” and none can fulfil the functions, or do the work of another. All are interdependent and none can fulfil the functions, or do the work of another. All are interdependent and under the control of the Head, just as the human body acts in its varied members in perfect organic harmony and order; and it is used, in our chapter, as an illustration. This takes the truth of the “Mystery of Christ” out of the region of mere theory, and presents it in a truly practical light.

The blessed Head on high is ever active on behalf of His members. How dear to Him we cannot tell. He loves them to the end. He described them to Saul of Tarsus as though they were Himself, “...Why persecutest thou ME?” How perfect the identity; how close and inseparable the tie!

But this implies similar activity on the part of the members, in relation to each other. Hence, “...if one member suffers, all suffer.” Do we appreciate this touching fact as we should? Or this—“...If one member be honoured all rejoice”? What mutual affection, regard, sympathy, and unselfish consideration, if we do. What withering up of mere party or sectarian animosities there would be. But the church as the body of Christ has lost, in leaving her first love, those family, nay those corporate affections that shone in fervent reciprocity in early Pentecostal days. Iniquity abounds and love waxes cold.

Albeit the unity of the body remains intact. No power of evil can break or mar that unity. “...For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Could unity be more perfect? Could the proper articulation of co-membership be better secured? Need the ear say, in jealousy, because I am not the eye I am therefore not of the body, when the ear though less beautiful, can perform in its own province, that which the eye cannot? Each is necessary in its place.

Far less may the eye say to the foot; in unbecoming pride, I have no need of thee, for the eye, in spite of its glory, cannot do the essential, if lowly, work of the foot. Such an idea in the body natural, were folly; though, alas, possible and actual in the body spiritual.

These members, these gifts, have been set in the church by God Himself, and each is placed by Him in the sphere intended.

But what a marvellous organism does the body of Christ thus present to us! How divine the conception! How profound the statement:—“...So also is the Christ.”

But, secondly, if we turn to Eph. 3 we find that the mystery of Christ affects
a wider field than the body itself. This unity is to be viewed as an exhibition of the manifold wisdom of God, by principalities and powers in heavenly places, the wonder of the ages, the vessel of the surpassing riches of His grace in His kindness to us through Christ Jesus. There we find what are called, "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and there are to be seen, if eyes are only divinely open, the administration—the practical and visible operation of this mystery.

In chapter 4 of the same Epistle we see the operation itself, first of all the kind of spirit that is absolutely necessary in those who would endeavour to keep the unity, not indeed, of the body, but of the Spirit, with Whom that body is so closely allied, animated, and sustained in vigour.

And so we have gifts from an ascended Christ for the perfecting of the saints of whom the body is composed, till we all come in the further unity, that of the faith to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." How practical in every sense is the mystery of Christ, as it is now revealed by apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

This is proved, thirdly, in the epistle to the Colossians, by the agony of soul through which the Apostle passed, in prayer for that assembly and others. The riches of the glory of the mystery, hidden for ages but now revealed, is "Christ in you the hope of glory." It was the coping stone to all the revelation of God; it completed the Word of God.

In this mystery of God, he tells us, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and to be possessed, therefore, of that treasure the soul is put on guard, intelligently against the mental seductions of the foe, such as philosophy, the traditions of men, circumcision, all that militates against the cross, the worship of angels, an abuse of the body which panders to fleshly pride—things which could have no existence, not be allowed, if the fulness of the Godhead bodily, in a risen Christ, and His headship as the ascended Man, were truly held.

In 1 Cor. 12 the mystery has for its object the mutual care of the members; in Eph. 3 the enlightenment of heavenly principalities and powers; and in Col. 2 the preservation of the saints from the intellectual attacks of Satan and the world.

This is all intensely practical, the importance of it causing such conflict to the Apostle, who was specially appointed to be the minister of the church.

No wonder then finally, that in Romans 16: 25 he regards it as essential to the establishment of the believer in the truth of the gospel, of which it is the complement; and although, without the knowledge of it, the believer may be justified, yet He lacks an apprehension of Christianity proper, and his work cannot but be defective.

2 Corinthians 3: 18

The power to behold and enjoy the glory of the Lord is the power to reflect Him. The reflection is no effort, but the necessary effect of the enjoyment. While this goes on from one degree of glory to another, the least measure of it is glory, and, as more and more we know of Christ, glory superadded to glory. This is what is "by the Lord the Spirit." It is the life-giving Spirit of Christ, working in His energy in the souls of men, not only for individual blessing but for its shining out also in the world of sinners which is true gospel witness.
The early part of our chapter has conducted us to the great fact that Jesus Christ is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth; some of the mighty implications of the fact come before us in the latter part of the chapter. We find in John 1 not only many of His Names and Titles, but also an unfolding of the varied offices and capacities that He fills.

The great ones of the earth fill various capacities. King George VI, for instance, appears on one occasion as an Admiral, on another as a Field Marshal, and so on. As Head of the State he fills these capacities, and more besides. It is not surprising therefore that the Word, becoming flesh, should assume offices and fill capacities of immense range and eternal significance. As we read verse 29 and note John's further witness, we meet with the first of the series. He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John said in effect, "Here is the one, effectual, never-to-be-repeated SACRIFICE of eternal value." In the Old Testament the lamb and been specially marked as the animal devoted to sacrificial use: hence the title here. Jesus is the Lamb of God's providing, and if He takes away by sacrifice the sin of the world—not merely your sin or mine, or Israel's sin, but the sin of the whole "cosmos"—then there has been effected a work of such magnitude that the settlement abides to eternity. The thing is to be DONE, and here is the Doer of it. We usually think of sin in its manifestations and myriad details, but here it is regarded as one gigantic and terrible problem, meeting its complete solution and removal. God will have a cosmos—the universe as an ordered whole—totally and eternally purged from sin; and here is the One who by His sacrifice accomplishes this. He is the Sacrifice of the Ages, and in this we see the basis of all that follows. Were He not this, there would be nothing to follow in the way of blessing and glory.

John proceeded to identify Jesus as the One of whom he had previously spoken, and to declare that the object of his baptism was not merely the manifestation of the godly remnant in Israel, but the manifestation of the Lamb of God to Israel. Upon Him He had seen the Spirit as a dove descending and abiding—not descending and returning, like the dove that Noah sent forth. When commissioned John had been told that this was to be, as it were, the hallmark on the One to whom He was to act as forerunner; the One who would baptize not merely with water, but with the Holy Ghost.

In saying this, John evidently presented Jesus as the great BLESSE R. As the Sacrifice He takes away the sin of the world: as the Blesser He fills it with the light and energy of the Spirit of God. It is plain therefore that here we have two parts of one whole, and both statements are on broad, comprehensive lines. Each believer today has his sins taken away and he receives the Holy Ghost: a tiny item within the compass of the whole. But the point here is the whole, considered abstractly. We do not yet see sin wholly removed historically and the Spirit poured upon all flesh; but here was the One who brings both to pass.

John's conclusion, stated in verse 34, is of much importance. It verified to John the witness he bore in verses 15 and 27. Here was the Son of God, and to His Sonship he could bear witness. The Holy Ghost is a Person in the Godhead, and here is a Man who has this Divine Person at His disposal, so as to shed Him forth as a baptism. Who can this Man be? No one less than the Son of God, another Person in the Godhead. Thus we are at once conducted to the point which is the main objective of this Gospel (see 20: 31). The Son was here in Manhood; hence such a thing could be. The Son of God and the Word are One.
The following day John bore similar testimony, only concentrating upon the Person Himself rather than His work. Still, it was the Person in His character as the sacrificial Lamb, and it is when He wears this character that He becomes specially attractive, as Revelation 5 shows. This attractiveness was felt here, for two of John’s disciples heard him thus speak and they at once turned from John to attach themselves to Jesus. No truer service can be rendered to God than that which diverts the hearers from the human servant and attaches them to Christ. A very true servant was John the Baptist.

Jesus did not check the two disciples in their desire to be with Him; rather He encouraged them to abide with Him. He is not only the Sacrifice and the Blesser, but also the CENTRE to whom all must gather. The two disciples had discovered this by a kind of instinct, and their action suffices to set Him before us in this capacity. Presently we have the Lord saying, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me” (12: 32); and in days to come this will be visibly accomplished. But amongst all the myriads Andrew and the other disciple will have the distinction of being the first to discover the Divinely appointed Centre in Jesus.

Verse 41 shows us that what had transpired had revealed to the soul of Andrew that Jesus was the Christ. Again we must think of that verse in chapter 20—He was Baptiser with the Holy Spirit, therefore the Son of God; He was the Centre, appointed by God, therefore the Christ. Andrew’s first action was to seek his own brother and testify to him of his discovery, and thus “he brought him to Jesus.” It has often been the case since that the more forcible and distinguished man has been led to the Saviour by someone of very ordinary type. As far as we have any record this is the most striking thing that Andrew did.

Simon was a ready talker, and amongst the disciples usually the first to speak, but when brought to Jesus he did not have the first word. Jesus at once showed that He knew his name and ancestry, and then gave him a new name. As we see with Daniel and his three friends, great kings asserted their ownership over servants and slaves by changing their names; in like manner when Simon came to Jesus He asserted His claim over him. But by giving him a name which meant “A stone,” He did more than this: He annexed him for the building that He had in view, and of which at that moment Simon knew nothing. Simon indeed, as far as the record goes, had nothing to say. What the Lord had in view and what He said was of all moment.

We have only to turn to 1 Peter 2, to find that presently Simon did know, and had something to say to us about it. Coming to Christ, the Living Stone, he became a living stone in view of God’s building, which is proceeding during the present epoch; and, as he shows us in that chapter, that which was true for him is true also for us, as we come to the Living Stone each in our turn. Clearly then, Jesus revealed Himself as the BUILDER of God’s house by the way He met Simon, though Simon himself and the rest did not know it at the time. This is another capacity that Jesus fills.

Jesus Himself took the initiative in finding Philip, as verse 43 shows, introducing Himself with the two words, “Follow Me.” The two words evidently were sufficient. They presented Him to Philip as the LEADER, who rightly commands loyal obedience from each and all. Philip followed and became a seeker of others, though as yet he did not know much. To Nathanael he could only speak of “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph”; neither a very lofty nor a very correct designation of the One whom he had just begun to follow. It had the effect at the outset of slightly prejudicing Nathanael: still it sufficed to lead him to an interview with the Lord.
Again Jesus took the initiative and by His opening exclamation as to Nathanael revealed Himself as the Discerner of the hearts of men. Here was an Israelite, not without sin, but without guile; that is, without deceit or dishonesty. Here was a man who was straight and honest in his spirit before God; and Jesus knew this, as He showed by His answer to Nathanael's startled question, "Thence knowest Thou me?" The Lord was showing Himself to be the JUDGE of all, before whom all men are naked and open, who can put every man in his proper place. Nathanael came to see Jesus of Nazareth, and he discovered One who knew all about him and read him through and through like an open book. Who could this Jesus be?

Nathanael's answer is given in verse 49, and we are carried on again to that verse in chapter 20. He is "the Son of God," and He is also "the King of Israel." As an earnest and godly Israelite he was waiting for the King, and would have been inclined to lay all possible emphasis there. But evidently in the presence of this Judge of men and Searcher of hearts all the emphasis lay on the fact that He must be the Son of God; and if that, then the King of Israel. Then note how in verse 50 Jesus accepted Nathanael's homage as not misplaced but as the fruit of faith. Hearing the words of Jesus he had believed, and his homage was the fruit of this.

In verse 50 there seems to be a contrast between hearing and seeing. Hearing induces faith, but a day is coming when we shall see greater things than we have heard. When the day arrives for sight we shall view the Son of Man as the great ADMINISTRATOR of God's universe of light and blessing. Angels will have their place of service, but their every movement will be regulated and performed in reference to Him. This capacity He will fill as Son of Man in keeping with what is predicted in Psalm 8. That Psalm indeed speaks of Him as made "a little lower than the angels," but this was for the suffering of death, as Hebrews 2 informs us. It also speaks of His having dominion over Jehovah's works in earth and sea. Our verse in John 1 shows that the angels will be subject to Him, but Hebrews 2 carries it even further, saying that "all things" being in subjection means that there is "nothing that is not put under Him." The Son of Man will dominate the heavens as well as the earth.

Before passing from chapter 1 let us note that not only do we have these glimpses of the various capacities that are filled by the Word become flesh, but also we get all His main Titles brought to light:—Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, the only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of Israel, the Son of Man. The whole chapter is like a mine richly shot through with these veins of gold.

Did I not think my Teacher as faithful as He is infallible, there is no book I should fear to handle as the book of God.

It is lamentable, sad, very sad, that the members of Christ's body should be so unlike the Head; and this, alas! is too true of us all. The transcript of the Spirit, though executed with exquisite nicety, is scarcely perceptible through the thick veil of flesh that covers it. It seems no longer true that "no man ever hated his own flesh." Whether we look at the want of power in His church, or of the fruit of His Spirit in His members, still we are inclined to ask, Has the Spirit of the Lord fainted? Where is He? Is not all quarrelling among the children of God the natural result of want of communion? The "fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" especially enforces and cultivates union. Satan's wiles are aimed at the scattering and dispersion of the members.
THE DELIVERER, John 5

THERE lies the helpless cripple, around him a mass of suffering humanity, but none worse than he; for thirty-eight years he had suffered, and through all those years no thrill of strength had stirred his palsied limbs. The doctors must have pronounced his case hopeless, and yet with a strange persistence he hoped, an example of the saying, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." But this hope was not in a doctor's skill, but in the pool by the side of which he lay.

It was a strange pool, a large reservoir inside the walls of the city of Jerusalem near the sheep market gate, and it was known as Bethesda, which means the house of mercy. It was well named, for at a certain season an angel from heaven appeared and stirred the waters, then whoever stepped down first into the water was made whole, no matter what his plague might be.

What a scramble there would be at every season, and what disappointment, and amongst the disappointed ones was our cripple. How many times during those years he had fallen back in his misery we do not know, but at last he seemed to be reduced to despair. Did he think that Jesus was but a passing stranger interested in his helplessness when He asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" If He had been only that, such a question would have been a mockery; but, because of who He was, two things transpired: first, the confession of the man's despair; then the mercy of the Lord that met him there.

Yes, the man had lost all hope, and the Lord's question does not seem to have pleased him overmuch, for it did seem from the man's point of view, an unnecessary one. "Sir," he answers, "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me" (John 5: 7). "My own efforts have all proved vain, and there is not a man who cares a straw for me." As he lay in his helplessness his language might well have been: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7: 24). "I have no man."

Does not this man's sad case illustrate that of many, whose struggles after holiness and good have been long and earnest but in vain? The bitter cry of their souls is, "I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that do I" (Rom. 7: 14-15). The lesson must be learned that there is no strength for good in the life that is paralysed by sin, and that every hope of overcoming this condition of continual defeat is a vain hope. Aye, but it is just here that the crisis is reached, for man's extremity is God's opportunity.

When the paralytic of John 5 confessed that all his hopes were dashed, and that he had no resources either in himself or in any other man, and that the blessing of the pool was not for him because it was out of his reach, then the Lord spoke, and His word was a delivering word, "Jesus saith unto Him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked; and on the same day was the sabbath." Christ superseded the pool; His word did for the helpless cripple what neither angel nor man could do. He was a delivered man, and if he had had a grateful heart, which he does not seem to have had, he would have cried, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and he would have followed Him and clung to Him.

I heard of an East Central African negro, who summed up this story in two sentences. They were these. The impotent man said to Jesus, "I have no man," and Jesus answered, "I am your Man." And not only had this
negro the art of going to the very kernel of the matter, but he must have learnt the wonderful and soul-emancipating truth, that all life, virtue, power, blessing and deliverance for men lie in Christ, and that it is when the groaning, struggling soul ceases all his efforts and cries out, "Who shall deliver me?" that deliverance comes.

Deliverance from the power of sin does not come by efforts to keep the law. The weakness of our fleshly nature is not strengthened to do good by resolutions and vows. What has your spiritual history been, my reader? Have you to say:

"Oh the regret, the struggle and the failing!  
Oh the days desolate, and useless years!  
Vows in the night, so fierce and unavailing!  
Stings of my shame and passion of my tears!

"Oh thou poor soul, enwrapped in such a sinning,  
Bound in the shameful body of thy death!"

—there is hope for you. Lift up your eyes from self and sinning to Him who died for you, bearing the judgment, and has been raised up from the dead. He is your Man, your Deliverer.

If you have believed on Him, He is not only your Saviour but the Source of your power, and you have been joined to Him to bring forth fruit unto God. You have come under a new headship, you are in Christ, and a new life will work in you now. Not Paul only, but you also may say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8: 2). He is your Man: His Spirit dwells in you; and through Him that loves you, you may be more than a conqueror.

2 Corinthians 6

Communion with God without separation from evil is here declared to us to be an impossible thing: and how clearly is manifested here the drift of things, even among Christians, in a day like this, when large liberality is supposed to be what is pre-eminently Christian, and the love that thinketh no evil is confounded with the blindness which sees none, where it manifestly exists. God's word abides for us today, and the world abides also still in its essential character the same, the busy self-seeking world that knows not the cross: save perhaps as an ornament on the outside.

Colossians 3: 12

We are to forbear as God has forborne. We are to forgive as Christ has forgiven us: to all of which is to be added love, as that which is the "bond of perfectness" which keeps everything in its place and perfects every detail of life. Love has no need to put on an appearance: it will manifest itself in harmony in every tone and gesture. The manifestation of the divine nature has a unity in it which makes everything to be in harmony. If there is love in the heart, the words will not be hard or unseemly; their very tone will be affected.

Let us be in earnest; let us have a lively care for one another; let us know more of that love which will take a brother's failings to a throne of grace, while throwing over them a cloak of charity—which will fix on God's grace in a brother, and render thanks for it—which will be faithful in reproof, as well as jealous in defence.
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

The Mediator.

Will you give some help as to the subject of the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2). In approaching the Father in prayer and in praise, do we do it through the Mediator?—STAFF.

The one Mediator is between God and man as such and not between the Father and His children. As a sinful man, Job yearned for a mediator between himself and God when he said, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both" (ch. 9: 33). He felt his need of one who was equal to God and could lay his hand upon Him in all His holiness and yet could stoop to him and put his hand upon him, and answer for him, and bring him to God in peace. Only one could fill that place—the Man Christ Jesus, and He qualified for it—if we may be permitted to use the word—by giving His life a ransom for all. This is the gospel to be proclaimed throughout the world to sinful men.

All who are brought to God by Him become the children of God, they know the Father, and though the Lord ever liveth to make intercession for them before God, there is in the relationship of children with the Father, an intimacy that does not admit the thought of a mediator. And yet we could have no access to the Father apart from Him. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," He said, and again, "Through Him we both have access by One Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2: 18). It is as being one with Him that we have part in this relationship of which He is the measure and the pattern, and He, the Son, makes us free in the relationship (John 8: 36).

"We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8: 15), and the babes in the family know the Father, and they may in simplicity and confidence draw near to Him in prayer and praise. Yet this is not apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, we are conscious of this as we draw near to Him, and we realise somewhat of the meaning of such words as "I in them and Thou in Me" (John 17: 21). This access without hindrance or fear is one of the great blessings and privileges that belong to the eternal life that we have in the Son of God.

The words of the Lord in John 16: 26 are important, "At that day ye shall ask in My Name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me."

Prayer to the Father in the Name of the Lord.

In connection with the foregoing question some explanation of what prayer in the Lord's Name means would be helpful (John 13: 13, 14; 16: 23, 26).

Here we have prayer in its highest and most blessed character, and it shews us the nearness to the Father into which we have been brought by the Lord Himself, who has declared to us the Father's Name. He does not stand between us and the Father as a Mediator, but we stand with Him in this new and wonderful relationship of children with the Father, having the access, favour and privileges that belong to the relationship. Along with this nearness with Him before the Father we are identified with His Name before the world, and it is because of this that we must pray in His Name. It is prayer in relation to His interests in the world. John 14 shews us this. He was going to the Father and His own were to be left behind to represent Him in the world, that through them the Father might be glorified in the Son. It is in
the consciousness of this that we pray in His Name. It does not mean that we attach His Name to our general prayers in a formal way, but as the faithful representative of a business house would ask his employers for whatever he felt would further their business in the place where he represented them, so we come to the Father, not asking for things for ourselves, our ease or pleasure, but for that which will enable us to glorify Him in our lives and labour for His Name's sake. John 15:7 confirms this. If we abide in Him, His thoughts will find expression in us, and we shall pray the Father, in our measure, as He would were He here.

John 16:25-27 is very wonderful. We are there in a range of things outside the world: it is the Father's world, His family circle, where His Name is known, His love enjoyed, and His purpose in sending forth His Son understood, and we pray in the Name of the Lord as those who have their part in this wonderful fellowship of love.

"Let Your Requests Be Made Known Unto God."

Is there any difference between prayer in the Name of the Lord and this Scripture? (Phil. 4:6).

Prayer in the Name of the Lord is specially for His interests in the world; prayer according to Phil. 4 is in relation to our own interests. It is the expression of our dependence upon God. Everything that might be a burden to us and cause us anxiety we may carry to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." No circumstance in our lives is too insignificant for His notice. Even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered, and there is nothing that concerns us that is too great for His wisdom and power. In God we have a refuge in distress and a resource in need; knowing this we will honour Him by going to Him. Every right desire we have we may turn into prayer. Indeed we may pour out all our hearts' desires before Him, for He loves us perfectly and desires our confidence, and being who and what He is will answer our requests according to His own wisdom and knowledge of us. He may not grant what we ask, but if not, He will give us something better—His own peace to keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. It is as we come to God according to this passage that we are careful for nothing, prayerful in everything, and thankful for all that He gives and above all for the high privilege of drawing near to Him.

Printer's Error.

On page 45, June issue, read

"Peace with God" (Romans 5:1)

This results from the knowledge that the death of Christ has fully satisfied every claim of God's justice. He has raised Him from the dead. God has nothing against my Substitute and Saviour, hence He has nothing against me. Christ raised from the dead and exalted to the glory of God is the abiding proof of this.
HAVING finished all His words of counsel and comfort to His disciples, words spoken to them that they might have peace in Him though beset by tribulation in the world, the Lord lifted His eyes to heaven and spoke to His Father. He had requests to make for "His own" whom He was leaving in the world. With what awe those eleven men must have heard Him, for the things He asked for were so amazing, so infinitely beyond anything and everything that they could have asked or thought; and we may stand in thought with them and share their wonder, for what He asked for them He asked for us also. He had not to beseech the Father on behalf of "His own," as one might plead with a reluctant and grudging giver, for His Father was one with Him in all His desires for the blessing of those men. They were His Father's gift to Him and so are we. "Thou gavest them Me," He said, but in giving them to His beloved Son the Father did not give them away or lose them, for, added the Lord, "They are Thine, and all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." It is an amazing thought. The Father and the Son have this mutual interest in all who are Christ's. They are the Father's gift to Him, and yet the Father retains possession of them and they were the subjects of these wonderful communings between the Father and the Son. They are more precious to the Lord than crowns and Kingdoms and far-reaching fame, they are His most cherished possession, next to the love that gave them to Him; and they are precious to the Father because they are precious to His Son. That is where we stand, fellow believers in our great Saviour; that, my brethren in the divine family, is the place we are given in the thoughts of the Father and the Son.

Great and glorious things are to be ours according to the will and requests of the Lord, they include present blessings and future glories, but the crown of them all seems to be kept until the last. Hear the actual words of the Lord, "I have declared unto them Thy Name and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them." He had said, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." We might well ask what is that glory and be unable to find an answer to our question, so wonderful it seems, but here is something greater than glory. Is there anything more precious to the Lord than the love wherewith His Father loves Him? Nothing. "Power and riches, and wisdom, and strength and honour, and glory and blessing" are to be His by universal acclaim, but what are these in comparison with His Father's love. This love was His before the ages of time, for He dwelt then in His Father's bosom; this love sustained Him in His life of sorrow here on earth; the Father's bosom was His refuge and resting place when despised and rejected of men, and His Father's love will be His chiefest joy for ever; and it is this that He wills and desires should be ours. He gives His choicest and best to us. Such is His love that it will not be satisfied unless we share with Him that which He knows will eternally satisfy us because it satisfies Him. We would have been satisfied with a lesser love; a love of compassion such as God had for us when we were yet sinners would have filled us with eternal gratitude and praise, and we have known and believed that love, but nothing less than this love of relationship and complacency, the Father's love to Him in us would satisfy the unselfish love of our Saviour, our Friend, our eternal Love.

By His desire and will this love is to be in us, not on us only; it might be on us and we be unconscious of the fact, but it is to be in us, to be known and enjoyed in our soul's deepest experience. To this end He said, "I
have declared unto them Thy Name and will declare it.” The declaration of the Father’s Name to us involves our being brought into the same relationship in which He stands, His Father becomes our Father, for only in the relationship of children with the Father could the Father’s love be in us. It required too that the Spirit should be given to us—the Spirit of the Son, that we might intelligently rejoice in His love and respond to it with the children’s cry of Abba, Father.

But further, and these are His final words, “And I in them.” Does that mean “that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith”? It does, and more. He would be the supreme object of our hearts, dwelling in our love as a living, bright reality. It is His last request as to us, and reveals the intensity and sensitiveness of His love. This is more than the love that will be ever active towards us in our constant needs, it is that same love seeking its satisfaction in being loved; it is love resting and satisfied. This we may give Him, and this we shall give Him in His Father’s house on high, but this we may give Him now, and as we begin to understand it we begin to understand His words spoken but a little while before: “The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me” (ch. 16: 27).

The Holy Spirit of God.

“We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2: 12).

It is a great fact, even though we feebly realise it, that the Spirit of God has been given to us, and that He dwells in us. We were born again by the Spirit and having believed in the efficacy of the blood of Christ we have been sealed by the same Spirit; by Him the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts and by Him we cry “Abba, Father.” The work of Christ on the Cross is the foundation of all, but the presence of the Spirit within us is the power of enjoyment. He witnesses with our spirits that we are children of God and heirs of God and is the present Earnest of that inheritance which we shall possess at the coming of our Lord. Where the Spirit is there is liberty, and where He is not grieved, we have communion with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the power by which the graces of Christ are manifested in our lives—“love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control”—and He is also the power that enables us to witness by our lips.

That good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12: 2).

Thy love, O God, restores me
From sighs and tears to praise:
And deep my soul adores Thee,
Nor thinks of time or place;
I ask no more, in good or ill,
But union with Thy holy will.

'Tis that which makes my treasure
'Tis that which brings my gain;
Converting woe to pleasure,
And reaping joy from pain.
Oh! 'tis enough whate'er befall
To know that God is all in all.
“THE LORD SHALL FIGHT FOR YOU”

(Exodus 14: 14) A. J. Pollock

Then the Lord caused a strong east wind to blow all night, which made the sea dry land and the waters were divided. A way of escape was made by GOD.

The Egyptians in their blind fury, Pharaoh’s horses, chariots and horsemen, pursued after the Israelites into the midst of the sea. Then in the morning watch the Lord looked upon the proud host of the Egyptians and troubled them, took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove heavily.

The Egyptians were at last alarmed, and cried out, “Let us flee from the face of Israel: for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians” (Exodus 14: 25).

That, however, was not the end. The wind, that clave a path for the children of Israel across the sea for their salvation, blew again, and covered the fleeing Egyptians, drowning the whole host in the waters of the Red Sea.

No wonder Moses and the children of Israel sang their triumph on the further banks of the sea they had just crossed: “The Lord hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song and become my salvation... The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name” (Exodus 15: 1-3).

GOD HAD INTERVENED.

Do you remember the Bible story of how the Midianites, Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered to fight the Israelites? God intervened again and again. His Holy Spirit came upon Gideon, up to then a little-known man, one, who declared that his family was poor in Manasseh, and that he was
the least in his father's house. Gideon, inspired by God's Holy Spirit, blew a trumpet, and a goodly number of followers gathered round him.

But the Lord told Gideon that the number was too many. In case of victory the children of Israel would vaunt themselves, saying, "Mine own hand hath saved me." Are we not in a similar case in this country? Do we trust in a powerful navy, a strong air force, a well-trained soldiery, equipped with tanks, Bren guns, all the latest and most up-to-date instruments of war? Do we put our trust in God?

Gideon put a test upon his followers, and out of thirty-two thousand twenty-two thousand returned to their homes, leaving but ten thousand. But these were still too many. A further test was put upon them. When they were brought to water, everyone who bowed down upon his knees to drink was to be rejected, whilst those who lapped the water, putting their hands to their mouths, were the chosen ones to fight. Out of ten thousand, nine thousand seven hundred got upon their knees to drink, and only a handful out of the whole host, three hundred men, lapped the water.

This handful of men looked upon the mighty host of the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, who lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, their camels without number, as the sand on the seashore. Gideon divided them up into three companies, put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and provided them with lamps to place in the pitchers.

Gideon bade them follow him. So they advanced to the outside of the camp. At a given signal they broke their pitchers, and there the naked lights of the lamps shone out, the trumpets sounded, and the men shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" (Judges 7: 20).

Did God intervene? We read, "And THE LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host, and the host fled to Beth-shittah, in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath."

GOD HAD INTERVENED.

Twenty long years had the ark of the Lord been in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-jearim. Samuel, the prophet, was but a child when overwhelming disaster overtook the children of Israel; Eli, the aged priest, broke his neck as he fell backward from his seat, and died, stunned by the news that the battle with the Philistines was lost, his sons, Hophni and Phineas, men of Belial though in the priest's office, slain, and above all the ark of the Lord taken. No wonder Phineas's wife, hearing of the deaths of her husband and father-in-law, and that the ark of the Lord was captured, dying in giving birth to her child named it Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel" (1 Sam. 4: 21).

But the days of recovery were at hand. Samuel had grown up, and had an assured place as a Prophet of God and the Judge of Israel. Samuel showed how the Lord would deliver the children of Israel from the Philistines, if they really prepared their hearts to follow Him wholly. Happily they responded, putting away their strange gods, and seeking to follow the Lord wholly.

Gathering together at Mizpeh, the Philistines went up against them, striking terror in the hearts of the Israelites. They begged Samuel to cry without ceasing to God for them. Alas! they had not faith that God would deliver them. How often God is better to us than our fears.

Samuel offered a sucking lamb as a burnt-offering to the Lord, crying to the Lord for His intervention. As he was thus engaged the Philistines drew
near to the battle, "but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them. . . . And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and discomfited them, until they came to Beth-car."

GOD HAD INTERVENED.

Sennacherib, the mighty king of Assyria, invaded Judah, and at last his mighty hosts came against Jerusalem. His generals, Tartan and Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, boasted of their power, and Rab-shakeh in particular taunted the Jews, saying, "Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria" (2 Kings 18: 30).

When King Hezekiah heard of this impious boast, he rent his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. He sent to Isaiah the prophet, and reported to him what had happened. Isaiah gave him great comfort. He said, "Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold I will send a blast upon him and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land: and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land" (2 Kings 19: 6, 7).

Again the Prophet spoke heartening words, "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city [Jerusalem], nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend the city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant, David's sake" (2 Kings 19: 32-34).

When God takes a hand in any matter we know that the mightiest foe against a feeble land is powerless. What happened to the mighty Assyrian army? "And it came to pass that night, that THE ANGEL OF THE LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand; and when they arose in the morning behold they were all dead corpses." No wonder the chastened remnant of the proud army with their humbled king at their head departed. Shortly after Sennacherib's own sons rose against their father, and smote him with the sword. Thus was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled to the letter.

GOD HAD INTERVENED.

And can God not intervene again in answer to the cries of His people? He can, blessed be His name. Does not He take note of the impiety of the proud blasphemous aggressors? And of the determined efforts to stamp out all that is for God and Christ in the world? He most surely does. He has set a limit to the tides of evil, it is our part to pray. And yet the question ought to be aroused in many of our hearts as to whether we are ready and fit to pray. To Israel in ancient days God said, "When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean: put away your evil doings from before my eyes: cease to do evil: learn to do well . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat of the fat of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 1).

The things that were written aforetime were written for our learning, and here we are taught as to what God looks for in those that would approach Him in prayer.
IN considering our subject, care is needed in the use of the words "old" and "new." Old is generally used as the antithesis of new as in "old man" and "new man," "old covenant" and "new covenant." But while Scripture speaks of the new creation, it does not call the first creation old, nor the first birth old. The "new man" displaces the "old man," and the "old covenant" gives way to the new, but the new birth does not displace the first birth, nor the new creation the old. The first creation was a divine act, the first birth the human medium; these produce the person upon whom the Spirit of God operates in the new birth, and transfers him from Adam to Christ, in the work of new creation, but this work of the Spirit does not undo or set aside the original creation or the first birth. The need of these remarks will be understood when we realise that there is a tendency to view new creation as though God had been defeated in the fall of man and had to create a new race in his place outside the possibility of sin. The words old and new as applied to the physical creation may engage us later.

But some one is sure to say, what is the gain of all this abstract reasoning to me? Much in every way, let it be said, for we are in touch just here with the richest things of heaven. As united to Christ in glory believers have access to the Father in the holy relationship of sons; and the wealth of divine revelation is available and enjoyed on the principle of faith. Part with Christ in glory as His companions assures an entrance into the richest and deepest things of God. No words can fully describe the grand range of blessings that are made ours in Christ. Having the birthright all is ours and the Lord Himself ever seeks to lead us into the appreciation of these things. They are unseen things; things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Cor. 2:9).

While subject to many and varied changes, both mentally and morally, there are three distinct conditions of manhood which should be noted. First, man stood in innocence, knowing neither good nor evil; second, as fallen he stood a guilty sinner alienated from his God; third, he stands recovered and brought back to God; reinstalled because reconstituted, but brought into an infinitely higher position than he was in as first created. In a normal way his walk and conversation are the outcome of the new nature and coloured by the grace of heaven, but alas! it may not be for he may act in the flesh. In the former case he identifies himself with the work of grace in his soul and you have the "I" of purpose—"I delight in the law of God after the inner man." But in case of failure, instead of acting in the dignity of his renewed being he is simply walking and acting as man in a carnal way. "My little children," says John, "these things write I unto you that ye sin not."

The above consideration shews the individual in relation to the widely different characters of life flowing from the two Heads, namely, Adam and Christ. This necessitates the use of the personal "I" in a threefold way as is shewn in the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ." That is as a man in Adam. "Nevertheless I live." This is the "I" of creature personality which must be kept distinct in our minds from both the "I" of responsibility and the "I" of purpose. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me," shews the consciousness of the completeness of his identification with Christ the new Head in life and nature. In this threefold use of the personal I, all hangs on the individual himself as seen between the "I" of responsibility on the one side and the "I" of purpose on the other. The rest of the verse shews the man in his life in bodily condition with Christ on high as his Object.
New creation then, has begun and it must spread till it includes the whole vast creation. It takes time, however, to work out these things and so far as it has gone man only is brought in, and that in a faith state as an abstract reality waiting its completion at the coming of the Lord. In its working out the moral order takes precedence as we have seen. When every family has been set in the place marked out under the Head, all moral values adjusted and every problem solved, the physical order, as having served its purpose, will be changed. It came in first as a necessary part of the whole as suited to the character of life intended of Him and the marvellous moral issues involved. As having served its Creator as everything must (sin, Satan, death and hell must serve the great Creator’s end), it is spoken of as become old (Ps. 102: 26; Heb. 1: 11).

All being finally rectified, the Name, Throne and Majesty of God triumphant, the physical order of creation, too, passes through its change; shall we say death and resurrection in view of serving its Creator in the moral life of a new eternal scene? There we hear the words, “Behold I make all things new.” There had been tears, and death with grief, crying and distress, as alas! there is plenty of these things today. Planting our feet in that holy scene by anticipation we can look back into the time scene where all the sorrow was. While these the former things are passed away, those who were in them are now in the New Things in God’s eternal day. Praise His Holy Name for evermore.

This is a blessed theme as concerning the glory of our Lord. It fits in properly with the great scheme of Reconciliation in its bearing on the higher ranges of intelligences. If the Lord permit we may be permitted to trace it out a little as sketched out for us in the Book of God. The Lord graciously add HIS blessing.

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever” (Heb. 13: 8).

It would be a foolish thing to go about preaching Christ, and the grace of God in Him, if He were as changeable as the times. But He changes not, He is the Same. If He were changeable the four Gospels would be no more to us than the histories of nations and heroes long since dead, but because He is the Same we may tell the story, and tell it again, how He said to the sinner of the city, “Thy sins are forgiven,” and to the dying malefactor, “Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” We can tell over and over again, how He uttered those wonderful words, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and heavy laden and I will give you rest,” and “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink.” We can tell of His compassions for the multitudes, His welcome to the children, His tears over Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus. Would not the Gospels take on a new glory, their true glory, if we read them in the light of the fact that what our Saviour was to others in the yesterday of His sojourn on earth, He is today in the glory? Men’s needs are the same, our needs are the same and His fulness is the same. Happy are those who can say, “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.”

Thou, Lord, alone, art all Thy children need,
And there is none beside;
From Thee the streams of blessedness proceed,
In Thee the blest abide:
Fountain of life, and all-abounding grace,
Our Source, our Centre, and our dwelling Place.
CHAPTER 2 opens, "And the third day." If we work back we find the second day was that on which Philip was found, and the first that on which Andrew and his companion found their Centre in Jesus. Viewing these things in a typical or allegorical sense, we may say that the first day is that in which the church is gathered to Christ; the second that in which He is recognised as Son of God and King of Israel by the godly remnant in Israel; the third that of millennial blessedness and joy as the fruit of the Son of Man being set over all things. On the occasion of the marriage at Cana no external glory marked the presence of Jesus. His disciples were there and His mother also, but He soon showed, by the answer He gave His mother, that the initiative was His and not hers; and also that His hour was not yet come—neither the hour of His suffering, nor the hour of His glory, when "all things" will be at His disposal. However, He quickly manifested His glory by showing that water was at His disposal, and that He could make of it that which He pleased. He turned the water of purification into the wine of rejoicing. This was the beginning of His miracles or signs, and as a sign it looked on to the ultimate result of His work. There can be no gladness of an abiding sort save on the basis of a purification which He brings to pass, and the gladness which will spring forth when at last the marriage day comes for a cleansed Israel, will be the best of all. The "good wine" is kept until that day. This sign, demonstrating His glory, confirmed the faith of His disciples, and may well confirm ours.

This illustrates how the kindly provisions of the law could be and were corrupted to serve man's covetous ends. There was instruction on this point in Deuteronomy 14: 22-26, and they might plead that they were only doing what the law allowed. The law told them to bring their money and purchase what they needed, but did not countenance the covetous practices they had introduced, turning the house of God into a money-making centre. The same thing in principle can be seen in our day; such as Romish shrines with shops attached where the devotees buy candles and other paraphernalia at high prices!

The Lord did not yet disown the Temple. He treated it as God's house, and He was filled with zeal for it. No one could resist Him and His scourge of small cords, and the evil-doers had for the moment to go. The Jews, however, challenged what He did and demanded a sign, as though the irresistible authority of His action was not sign enough. In reply He gave them the great sign of His own death and resurrection, only couched in symbolic language. The fact was that the Temple, as God's dwelling-place, was about to be superseded by Himself. His body was a far more wonderful "Temple" than that which had stood on Mount Moriah. The Word dwelt among us in flesh, and hence "God was in Christ" in a far deeper and more intimate way. The fulness of the Godhead was dwelling in Him. The Temple

After a short period still in Galilee, He went up for the Passover to Jerusalem. All these things transpired before John was cast into prison, and therefore before His more public entrance upon ministry, as recorded by the other Evangelists. The scene in the Temple, recorded here, took place therefore right at the beginning of His ministry. He was at the heart of things when He arrived at the Temple, and here at the very heart the need for a work of purification was most strongly manifest. The house of God, His Father, had been turned into a house of merchandise—a place of trading and worldly profit.
had served a certain capacity in Israel, but He was now filling that capacity in an altogether new way.

From the outset of this Gospel He is viewed as rejected. So here Jesus takes their deadly animosity for granted. His words were a prediction that they would set their hands to His death; destroying, as far as in them lay, the temple of His body. They would destroy, and in three days He would raise it up. Mark how He says that He would do it. It is equally true, of course, that God raised Him from the dead, but in chapter 10 He again speaks of His resurrection as His own act. This is in keeping with the Gospel which presents Him as the Word who was God and became flesh. Of all the signs He showed, His own resurrection was the greatest.

At the moment no one, not even His disciples, understood Him. This is another characteristic feature of John’s Gospel. He is continuously misunderstood, by friends as well as by foes. It was only after His resurrection and the consequent gift of the Spirit that the real meaning of these things dawned upon the disciples. But this again is not surprising. If the Word becomes flesh, He will speak to us in human accents it is true: but He will also speak of the lofty things which He knows as in the bosom of the Father. Hence His utterances are bound to have in them a depth utterly beyond any plumb-line which man possesses—depths which only the Holy Ghost can reveal.

When the Lord spoke figuratively of His resurrection His words were not understood by any, yet the works of power that He did had their effect on many minds. The verses which close chapter 2 show that miracles may produce a “belief” of a certain kind. Many in Jerusalem at that time would have subscribed to the dictum that “Seeing is believing”; yet the belief that springs from the sight of facts which cannot be denied is not the God-given faith which saves. It is merely intellectual conviction which, when tested, easily collapses, as we see in verse 66 of chapter 6.

For the moment things in Jerusalem must have appeared quite promising, but Jesus saw beneath the surface and the Evangelist seizes the opportunity to tell us so. He makes the twofold statement that Jesus “knew all men,” and that He “knew what was in man.” He makes again a very similar statement in verse 64 of chapter 6; but this in our chapter is the first of a series of similar remarks which disclose to us the omniscience of our Lord, and are very much in keeping with the character of this Gospel. Knowing these men Jesus did not commit Himself to them. The word translated commit is the same as that translated believed in the previous verse, which helps us to see that true faith is not a mere mental conviction but the committal of oneself in simple trust to the One in whom one believes.

Chapter 3 really begins with a word, which may be translated, But, though it is omitted in our Authorised Version. Nicodemus was amongst those impressed with the miracles, but in his case something further existed. The signs he had witnessed had led him in his thoughts to God, and after God he sought. The orthodox way of seeking God was to go up to the Temple, and that Nicodemus would have done by day. He chose the unorthodox way of seeking an interview with this “Teacher come from God,” who was not popularly accepted; hence he did it by night. He himself was a leader and teacher in Israel, and he assumed that all he needed for himself was further instruction. It was no small thing for this proud Pharisee to take the place of a humble scholar!

The Lord met him at once with that great and emphatic pronouncement concerning the absolute necessity of the new birth. Without it no one even sees the kingdom of God. He may see the miracles and signs, but he does not see the kingdom. Nicodemus needed the
new birth and not teaching for at once he showed himself quite incapable of understanding the Lord's words, and thereby he illustrated their truth. He could not see anything in them but a mystifying reference to natural birth. This called forth a second emphatic pronouncement in which the matter is carried a step further. The kingdom is not only to be seen but entered, and the birth for this must be of water and of Spirit.

What is imperative is not merely new behaviour or new principles of action, but a new birth, and this signifies an entirely new origin. The origin and pedigree of Nicodemus was of the best, since he came of true Abrahamic stock. Moreover he had acquired all possible culture in the Jew's religion. If he, a cultured son of Abraham needed a new birth then it shows that all flesh, even Abrahamic flesh, is condemned before God. The fact that new birth is universally needed puts the sentence of condemnation upon us all. By our first birth we found our origin in Adam, partaking of his life and nature. Only by experiencing new birth, which brings us into another life and nature, can we see or enter the kingdom.

The Lord's words in verse 5 are clearly a reference to the prophecy of Ezekiel 36: 24-32, which foretells the deep and fundamental cleansing which will reach Israel in the beginning of the millennial age, when God will "sprinkle clean water" upon them, giving them "a new heart" and putting within them "a new spirit," and then putting His Spirit within them. As a result of this they will be so cleansed in their very being that they will loathe themselves as in their former corruptions, and then they will be blessed of God. This passage does not give us the full truth of the matter, but it gives so much that Nicodemus ought to have felt no surprise at the things he had just heard. As a master in Israel he should have known what Ezekiel had said.

A good deal of sprinkling was enjoined under the law, generally of blood, but sometimes of water, as in Numbers 8 and 19. By sprinkling the blood or water was applied. Water is the great cleansing agent. Ezekiel used these familiar figures to teach that God would apply His cleansing agent to Israel for their spiritual renewal. His spiritual cleansing agent is His word, as is indicated in Psalm 119: 9.

So here we find the Lord in His earliest utterances linking His teaching with what had been made known through Ezekiel, and at the same time clarifying and expanding the truth. Yet more is revealed to us about it in the epistles, and we must remember that what we read as to it, in verses 12 and 13 of chapter 1, were written by the apostle John years after full light had been granted on the subject. To Nicodemus Jesus stated that new birth is an imperative necessity for every soul that would see or enter the kingdom; that it is of the Spirit as the active Agent, and of the water of the Word as the passive agent. Such is the state of all men that nothing less fundamental and drastic than a new birth will suffice.

He also stated that flesh always remains flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit partakes of His nature and remains spirit. Verse 6 makes it very plain that the two natures are altogether distinct and never merge into one another. The phrase, oft repeated in Genesis 1, applies—"after his kind." There is no more trace of evolution here than there is in Genesis 1: by no amount of cultivation or natural selection can flesh be transmuted into spirit.

A good deal of reasoning and controversy has taken place as to the new birth which might have been avoided if verse 8 had been duly noted. The Greek word for "wind" and "Spirit" is the same. Like wind the Spirit is invisible, and only to be apprehended by hearing Him in the word He gives, or feeling the effects of His operations. Like the wind, too, He is not subject to our control, and His actions beyond
all our thoughts. The same thing applies to all those who are spirit as born of Him. There must therefore be about the new birth, and about those born again, elements that are incomprehensible to us; consequently our reasonings may easily be futile or even erroneous.

In verse xi we get the note of special emphasis—"Verily, verily," for the third time in this chapter. Nicodemus was specially to note that the Lord was not speaking as a mere prophet. He had inward conscious knowledge of the things of which He spoke: He had actually seen that concerning which He testified. He was ever "in the bosom of the Father," as before intimated. Nevertheless His witness was not received by man, apart from the operation of the Spirit of God. And of what did He bear witness? He had spoken of things intimated by Ezekiel as necessary for earthly blessing in the millennial age, giving an expansion to Ezekiel's prophecy, and here was Nicodemus full of hesitancy and doubt. He had yet to speak of things related to God's purposes for heaven; were these things then likely to be received in faith?

Heavenly things in their very nature must be wholly inaccessible to men. Their feet tread the earth and they have a familiarity with it, but to heaven they have never come. But here was One wholly competent to reveal heavenly things. An astonishing paradox greets us. He came down from heaven, yet He was in heaven. If however we remember how the Gospel started, the paradox disappears. Here is the Word who was God and became flesh. In becoming flesh He certainly came down from heaven; yet He never ceased to be God who is in heaven. But He said, "the Son of Man which is in heaven." Yes, and evidently we are intended to learn thereby that we are not at liberty to dissect in our minds His person, as some are inclined to do. We must not say, In that position He is wholly as God; or, That He did altogether as Man. We may distinguish of course, but we must not divide. Even when in Manhood His personality is one and indivisible. Hence the Son of Man is the completely competent Spokesman of heavenly things. How different from all who had gone before!

Faith owns nothing real, nothing solid, nothing true, but the one true, living, eternal God. Nature might cast a longing look at the granaries of Egypt, and see something tangible, something substantial there. Faith looks up to heaven and finds all its springs there.

The Christian should always be peaceful and happy; always able to praise God, come what may. His joys do not flow from himself, or from the scene through which he is passing; they flow from the living God, and they are beyond the reach of every earthly influence.

A tender conscience is a most precious treasure to carry about with us, from day to day—a conscience that ever yields a true response to the action of the word of God—that bows down, without a question, to its plain statements.

The two grand elements of human perfection—of perfect manhood—are these, dependence and obedience. In proportion as anyone departs from these, he departs from the true spirit and attitude of a man. Independence and disobedience go together—they are utterly unchristian and unmanly.

The true safeguard against sins of ignorance is the study of the Word; the true safeguard against presumptuous sins is subjection to the Word.
PREPARATION.

I STAYED in the home of a bride-to-be. It was an interesting experience, and not interesting only, but instructive. She was a capable girl and carried out all her house duties as she had always done, but it was evident that the coming looked-for day filled her thoughts, and all her leisure was filled up in preparation for it. If she went out she did it with a purpose, either a visit to the dressmaker’s establishment or to make purchases of new and needful things, and if she stayed at home she kept her needle busy. Certainly she wasted no time. She was to live in a distant town and there the happy, expectant bridegroom was just as busy as she. All the time that he could snatch from his day’s work was spent in preparing the home for his bride, and a daily letter reported his progress. I could not help being interested—who would not have been?—even though it is the sort of thing that is happening every day and in every land.

But the instructive part of it to me was, that two brief words of Scripture were brought forcibly to my mind by it. The first was words that came from the Lord’s own lips. Said He, “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14: 2). The second is said of His bride. “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19: 7). Preparation in heaven and preparation on earth!

We have no doubt as to what lay behind these words of the Lord. It was that love of His that will not be satisfied until the marriage day comes. And what a glad surprise His bride will get when she enters that eternal home. Her eyes will not rest on a single thing or scene that is not perfect, all the fruit of a perfect love: a home prepared for her joy by a love that surpasses all her thought. It seems to me that the Lord intends us to consider His words: it would be good for us to consider them every day. “I go to prepare a place for you.” Will His love overlook one single thing in that home that will contribute to the joy of His bride? Not a single thing. All the preparation must be to make her absolutely and happily at home with Him. But it would not be home to her if He were not there, so those other words, “that where I am ye may be also.” He, Himself, will be the all-absorbing Object there, His company her supreme joy, but everything within that home will bear the eternal impress of His love for His bride and His consideration for her.

But what of the other side—“His wife hath made herself ready”? His wife is His church, as Ephesians 5: 25-32 clearly shews. What preparation is she making for the great day, and where do we see it? Of course, she could not make herself fit for heaven, or fit to be the wife of the Lamb, her fitness for that home of eternal love is Christ Himself. He is her righteousness. She did not choose Him but He chose her, and when He did so He purposed in His heart and according to God’s own counsels to give Himself for her, even to death, not only that He might possess her without a rival for ever, but that He might redeem her from all iniquity and sanctify and cleanse her by the washing of water by the Word. Blood and water were both necessary if she was to be His spotless and glorious bride, and both flowed from His side when He died at Calvary.

Yet she makes herself ready for the marriage, just as the young bride of my story prepared for her wedding by her diligent stitching. “To her was granted,” says our Scripture, “that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.” The word, as is well known, should be in the plural. It is righteousnesses and not righteousness. What are righteousnesses?
First of all, and what lies behind them, and without which there could be none of them, is the thought, "What will please Him?" How would He who is my Lord as well as the coming Bridegroom have me to appear? And such a question could only arise in the heart that loves Him. We must begin there. That "first love" which the church at Ephesus lost must be revived in the heart of the bride if she is to make herself ready for the marriage day. It is as this "first love" controls her that she will cry with earnest expectation, "Come, Lord Jesus," but along with that will be the diligent preparation that she be not found wanting in that day.

This fine linen, clean and white, is of imperishable beauty and the threads of it are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, faith, meekness, temperance"; it is the life of Jesus reproduced in His saints on earth by the Holy Spirit that dwells in them, and every thread of it is a wonderful triumph for God. He will be able to shew on that marriage day the reality of His work in His saints, and that Christ was enough for their hearts in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil.

It is evident that the thoughts of the Lord are upon His church on earth. "I go to prepare a place for you," proves that, and the thoughts of His church must be upon Him if she is preparing for the hour of meeting and union with Him. We know that all is perfect on His side; on ours there is fickleness and failure, and yet we love Him and desire His approval. May God's Holy Spirit deepen this love for Him and increase our desires to be just what He would have us to be, that we may have a large part in this preparation for the marriage day.

**God is Light.**

It is common for men to descant on God as love, and even to transpose the sentence and claim that love is God: how seldom we hear that God is Light. This is the ultimate folly of man's mind, and makes a mere idol of God. It is blessedly true that God is love, but He's more. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Light is a burning word, and is expressive of His intrinsic and absolute purity of nature; love is "expression of the activities of His nature to others." There is no sacrifice of His light to His love; if that were possible it would entail the greatest loss on His children; but it is impossible. And we who were once darkness are light in the Lord. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, is at once the great proof of God's great love, but it also meets all the claims of the absolute, the perfect Light of God, and it has given us a sure footing in the light for it cleanseth from all sin.

**Conclusion of paper, "Eldad and Medad," from page 128.**

"Now all these things happened unto them for examples [types]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [age] are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10: 11).

well-being of the people of the Lord, because they were His people. And after such an expression of his deepest feelings and desire, what could he do but that which he did do? "And Moses got him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel."
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

The Broken Bread at the Lord's Supper.

The question has been raised as to whether the loaf at the Lord’s Supper should be partaken of unbroken, whether “the bread which we break” (1 Cor. 10:16) is not the true breaking of it, and whether the unbroken loaf on the table represents the unity of the one body of Christ.—S.

It was a broken bread that the Lord handed to His disciples when He instituted the Supper on the night of His betrayal, and they ate of no other, nor should we. The broken bread signifies in a striking way His body broken, or given in death for us; an unbroken loaf could not have the same meaning or be so impressive.

“The bread which we break” is not the breaking of the loaf in the first instance, but our communion in eating together of that already broken bread; and in the meaning and results of it, “We are all partakers of that one bread.” It is, along with the cup, the fellowship of the Lord’s death. “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.”

We cannot admit that the unbroken loaf on the table signifies the unity of the one body of which Christ is the Head. It enters into the service when broken and it represents nothing but the Lord’s own body given for us, and nothing must be allowed in any way to obscure this. It is we who partake who “are the one bread, one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” The one bread being in us all shews that we are one. It is in the saints that the unity of the body is known and seen, not in the loaf on the table.

Cleansing by Blood and by Water.

A tract by a well-known Author has been given to me in which it is stated that the Christian needs to turn repeatedly to the blood of Jesus Christ for cleansing, and the washing of the disciples’ feet (John 13) is quoted in this connection. Some clear teaching on the subject would be appreciated.—R.

The error arises from the failure to see that the Scriptures speak of cleansing in two ways, namely, by blood and by water. The blood cleanses from the guilt of sin, the water from its defilement. The first cleansing is judicial, the second moral. Cleansing by blood gives us a standing in perfect and perpetual righteousness before God, cleansing by water produces a state that answers to this standing. The first is for expiation, the second for purification, or we might say the first secures justification from all things for us, the second our sanctification. Cleansing by blood is done once and for all, never to be repeated, while cleansing by the water has a twofold application; it is done once and for all too, but, as we shall see, there is also need of its oft repeated application to us.

Referring to 1 John 1:7, “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth from all sin,” we should see that it is not here the question of when it does this, but what it does. Attention is turned to the abiding efficacy of the blood, that we might rest in it without a doubt. The words should be read in their context, “God is light, and if we walk in the light as He is in the light.” At once the question arises, How is that possible? The answer is, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” That is its abiding power; it answers every demand of the
Light; by it God's justice is vindicated and our consciences purged once and for all; it is the basis of the unassailable righteousness in which we stand before God and of our abiding relationship with Him. It was shed once for all and has been applied once for all to all who believe. Were it not so we could not have unbroken peace with God, but now we can give thanks for the words "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10).

As to the water. Water as well as blood flowed from the side of our crucified Lord and it has a significance, not less important in its place than the blood. But let us consider the Lord's own words, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The water here must be the word in its purifying character. Other passages help us to this conclusion. James 1:18 says, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth," and 1 Peter 1 says, "Being born again ... by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Being born again means for us a new and sinless nature, though the old flesh remains in us which can do nothing else but sin. The blood tells of a work done for us by our great Saviour when He died for us, the water of a work done in us by the word applied in the power of the Holy Ghost which brings about an inward change, the result of which is "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and from the time of this work within us God views us in relation to the Spirit's work within us. We are in the Spirit and not in the flesh, though the flesh remains in us. We are in Christ" (Romans 8).

Two words of the Lord to His disciples will confirm this. In John 15:3 He said, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." That was not cleansing from the guilt of sin, only His blood could do that. His words were spirit and life, and they had entered their souls in power and changed them, the very springs of their beings had been cleansed, and though they might fail, as they did, by trusting or listening to the old flesh, yet that was not their life, henceforward their life was bound up with and in Him. Then at the supper table He said, "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10). This was true of all the disciples except Judas, there had been no inward change of heart in him, no impartation of the new life.

This brings us to the feet washing and the oft recurring need of cleansing by the water of the word. And for this we will quote from the writings of the late J. A. Trench:—"We have to pass through a defiling world, where all that meets the senses tends to hinder communion with Him Who is our life. Hence the need of the second application of the word, symbolised by the Lord's touching service to His disciples. He girded Himself with the towel and pouring water into a basin, began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. It was, as He tells Peter, that they might have 'part with Him' when He would be gone out of the world to the Father. In going through the world we are apt to contract defilement at every step, or at least that which would bring moral distance between our souls and Him. He knows how to apply His word to bring back our souls to the enjoyment of His presence in His ever faithful and unfailing love. That first action of His by which we are clean every whit could never be repeated, this is needed continually. Nor does He leave us to apply the word to ourselves. He does it Himself, though He may use any of us who have learnt in the school of His grace, in this privileged service to others."

"Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26).
THE divine record of God's ways with men in the past and with Israel in particular have been written and preserved for our admonition, and the story of Eldad and Medad stands out with such prominence in this record that we must not overlook it, or miss the lesson it would teach us. It was a time of grave crisis in the camp of Israel. The people had grown weary of the heavenly Manna that typified Christ as our daily food; they had grown restive and demanded a change of diet. It was a time when the word of God was greatly needed in their midst. Moses was a bewildered man and complained to the Lord that the burden of the people was too much for him. So the Lord commanded that seventy men, trustworthy elders of the people, should be gathered out of the camp to the tabernacle of the congregation. "And the Lord came down in a cloud . . . and took the Spirit that was upon Moses, and gave it unto the seventy elders, and it came to pass when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease."

They seemed to have prophesied before the Lord, but what about the multitudes in the camp, was there no word of the Lord for them? There was, for we read, But there remained two of the men in the Camp and they were of those that were written, and upon them the same Spirit rested; and they prophesied in the camp. The name of the one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. Their names are given, and in this way they were distinguished from their sixty-eight brethren, whose names are not given. These two were the outstanding men.

What moved these men, who were chosen of Moses to share the burden of the people equally with the other elders, to remain in the camp? Their names give the clue to their behaviour. Eldad means "God has loved," and Medad means "Love." Later in his history Moses sang of Israel, "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand, and they sat down at Thy feet, every one shall receive Thy word" (Deut. 33: 3). But at this crisis that we are considering Moses seems to have forgotten this, or he may not have fully learnt it then. Anyhow it was not uppermost in his mind, for he complains with some petulance that they were more than he could endure, and blamed God for imposing such a burden upon him. Then there shone out the faith and love of these two men: they seem to have realised beforehand the truth of the song of Moses. These people in spite of their perversity were one, they were God's people and dearly loved by Him, hence they could not but love them and serve them. And how could they serve them in such an hour and deliver them from their perversity and evil desires apart from the word of God, and how could they hear that word without a preacher? The Spirit of God honoured their spirit and purpose, and rested upon them and they prophesied in the camp.

But theirs was unusual conduct and Eldad and Medad could not expect to escape criticism and condemnation. There are always those who are rigidly legal and are more concerned about their conception of the letter of the law than its spirit, so we read, "There ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the Camp." He had better have stayed and given ear to their words. But his tale-bearing stirred up "Joshua, the servant of Moses, one of his young men," and he was zealous for his master's honour, and cried, "My lord Moses, forbid them." He evidently considered this irregular ministry to be worthy of strong rebuke or stern discipline. Noble Moses, he could not harbour resentment against this people. Over and over the deeply rooted love of his heart for them breaks out. Here his irritation of spirit disappears and he answered, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all THE LORD'S PEOPLE were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" These were noble words, generous words, the words of a man whose very life was bound up with the

(Concluded at foot of page 125)
Peter and Paul stand out in the New Testament as representative men. Probably we see more of our frailty and failure in Peter, but even in Paul the valiant, we discern desires and difficulties that are not strange to us. The Lord's ways with them are recorded for our learning, and in these ways the fact shines out as clear as the sun that He was more than enough for all their necessities and distresses. Herein we have sure hope and great encouragement. And here I will give the words that led me to write this short paper, they came forth from the Lord's own mouth. To Peter He said, "I have prayed for thee," and to Paul He said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is not really necessary to make many remarks on these wonderful sayings—they speak for themselves and are enough to sustain the soul of any child of God even in the greatest trials of faith, for what the Lord was to Peter and Paul He is for all His own: for you and for me.

It is interesting that both these men passed through a threefold test; Peter three times denied his Lord, and Paul three times prayed that the thorn that tore his flesh might be removed. The three times would indicate the intensity of their trials as it also tested and proved the efficacy of the Lord's intercession and grace. Then Satan had a hand in both these great testings. To Peter the Lord said, "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat"; and Paul said the thorn in his flesh was "the messenger of Satan to buffet him." Again both these servants of the Lord had to pass through their testings in respect to spiritual pride. Peter was puffed up because of his undoubted devotion to the Lord, which he considered greater than that of his brethren; he had to be purged of that pride. Paul's thorn was given to him because he was liable to be puffed up because of his great knowledge of the things of God; he had to be preserved from that; and finally the result of the testings was to be the same with both men, they were to be delivered from all self-confidence and self-reliance to find all their strength in the Lord and to rely wholly upon Him.

Peter and all the disciples were to be "sifted as wheat," but every trial to which any child of God is subjected is sifting—tribulation means that; and "in the world ye shall have tribulation" is a sure word. The tribulum, from which the word is derived, was the threshing instrument that separated the wheat from the chaff. Bereavement, sickness, personal suffering, loss of possessions, all adverse circumstances and strong temptation, all these are for the sifting of the wheat from the chaff, and Satan is not far away when the sifting begins. In Peter's case he did the sifting, he seized the flail and was determined to smash his faith, but he was too late for that: our omniscient Lord was ahead of him: His intercession went before Peter to the threshing floor; and though he failed, grievously failed, his faith did not fail, and on the day of Pentecost the devil must have discovered how Peter's faith which he had hoped to destroy had been sustained and strengthened and purified in and by the sifting, and how completely he, the tempter, had been foiled in the conflict; his foul designs had recoiled on his own head. The intercession of the Advocate had prevailed against the malice of the Adversary and Accuser.

We look out on the family of God in the world and we see it in sore tribulation. These are sifting times. Some are more sorely pressed than others, but that would be a selfish and unchristian heart that was not pained and did not grieve for the widespread sufferings of the day. There are lands in which our brethren in the great family are suffering in prisons and concentration camps for their faith; in others it is a crime to possess a Bible,
and Christian fellowship is only possible in secret. In these more favoured lands multitudes are enduring anxiety which has grown into agony; they are in suspense day and night; and many are suffering from sickness, pain and injuries and nerve strain; some have lost their possessions, and many are bereaved, the sorest test of all. And Satan is busy; he has had long experience in handling the flail and knows well how to increase the pressure upon the suffering soul. His plan of campaign is to suggest doubts and questions as to God's goodness and the reliability of His Word, because of the very sorrows in which he is the prime mover. There is nothing new in this, it has been his way from the beginning, but by these means he hopes to rob suffering saints of their confidence in God consequently of their peace of heart, and to mix bitterness and rebellion in their cup of sorrow. But in distress what comfort there is in these words, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." What confidence, what courage they impart to the soul.

Your tribulation, dear reader, may have come upon you suddenly and unexpectedly, and may have taken you by surprise; it did not surprise your Lord, who ever liveth to make intercession for you. He knew all about it beforehand and He prayed for you before it happened. May you take His words home to yourself? Yes, you may, just as though you were the only suffering saint in the world and as though the words had been addressed to you as they were to Peter: they are for you as truly as they were for him. The intercession of your Lord will sustain you through your trial, and because of it you may sound forth the Christian's triumphant challenge, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or sword?" Nay, in all these things you may be more than a conqueror through Him who loves you. You need not fail as Peter failed, for He is able to keep you from falling. Your faith will not fail for He has taken charge of it, and He must triumph in and through you.

Not one of us will ever be forced into such a fierce fight as that which Satan waged with Peter. It opened in the high priest's kitchen, but that was but the first onslaught in the great conflict; it continued in those dark and terrible hours that followed. Peter had slept on the Mount of the Lord's glory, and in the garden of His sorrow, and afterwards he slept in prison while awaiting execution; he might well be called the sleepy disciple; but does anyone suppose he slept from the time of his denial until he saw his Lord again? Sleep! Nay, Satan would see to it that he did not sleep, even if his own base conduct had permitted it. His conscience would give him no rest, and Satan would give him no rest, and the sifting time went on until the Lord delivered him from it by His appearance to him on the resurrection morning.

His Lord had been crucified, a mode of death reserved for the worst of criminals, and what words can describe what that meant to Peter? He had had great hopes in Him, he had thought that he was following Him to a throne and lo, instead a cross had been given Him, and He had accepted it without remonstrance or resistance. He had been numbered with the transgressors, despised and rejected by men, and Peter had played his ignoble part in all that his Lord had suffered. He should have died for his Lord and had boasted that he would, but instead he had denied Him. Would not Satan mock him as his conscience accused him? Would he not present the death of shame that Jesus had suffered as His utter and final defeat, and Peter's faith in Him as a vain thing? His fiery darts would fly thick and fast, all aimed at Peter's faith: the flail would fall stroke upon stroke on his innermost soul; as the hours passed on leaden feet, every weapon in Satan's armoury would be brought forth and used with satanic skill to destroy the faith of

...
Peter, but it was all in vain. The Lord had prayed for him and His prayer prevailed. The chaff was scattered, but not a grain of wheat was lost. The scars of the great conflict remained on Peter all his days, he could not forget it nor the grace of His Lord, and his desire was to preserve his brethren from the suffering that he had suffered as a result of his self-confidence and unwatchfulness. So he wrote to them, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5: 8). Thus was Satan defeated and Peter came out of the conflict with faith strengthened to strengthen his brethren. Whatever trial of faith any of us may be called to pass through cannot be comparable to Peter’s, yet the Lord carried him through it and He will not fail us.

Paul’s case was different and the buffetings that Satan’s messenger gave him were from another quarter, they did not arise out of any failure of his; the attack came upon him when he was faithfully serving the Lord and receiving signal marks of His favour. The thorn that caused him such anguish of body and spirit was something entirely personal. For a wise reason we are not told what it was, but it meant a fierce trial for Paul in which Satan sorely pressed him for a victory. As far as our knowledge goes he did not pray for relief from anything else. In the previous chapter he tells of some of his sufferings, and we marvel that any man could have endured them, but he did not pray to be relieved of any of them, he accepted them all with joy as part of the price he had to pay for the high honour of bearing witness before men of the blessedness of his glorious Lord and Saviour, he expected nothing else but suffering. But the thorn in the flesh was different: it was something that changed his strength to weakness and robbed him of all pride in himself, and when men looked at him, the most valiant of all the servants of the Lord, they saw a man beset with "infirmities, necessities and distresses."

How Satan hated this man, and as he gained permission to harass Job, so now he was allowed with satanic malice to drive this stake into Paul’s body and soul, and then his mockery and tempting began. It would have been a waste of time and effort to have told Paul that his faith in Jesus was vain, for he lived on the post-resurrection side of the cross, and had heard the voice of his Lord and had seen Him there, but he may have suggested that since the Lord had all power He had not much consideration for His faithful servant, seeing He allowed him to suffer what seemed to be a needless and distressing affliction; but that temptation would also fail utterly to shake Paul’s confidence in the Lord: he knew Him too well to doubt Him. It is very probable that he told Paul that he would never again serve the Lord with the freedom that he had enjoyed, that he would be an object of contempt in the eyes of men when he stood up to address them, and, crippled as he was, he might as well give up all thought of continuing his witness for the One who had loved him and given Himself for him: his day was done.

Whatever the thorn was and however Satan buffeted him in it, it cast him on the Lord and made him pray. Peter did not pray for himself, but Paul did—he prayed in an agony: he besought the Lord, not once but thrice, that He would set Him free from this terrible burden, this incubus, that threatened to crush both spirit and life out of him. And what was the result of his praying? He was heard but his request was not granted. What did he say about it? Hear him. "And He said unto me." Weigh every word—his Lord drew near to him and spoke to him and soothed and quieted his spirit by intimate, peace-giving words; and what were they? "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Could anything be more affecting than that? Then and there
Paul learnt what he had never before learnt in all the revelations he had received, no, not even those he had heard when called up into the third heaven. He learnt the Lord's solicitude for him, the tenderness of His heart, His deep and never-ceasing care for His suffering servant; he discovered that the grace of the Lord was as boundless as His glory and as inexhaustible as His wealth of power. "My grace... for thee." There was henceforward to be as Paul had never known it in all his Christian experience a continual flow of active love from the heart of His Lord into his very being, and he was to be upheld in this greatest of all trials, not by his indomitable spirit, but by the arm of the Lord. The thing that Satan intended should drive him to desperation and totally unfit him for the service of the Lord was turned into his greatest blessing, and instead of being defeated he triumphed in the grace and strength of the Lord when he cried, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

"I have prayed for thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee." These words abide for us in their fullest meaning. The first casts a hedge about our faith and will preserve it inviolate in every time of testing, even when the testing is the result of our own folly and failure, as Peter's was. The second is the pledge that the Lord's personal grace and strength will uphold us and carry us through the testing and turn the burdens into blessings, the trials into triumphs and the sorrows into songs, as in Paul's case. We have committed the eternal welfare of our souls unto Him and He will honour the trust and we may with the greatest confidence trust Him at all times, assured that He will carry us through to the glory of God and present us faultless there with exceeding joy.

Maranatha.

Christ is coming! let creation bid her groans and travail cease;
Let the glorious proclamation hope restore and faith increase.
Maranatha! Come Thou blessed Prince of Peace!

Earth can now but tell the story of Thy bitter cross and pain;
She shall yet behold Thy glory, when Thou comest back to reign.
Maranatha! Let each heart repeat the strain!

Long Thine exiles have been pining, far from rest and home and Thee
But in heavenly glory shining, soon shall they Thy glory see.
Maranatha! Haste the joyous jubilee!

With that "blessed hope" before us, let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty advent-chorus onward roll from tongue to tongue,
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, come Lord, come."

"Christ, only Christ, ere long will fill my vision;
Glory excelling, soon, full soon I'll see;
Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling;
Christ, only Christ, my All in All to be."
The characteristic word in Psalm 62 seems to be "only." First, my only resource. God is my only resource. In the Psalm the soul is beset with difficulties. All around there are enemies, hypocrites, enviers, haters. They appear in verses 3-4. They imagine mischief, they consult to cast him down, they delight in lies, they bless with their mouths, but they curse inwardly. That is exactly what our blessed Lord experienced here in His life of service, trial and crucifixion. In His pathway through the world He endured the hatred, envy and hypocrisy of the heart of man, and we need not be surprised if the saints of God have to pass the same way. But in the midst of it, as in Psalm 62, the one who suffers for Christ's sake can take up the very language of the Psalmist, "When my heart is overwhelmed lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." God is at the top. God is our only resource. My soul wait thou only upon God.

When difficulties arise we often turn to human resources. We look to each other, we seek counsel together, and how often we forget that our only resource is God Himself. If only we could be satisfied with that dependent place then confidence would be begotten immediately instead of doubt. If God is my only resource, then God will be my only confidence. That is what the Psalmist finds. As he waits upon God, what is the answer? He only is my Rock. "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." We are led to the One who is strong and unshakable, our refuge, our hiding-place. Power belongs to Him, and to Him belongs mercy, verses 11, 12. Power to protect us from evil without, and mercy to meet the evil within. He is not only a Rock, but as He speaks here, "and my salvation," my only deliverance, or better still, my Deliverer. He has set Himself not only to deliver His saints from "the wrath to come," but in every time of trial, and to bring them into eternal blessing. God will not be satisfied until He sees us conformed to the image of His Son, and He will deliver from every foe and snare on the way to that glorious destiny.

The path of our Lord, the perfect Man, is most worthy of our contemplation, everything according to man was against Him, yet He never turned aside. Only God was before Him, He lived to do His will. He went on in quiet confidence in God, and that should be our happy experience, and will be as we follow in His steps.

As a business man I can speak from experience of the difficulties in a day like this. But let it come home to each one of us that if God is our only confidence we shall not be greatly moved. Look how the words are used; it is the language of faith. He is my Defence, or, my high wall. It is a grand thing to have a high wall around us, such as we have in Philippians 4. If we take everything to Him in prayer we shall have the peace of God like a garrison about our hearts and minds. That is the high wall around us. He is my Defence against all the malignant efforts of the enemy and against all the machinations of men.

In the previous Psalm he had said, "Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy." There was his defence, but what else did he say? "I will abide in Thy tabernacle for ever." That was the secret of his assurance. We get confidence when we are in His presence, near to Him, in the inside place. That is the only place of refuge, the only place of dependence, the only place of real communion. If I abide in Thy tabernacles "I will trust in the covert of Thy wings." What a shelter that is. In the covert of His wings there is protection—there we can rest and not be afraid. He speaks in verses 3 and 4 of what man's condition is, where man's thoughts are. How un-
trustworthy man is! But he turns from men, and says, "My soul, wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from Him." I need not expect anything from man, nor even overmuch from my brethren.

"Earthly friends may fail or leave us, One day soothe, the next day grieve us."

But if our expectation is only from God we shall not be let down. If we continue in that waiting attitude, if we continue in that place of dependence, if our only expectation is from God, we shall not be disappointed with what He sends.

Disappointed we often are when we find things are not what we hoped they would be. And with ourselves, how often we are disappointed with ourselves. We try to walk, as we think, uprightly and consistently, but how often we are unwary and we weaken and fail. We have not been expecting only from God. If our expectation is only from God, again I say, there will never be a disappointment there.

"No good in creatures can be found, All, all is found in Thee; We must have all things and abound Through Thy sufficiency."

But expectation only from God brings me into very close communion with Him; it is the path of faith that the Psalmist is describing. He says "He only is my Rock and my Salvation. He is my Defence and I shall not be moved." There is no "greatly moved" now. He speaks with assurance. This is experience, and if our expectation is only from God, if our resources are only in God, if God is our only confidence, blessed be God, we shall be "steadfast, unmoving, always abounding in the work of the Lord." There is this path in which we can put our feet down and go steadily on, assured that God in whom we trust will not fail us.

When that is our experience, we can go on with the rest of the Psalm and say, "In God is my salvation and my glory, God is the Rock of my strength." He takes me into His hand, He moulds me, fashions me according to His own pleasure. His desire is that I might be made conformable to His own beloved Son, and that I might be found here in the world pleasing Him. He is our only glory; not in man are we to glory; in neither his wealth nor his power nor his wisdom, but in God only. What a God we have! He is infinitely strong, yet infinitely gracious, infinitely just, yet infinitely kind, and all He does is working out His sovereign purpose and pleasure that in the coming day we might enjoy all that He has in His heart for us, and even begin to enjoy it now.

The Psalmist goes on to say because of his experience of what God is, "Trust in Him at all times ye people, in sickness, in health, in poverty, in wealth, in war or peace, whatever it is. Pour out your hearts before Him." It is easy to say these things and repeat Scripture, but here is the language of a soul that has experimental knowledge of God and is able to say with confidence, "Trust in Him ye people at all times." He can associate others with himself now. He finds joy in fellowship, he can call others to the Refuge in which he confides; he can bring them along with himself and say, I want you to have confidence in God, because I have proved Him myself.

Passing on he says, "God is a Refuge." Not only for me, but "FOR US." It is good to be able to bring the saints of God along with yourself, to have fellowship with them in prayer, to tell them to pour out their hearts before God. It is good if you can say, "He has not disappointed me"; and He will not disappoint you.

"Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." God is our Rock, but the best of men are
vanity. What a contrast! There is no help for us in man. "Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery. If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Why? God has spoken, and He has the last word about everything. "God hath spoken once; twice I have heard this." Here we come to the top, to the source of everything, to the One Who has spoken, and heaven and earth shall pass away, but not His word. Hath He said it, and shall He not bring it to pass? He has set a limit to all evil and He has our interests at heart. "Power belongeth to God. Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy." It is a grand thing to know that the One to whom all power belongs is exercising that power in mercy. Power without mercy would be our destruction. Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy for Thou renderest to every man according to his works. Those last words are solemn words for those who turn from God. Though He waits in mercy and long-suffering yet He sees the oppression and robbery, and He has said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." But judgment is His strange work, He delights in mercy and He has dealt with us in mercy. We needed it, and still need it. And we are looking for His crowning mercy, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

"I AM THE LORD" Exodus 6

It is a great blessing to a man when he begins to understand that God is sovereign, He is supreme, the absolute God, and that His will, and His will alone must prevail. Then to learn that He is good. The heart of the great I AM is kind; He is full of compassion. This is revealed when He said to Moses, "I have heard the groanings of the children of Israel."

Mercy and sovereignty go together. This comes out in its fulness in the New Testament. What could exceed in blessedness such a statement as this: "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)" (Eph. 2)?

He said to Israel, "I am the LORD. I will bring you out. . . I will rid you out of your bondage, I will redeem you. . . I will take you to Me. . . I will be to you a God. . . I will bring you into the land. . . I will give it to you. . . I AM THE LORD." The seven-fold "I wills" are prefaced and concluded by the declaration of His Sovereign Name, the pledge that He will not, cannot fail. When God announces His purpose in redemption, and the goodness of His sovereign will, we do well to listen. Better promises and a more glorious destiny have been revealed to us.

How happy are those who bow to the supreme God and listen to what He will tell them of the love that is in His heart; and what surpassing grace it is on His part to enter into relationship with them so that they may find their all in Him and that He may find His satisfaction in them.

The end of God's work for Israel was to bring them into the promised land. He will bring us into a better home, the Father's house, and into a more glorious heritage, the heavenly kingdom; and we must not lose sight of the care bestowed on us by the way. Our sure entry into the Father's house is not far distant. The prospect of our introduction into glory animates our hope.

"When to Canaan's long-loved dwelling
Love divine thy foot shall bring."

It is our part to know more of the
love, the counsels and the patient mercy of the Sovereign I AM who has revealed Himself to us in our Lord Jesus Christ. This name called forth Pharaoh’s anger and it called forth the antagonism of the religious world (John 8: 59); then stones were taken up to cast at the One who declared His sovereignty, may we, whose eyes have been opened through grace, be more simply conformed to His supreme, His holy will, which is good, acceptable and perfect.

BIBLE STUDY — JOHN’S GOSPEL

HAVING mentioned heavenly things, the Lord at once proceeded to foretell the great event that must take place before they could be available for men, and the full revelation of them be made. The event had been typified by the brazen serpent in the wilderness—even the lifting up of th Son of Man on the cross. This is the work wrought for us, outside of ourselves. New birth is a work wrought in us. As to both Jesus used the word, MUST; for both are imperative if we are to have to do with God in blessing. The sacrificial death of the Son of Man is the only possible way of eternal life for man; a way that becomes effective for “whosoever believeth in Him”; that is, by faith.

Verses 16 and 17 both begin with “For,” and thus are connected closely with verses 14 and 15. We discover that this Son of Man, who came down from heaven, yet is in heaven, who was lifted up on the cross, is the only begotten Son whom God gave. How strikingly all this fits in with Romans 8: 3, where also is set forth the truth typified by the brazen serpent. Just as Moses made the brazen serpent in the likeness of the fiery serpents that were the source of the mischief, so God had sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that sin in the flesh might be condemned in His sacrifice for sin. Sin was resident in our flesh, dominating and corrupting our old life. Believing in Jesus, the Son of God, eternal life is ours; but it rests for its basis on God’s condemnation of sin at the cross. There the governing power, active in our old life, was condemned, the pledge that ultimately it will be removed for ever. On that basis eternal life is given.

In the gift of the only begotten Son the love of God is revealed; a love which embraced not Israel merely, but the world. The way in which the grace made known in this Gospel overlaps the narrow boundaries of Israel is very striking. In the opening verses we saw that “the life was the light of men,” not of Israel merely; as also that the true Light “lighteth every man.” So here, “God . . . loved the world,” and the gift of the Son is the measure of the love. Further the term, “only begotten,” expresses the supreme and exclusive place He holds in God’s love. The type of Abraham and Isaac helps us here. Hebrews 11 tells us that Abraham offered “his only begotten son,” though as a matter of fact he had Ishmael at that time, and subsequently many more sons. Isaac however stood solitary and alone in God’s purpose and in Abraham’s affection. After this striking fashion the term is used of the Son of God, and it is intended to enhance in our minds the greatness of God’s gift. God gave the One supreme and unique in His affections.

Verse 17 furnishes a further thought. Perishing is at the end of the course the world pursues, as verse 16 indicates. Now we find that judgment and condemnation lies ahead of it. To perish is to lie eternally in utter alienation and separation from God; that is, in a state of eternal death. Life is consequently an urgent necessity for men and the gift of the only begotten Son has made
it possible for the believer in Him to have not merely life of some sort, but "eternal life," life of that Divine and surpassingly wonderful quality. So too, the coming of the Son into the world was not for the purpose of condemnation; the law of Moses had already brought that in pretty effectively. He came to save. The godly in Israel expected the raising up of "an horn of salvation" in the house of David, that would save them from their enemies (see Luke 1: 68-71), but this is something much greater. The salvation is from sin and its effects, and the scope of it is the world.

Still though the Son of God had not come to earth with the object of condemning, His presence here did incidentally bring in condemnation, inasmuch as He was the Light, and light makes everything manifest, and so brings all men to the test. Light acts in illumination and manifestation, and in its presence man reacts in one of two ways. If he is a doer of evil he loves darkness and hates light because it reproves him. If a doer of truth he welcomes the light and comes to it. These verses (18-20) assume that "he that believeth on Him" is the doer of truth; whilst "he that believeth not" is the doer of evil. The one comes to the light and there is no condemnation for him: the other remains in the darkness, and this is sufficient to condemn him. The light has appeared in the coming of the Son of God and he has not believed. That is enough, and there is no need to wait until the arrival of the actual day of judgment. He is condemned already.

Verses 22-24 make it quite clear that the foregoing things transpired before John was cast into prison, which is the point from which the Lord’s public ministry started according to Matthew 4: 12; Mark 1: 14; Luke 3: 20. For a short time baptism was being administered by both the Lord—through His disciples (see 4: 2)—and John. Certain Jews took occasion to apprise John of this activity of the Lord, as though they would stir him to jealousy. If this was their object, they wholly failed to achieve it.

With real humility and fidelity John kept his place as a servant of God who had nothing but that which he had received from heaven. They had to bear witness that he had never claimed to be the Christ. He had claimed to be the forerunner of the Messiah: he was also the friend of the Bridegroom. In this second claim he evidently spoke figuratively by way of illustration. Truth, such as we have in Revelation 19: 7, was not yet revealed, but doubtless he was inspired to express himself in terms which exactly suit that truth when revealed. He had no link with the bride, but as the friend of the Bridegroom he had in Him the deepest interest and affection. To hear the Bridegroom’s voice filled up his cup of joy to the brim.

Then John uttered words which should be graven upon the heart of every one who loves the Lord Jesus—"He must increase, but I must decrease." For the third time in this chapter we get MUST. In verse 7 it is connected with man’s great need; in verse 14 with God’s great love; here with the devotion of the true-hearted servant. Like the sun, Christ was to rise to His zenith with increasing glory; thus, like the moon, John was to fade out and disappear. He knew it and rejoiced, for at that moment in his thoughts Christ was all. He knew Him as One coming from heaven and not of the earth at all. Consequently He spoke in a way impossible to all others. He was in touch with the full range of heavenly things in a way impossible to the greatest of the prophets, such as John.

John’s words came true, and soon he had to decrease and drop out of sight in prison. In this he was no exception to the rule. It is the rule for all the servants of God: in one way or another they decrease and depart. It was so with Moses in the Old Testa-
ment, and with Paul in the New. Great servants as they were, we must not think too much of them. Paul had his day as an ardent evangelist and founder of churches. But then came prison for him, and failure in the churches, and so he drops out of our sight. Paul decreases, but only to increase the supreme excellence of Christ. So it must be for all of us, and we should rejoice in it as John did.

The opening words of verse 33 appear to contradict the closing words of verse 32, but the paradox is a purely verbal one, and based upon one of those abstract statements which appear so repeatedly in John's writings. Man in his natural condition is wholly dead and unresponsive to the Divine testimony. That fact is stated abstractly at the close of verse 32. But then on the other hand God works by His Spirit in the hearts of some; and so from a practical standpoint we do find those who receive the testimony, and by so doing set to their seal that God is true. At the beginning the devil impugned the testimony God gave to Adam, and thus sin was introduced. Faith vindicates the truth of the testimony and thus life and salvation are brought in.

Testimony from God had existed from the time that God spoke to Adam about the trees of the Garden, but now it was reaching its climax in this One whom God had sent, who knew by observation the heavenly things of which He spoke, who uttered them in "the words of God," possessing the Spirit without any measure or limit. At last therefore there was a testimony of infinite range and incomparable fulness. Of course it wholly transcended the powers of the natural man, yet the simple believer can accept it, attaching his seal to it as the truth of God.

Verses 35 and 36 appear to be a separate paragraph in which the words of the Baptist are supplemented by the Evangelist, who could speak in the full light of all that had been revealed in the Word become flesh. The Son having been manifested, the Father had been made known, together with the relations between these Divine Persons. Three great facts concerning the Son meet us here. He is the Object of the Father's love. By the Father's gift all things are in His hand, to be disposed of as He sees fit. He is the Object of faith, and therefore the test of every man. To believe on Him is to become possessed of life eternal. To refuse the subjection of faith to Him is to be excluded from life and lie under the wrath of God.

Thus quite early in this Gospel do we discover that the Son is not only the Creator of all things and the Revealer of all things as the Word, but He is also the Operator in all things, the Disposer of all things, and finally as the Object of the Father's love He is manifested amongst men, becoming the Criterion for all. We notice that, in verse 36, life is to be possessed and also to be seen, which shows how comprehensive a term "eternal life" is; and further, that the antithesis to seeing life is abiding under the wrath of God. Here again things are stated abstractly, but the language is such as to negative both the theories by which men endeavour to escape the solemn fact of eternal punishment. The words, "shall not see life," negative universal reconciliation, which declares that in some way or other all shall ultimately see it. The theory of conditional immortality, which means the annihilation of impenitent unbelievers, is negatived by the fact that the wrath of God "abideth" on such—they exist abidingly. At this point let us again recall chapter 20: 31. This Gospel is written that we may be amongst those who believe and have life. The terrible alternative to this is put before us very plainly here.
CONTACT.

We have all seen the tram conductor at the end of a journey lay hold of the arm of the tram with the wheel at the end, swing it round from one end of the car to the other, and carefully seek to make contact between the arm and the live wire, which conducts the electric current from the power station.

The conductor may get it within an inch of the live wire, but within an inch, or even the fraction of an inch, will not do. There must be contact. Without contact the tram is dead, inert, without power of movement. With contact the electric current, the power, enters into the machinery of the tram, and three things are the result. First, power; second, light; third, warmth.

Just in the same way we need contact with the Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour, if we are to be truly blessed and saved. It is not sufficient to know about Christ, You must know Him to be blessed. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17: 3). “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (John 7: 38). “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11: 28).

The soul, who really gets contact with Christ, realises the power that comes into his life, giving him new desires, new aspirations, new affections. As a Christian man said to me in a Norfolk village, “The things, I loved once, I hate now; the things, I hated once, I love now.” That was indeed a testimony that the arm of his faith had contacted the live wire, in other words he had really made contact with Christ.

Not only so, but light had come into his darkened mind. The truly converted man or woman sees things in a new light. I remember a young man, who was led to Christ as the result of an interesting conversation, saying to me, “I cannot understand how it is. I used to find the Bible a dry book with no interest in it for me, now I find it alive and interesting.”

I replied that the reason was that before he came into contact with Christ, he was a dead man reading a living book. The fault was not in the Book but in himself. Now a living man was reading a living book. No wonder he had found it the most interesting book in the world.

Thirdly, contact with the live wire caused heat. Warmth is very acceptable in cold weather. When contact is made with Christ, warmth of heart is the result. Believers can say, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. 5: 5). “We love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John 4: 19).

Can the reader honestly say that he has made contact with Christ, that he has realised power, light and warmth in a new life of joy and blessedness? If you make a profession of being a Christian and lack these positive traits of a Christian, you may well ask yourself the question, Have I really made contact with Christ, have I true living faith in Him, or do I only believe about Christ, and do not really believe on Him? I may look upon a table laden with appetising food, but merely looking on it and admiring it will not satisfy my hunger. I must eat, in other words appropriate the good things, make them part and parcel of myself in order to benefit by the food. So our Lord said, “As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me” (John 6: 57). Eating is a symbol of appropriation, of real faith in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. There must be contact, or I am not blessed. Have you made contact?
It may be you reply, "I really do believe on the Lord, I have made true contact with Him by faith in His atoning sacrifice on the cross, and yet I cannot say that I am characterised by power, light and warmth. Indeed I am more characterised by weakness, ignorance, and coldness, if I speak honestly.

You ask, What is the remedy? The answer is contact. It is possible to be saved and yet be out of touch with the Lord, out of communion. We are living in very evil days. The professing Church has very largely descended to the level of the world. Belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures is largely undermined. No wonder that many Christians have to complain to themselves, of their lack of spiritual power, of their feeble intelligence in the things of God, and of the warmth of soul that should characterise the Christian.

How rejoiced we should be if these plain words were the occasion of some earnestly seeking constant contact with the Lord. If you feel your lack, suppose you get upon your knees and earnestly confess to the Lord your lack, and seek grace from Him that it should be otherwise with you. Our Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7, 8). Again, "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). How encouraging!

Of course if the believer is putting business gains, pleasure seeking, domestic happiness before the Lord and His claims, contact is lost. The Lord must be first surely. If I wish to use the gospel merely as an escape from hell, and to make sure of heaven, and treat the matter from the side of my own convenience and happiness, there can be no joy and victory in such a life. It is bound to be defeat and deadness all along the line. No, the Lord must be first. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

Never was there a day when contact was more necessary than now. There is an interesting touch in 2 Cor. 8:5. There we read of the Macedonian believers whose "deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." But what was the secret of this grace? We read "They FIRST gave their own selves to the Lord." Again we read, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Have we surrendered ourselves to do the Lord's will, to be pleasing to Him? If this is so, contact is easy. Let us seek that this may be maintained in prayerful dependence on the Lord.

"O one, O only mansion, O paradise of joy! Where tears are ever banished and smiles have no alloy! O house of fadeless splendour, O flowers that bear no thorn! Where they shall dwell as children who now as exiles mourn. Thine ageless walls are bonded with amethyst unpriced The saints build up thy fabric and the corner-stone is CHRIST."
A CAREFUL comparison of these passages will, I think, show that in many points there is a striking likeness. If, as is commonly supposed, the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul, we can see at once that the apostle Peter referred to it as corroborating that which the Spirit of God was giving by inspiration through His own pen. We get in both cases the heavens and the earth; the heavens referring particularly to the atmospheric heavens, which have been the seat of Satan’s power, and are corrupted by sin, just as the earth has become the seat of man’s power under the leadership of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the children of disobedience. The heavens have been defiled by Satanic iniquity, and the earth by human iniquity. Both are going to be removed. Peter tells us plainly that the heavens are going to be dissolved, and the very earth is going to be burnt up. The Epistle to the Hebrews is no less explicit. It tells us that the one whose voice shook the earth, in connection with the giving of the law, is going to speak again, and he promises, “Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” Yet once more so it is the last time. It signifies the removing of the things that are shaken. We can see how God is shaking the order of things which prevails amongst men, but the word looks on, and heaven is also going to be shaken.

Now I understand this to mean the final thing: the removal of those things which are shaken, so that the things which cannot be shaken will remain. God may give what I would call preliminary shakings. When an earthquake smites some part of the earth’s surface, it comes like a bolt from the blue. Suddenly people are whirled off their feet by the fearful convulsion of nature which takes place, and then for weeks and months there are subsequent shakings. The earth has had its great fall, and it has a number of little jolts before it settles down to its new position. That is the way in creation, but God’s way seems to be the reverse. It was so in connection with His overturning of Egypt. Nine times He shook them by providential circumstances, increasing in intensity. The minor earthquakes came first, up to the point when the blow like a great earthquake fell and God Himself by the destroyer came down, and death passed upon the first-born. God’s ways now are the same. He shakes and warns, but the great shaking is coming, when the things that are shaken will be removed. Thanks be to God, the Christian has things which cannot be shaken! When God puts forth His hand, and shakes man’s systems and man’s organizations, there are things that cannot be shaken. There are all those things in connection with Mount Zion which cannot be shaken. They cannot be shaken because they have a divinely wrought foundation. Creation may be shaken if it pleases God to shake it, but these things are founded upon redemption. There you have something which cannot be shaken.

So he says, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be removed, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.” Then comes that striking little word, “Let brotherly love abide.” I think we often miss the connection. I should like to go through the Bible, and read on from the end of every chapter to the beginning of the next. We so often stop when the chapters stop. It is most convenient, obviously, and easy to remember, but we frequently miss striking connections. Here is an instance: he speaks of things being shaken, and then of those which cannot be shaken, so as to “remain” or “abide,” and then adds, “Let brotherly love abide.”
We must not speak disparagingly of brotherly love. It does not rise to the supreme height of love, the Divine nature. It is the Divine nature working itself out through the saints, therefore it must be inferior to the Divine nature itself. Anything which comes out in human expression has not that absoluteness which Divine things have. You remember that passage in 2 Peter 1, where we are told to add virtue to our faith. We are taken through a list of those excellent characteristics, beginning with faith, and working up till we come to verse 7, which speaks of godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. There is an ascending scale, and you come to that which God is, and which crowns everything. When you come to Divine love you come to that which is absolutely perfect in every respect. Brotherly love is a very wonderful thing. It is the love of God flowing out through His people. It is the family love. "He that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." It is a love that springs from the divine nature. Even the apostle Paul was a human vessel, and therefore brotherly love, even in a Paul or a Peter, and certainly in ourselves, is not equal to the thing itself—love. But "Let brotherly love abide." That comes home to my soul with very considerable force. You know that when things are shaken around them, the people of God naturally and instinctively are drawn together. We are linked up with an eternal order of things. We are born of God, and redeemed. We are put into new and heavenly relationships which abide. We have a portion outside this earth which man has corrupted, and outside the air which the devil has corrupted. Our place in the Divine economy, in the new age and for eternity, lies outside the scene which is going to be shaken by God in judgment. "Let brotherly love abide." Let us see to it that it does abide in our own hearts. It may be fairly easy to love in the abstract saints a thousand miles away, but the test comes with the Christians whom we know, since the more we know them the more conscious we shall be of their defects, and the more easily brotherly love can take its flight from our hearts.

Then the apostle goes on to speak of the One who is ever the same. I believe the contrast is between verses 8 and 9 of chapter 13. "Jesus Christ, the same; yesterday, and today, and for ever." Then he turns to the saints and says, "Be not carried about by divers and strange doctrines." The One who is immutably and eternally the same, and you, who believe on His name, are not going to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. No, the stability and changelessness which marks the Lord Jesus is the character which is to be seen and followed in His people.

Now, with reference to the Scripture in Peter's second epistle, the Apostle tells us very plainly what the end of things, as we know them, is going to be. It is a very humiliating thing. It is very certain that the men of the world will not believe this, and it is a very serious question for us as to how fully we believe it. "The heavens and the earth which are now." Evidently the flood marked a tremendous cataclysm which altered the whole order of things in this world physically. The heavens and the earth, which are now, are by the same word kept in store, reserved unto fire. I wonder how much we really do in our own minds write those three words on all the things that we see and come in contact with every day. If a Christian is living in the light of eternity, as he looks at the great works of man he sees written across them, "Reserved unto fire." As he looks at all man's great schemes, their great organizations, their great trusts, their great unions, they are all covered by those three words. Men are most diligent about their schemes all the world over—like a great ant heap where the ants are running in all directions in the most frantic fashion. Let a tractor come through, and the ant world is hurled all over the place. Wha
is to be the end of them? If you ask what the ultimate end of them is going to be, it is as certain as anything can be in the Word of God—they are all reserved unto fire. Fire is the symbol of God's judgment. They are reserved unto judgment. Men are building up their schemes to be destroyed by the fire of God's wrath. Do we believe it? I think we need not go far to seek an answer to the question. The apostle immediately indicates the conduct which will mark the one who does believe it. "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Clearly if I walk through the world believing that the judgment of God rests on it, it will have upon me a very separating effect, both internally and personally, and also in all one's associations. It would make us walk in holy ways.

Well now, that is negative. The very fact that you know the judgment of God is resting upon things will make you a separate person, but then, we are filled with positive expectations. We hasten unto the coming of the day of God. We are like people with our hands out to the dawning of a new day. Nothing we can do will make the clock go faster, but we haste towards it in our hearts and affections. People are eagerly reaching forward to the new day that is coming. Men are talking about the new day which they think is going to be brought about by new schemes, but we Christians are hastening unto the coming of the day of God. We hasten to it, not merely because all that which is obnoxious and tainted with sin is going to come under the action of the fire, but we according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Righteousness is going to have its abiding home, with nothing to disturb. It will not have to be upon a throne, casting its judicial eye around continually in case there be an uprising of that which it must condemn. That is the position in the millennial age, when you reach the new heavens and the new earth, righteousness will be able to descend from the throne—its work being done—and come down abidingly amongst men, without any thought of there ever arising again that which will be a challenge. It will dwell unhinderedly in the new heavens and the new earth.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace." Peace, as you know, is the fruit of righteousness. "The work of righteousness shall be peace." Thank God, we are established in righteousness already. That which is going to be brought about in the coming age has been brought in with ourselves. You and I have been by the work of Christ put into the standing of righteousness already, so that we can be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless. But these are very searching exhortations. If we are people who really do look for such a blessed condition of things, you find the conduct which will instantly mark us; we shall not be led away with error, and fall from our own steadfastness. I see a great likeness to what we were looking at in Hebrews 13: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever"; "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." You and I are put into touch with Jesus Christ, who is the same. We have absolute righteousness in Him. Men invent and reason, because they have not anything that is absolute. It is only good as far as it goes, if it is good at all; but when you have Jesus Christ, you have One who is eternally the same. Absolute perfection marks Him yesterday, today and for ever. You and I are not going to be carried about by all these new ideas if we know Jesus in that way. We are not going to be led away with the power of the wicked, and fall from our own steadfastness.
"Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." The glory of the Father seems to stand out in contrast to the death of the cross that the world meted out to Christ. All that the Father is, demanded that He should be raised up from the dead, Who had laid down His life in obedience to His Father's command. He had glorified His Father on the earth and men had hated Him for it and awarded Him the cross with all its shame. What could be the answer to it all? It was the Father's will and pleasure to raise Him up and honour Him, and it was not one attribute of the Father, say that of power only that was active in the resurrection of Christ, but the Father Himself, in all that Name meant to His beloved Son—His nature as well as His attributes, visited the sepulchre and raised up Christ from among the dead. The similar phrase in Matthew 16: 27 has the same glory in view, but in Romans 6 the Father's glory raised Christ up when no mortal eye was there to see, the Father had His own pleasure in it, but Matthew 16: 27 shews us that the Father's delight to honour Him will be displayed publicly when He comes again.

"The glory of the incorruptible God," is a faith-strengthening word. His glory in this title is His incorruptibility. There can be no change, no decay in Him; He abides for ever in His own unsullied Being above the changing scenes of Time where everything waxes old and where moth and rust and thief and death destroy; where all is corruptible because sin is here. This lies at the basis of everything. If God were not this we could rely upon nothing, for nothing would be stable. We can appreciate this glory of God, coming as it does at the beginning of Romans, the Epistle that unfolds for us the gospel of God—"God's story"—His word is like Himself. Peter calls it "the incorruptible living and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1: 23 N.T.) and upon it we rest and have peace with God, and this is an unchanging peace, because God is the unchanging, incorruptible God. The consideration of this title would surely be a blessing to us and we might well call the gospel unfolded in the Epistle to the Romans "the gospel of the incorruptible God."

"Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."

We are in relationship with God: in all things He is our refuge, and events do not disturb Him.

He knows everything. He knows it beforehand. Events shake neither His throne nor His heart; they always accomplish His purposes. But to us He is love, we are through grace the objects of His tender care.

He listens to us and bows down His ear to hear us. In all things, therefore, instead of disquieting ourselves and weighing everything in our own hearts, we ought to present our requests to God in prayer, with supplication, and with a heart that makes itself known, for we are human beings, but with the knowledge of the heart of God; He loves us perfectly. So that, even while making our petition to Him, we can already give thanks, because we are sure of the answer His grace, be it what it may. It is our requests that we are to present to Him.

Nor is it a cold commandment to find out His will and then come; we are to go without requests. Hence it does not say you will have what you ask; but God's peace will keep your hearts.
MANY a time we must have marvelled at the favour shewn to those eleven Galileans to whom the Lord Jesus shewed Himself after His resurrection from the dead, by many infallible proofs. And we may have wished that we could have been with them and listened to His own voice speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Well, we should not have been alive today if we had been there, and I am inclined to think that the last days of the church’s history on earth are as important as the first, and to have part in the final victory and to greet our Lord at His coming again will be as great a favour as it must have been to have had part in the first great move against the forces of the foe.

Not only this, but I apprehend that all that has gone before, and which is recorded in the Bible, is an inheritance upon which we have entered, and which we may hold fast and enjoy. We may put ourselves, for instance, alongside those disciples as they assembled with their Lord, and listen to His words along with them, and study them. We may see the effect upon them of His victory over death, and His presence with them, and learn the good and right way in the final instructions and commandments that He gave them.

They were happy men, of this we can have no doubt, and triumphant men eager to tell the glad news of God’s signal vindication of His well-beloved Son, and I have thought that they were also impatient men. This comes out in their question, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel.” There was not a doubt in their minds as to His kingly rights, and they expected Him to take the throne. He had conquered death, and surely no other foe could stand in His way. Yet, why did He not do it? Why the delay? Why waste forty days when Jerusalem might lie at His feet and the land ring with His fame? Surely the time had come to make Israel great in the earth.

Ah, they had much to learn, and needed to be greatly enlarged. Yet they were teachable and obedient, and bowed before His wisdom, and were ready to await His way and will. Blessed men they were. We owe much to them. Yet at first they had limited thoughts of His greatness. They thought only of the throne of Israel, when the Father had no less a place for Him than His own right hand. Their horizon stretched out from Dan to Beersheba, but the story of His glory was to be carried to the uttermost part of the earth. “The uttermost part of the earth” were the last words they heard from His lips.

They looked up steadfastly into heaven when He was taken up from them, and no wonder. What could His ascension to heaven mean for Him and for them? It meant that God “had raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also that which is to come: and had put all things under His feet” (Eph. 1). They learnt this glorious fact when the Holy Spirit came upon them and dwelt in them, and meanwhile they were assured that He would come back again; they would see Him again—“this same Jesus” and not another.

We may stand with them in thought and look up there also, and see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and
how the heart thrills at the glorious knowledge that He is thus acknowledged and exalted. And we may look for His return as they did, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Between these great events, His departure and return, we see them: obedient, for they tarried in Jerusalem, and were together of one heart and one mind, loving one another, according to His word; dependent, for they continued in prayer. And in these things they shewed their love to Him, and He fulfilled His own word to them—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter" (John 14: 15, 16). So they were empowered to be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.

We know that our Lord has been raised up to the highest place, and that His fame must be spread abroad to the widest circle, and that the greatest power has come from on high to bear witness to the honour that heaven has given Him, and of His worthiness to be trusted by every creature under heaven. We feel that the Holy Spirit must often be grieved and quenched because in spite of our knowledge we have such narrowness of heart and such limited views of Christ and His greatness. We are so ready to confine Him within geographical or ecclesiastical bounds, when the Holy Spirit would enlarge us and make us overflow in the triumphant knowledge of the greatness of Christ and His all-sufficiency for all saints and for sinners to the uttermost part of the earth. The grace of God that shines in the face of Jesus, shines for all. The Bride that is to share His throne and glory must be gathered out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.

The work is almost done. For nearly two millennia the Holy Spirit has continued His labour with an unwearied devotion, and He will finish it, and the Bride of the Lamb shall be presented all glorious and perfect to the heavenly Lamb. And we may have a blessed part in the labours of the Holy Spirit just at the close. Abraham's servant who went forth to bring Rebekah to Isaac, did not go forth alone; we read of "the men that were with him." Deeply interested, we may be sure, they were in his mission, and ever ready to do as he might direct them; they were his companions and helpers, bearing witness to the truth of every word that he uttered in Rebekah's ear. The disciples of Jesus were the men that were with the Holy Ghost when He came forth first on His great mission; honoured men, faithful men they were. And now that the mission is almost completed, we may be the men that are with Him, working with Him, in communion with His mind and ways, being vessels of His testimony that He bears to the risen and glorified Lord. But if we are to be the men that are with Him our hearts and our vision must be enlarged. We cannot imprison the Holy Spirit within our little sects and bind Him with fetters to our carnal prejudices.

Yes, the favour of having part in the closing days of this period of grace is very great, and the sphere of our affection and faith is in no wise less than that at the beginning. If those first disciples looked upon their Lord chiefly as the root and offspring of David, who would bring in the day of glory, we know Him as the Bright Morning Star, sure pledge of that coming day. And as the light of His glory and grace shine into the heart what other response can it make but the cry of "Come"? It is the cry in which the Spirit and the Bride are in full concert. But some hearts are sleeping; there are those whom He loves, and who will be caught up at His coming who do not know of that coming, and others who know but are indifferent. Can those who are awake be satisfied with this? Nay, nothing will satisfy the faithful heart, but that all whom the Lord loves should be joining in this Spirit-born cry, "Let him that hears say, Come." All the saints must join in the cry. It is a day
of good tidings and we do not well to hold our peace, we must go and tell them of the soon-coming Lord. Nor can the bride rest satisfied in knowing that she is on the eve of the consummation of all her hopes, there are those on every hand who have tried the world and proved that it cannot satisfy, and she has an answer to all thirst—it is CHRIST—"Let him come unto Me and drink." And finally the uttermost part of the earth is called afresh into fullest blessing. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is the last word of Divine love to a needy world ere the Holy Spirit puts His Amen to the Divine Word. Oh, that it may stir our hearts and deliver us from our littleness, and compel us to drop our poor thoughts for God's thoughts, and lift our eyes to our glorified Lord and carry our thoughts and our energies outward to the uttermost parts of the earth.

CONTRAST—Exodus 15 and Numbers 14.

THERE was not a syllable about sons of Anak, lofty walls and grasshoppers in Exodus 15. No, no, it was all Jehovah there—His right hand, His mighty arm, His power, His inheritance, His habitation, His actions on behalf of His ransomed people. And then, if the inhabitants of Canaan are referred to, they are only thought of as sorrowing, terror-stricken; trembling and melting away.

But, on the other hand, when we come to Numbers 14, all is sadly reversed. The sons of Anak rise into prominence. The towering walls, the giant cities with frowning bulwarks, fill the vision of the people, and we hear not a word about the almighty Deliverer. There are the difficulties on the one side, and grasshoppers on the other; and one is constrained to cry, "Can it be possible that the triumphant singers by the Red Sea have become the infidel weepers at Kadesh?"

Alas! it is so; and here we learn a deep and holy lesson. We must continually recur, as we pass along through these wilderness scenes, to those words which tell us that "All these things happened to Israel for ensamples and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are met" (1 Cor. 10:11; see Greek). Are not we, too, like Israel, prone to look at the difficulties which surround us, rather than at that blessed One who has undertaken to carry us right through them all and bring us safely into His own everlasting kingdom?

Why is it we are sometimes cast down? Why go we mourning? Wherefore are the accents of discontent and impatience heard in our midst, rather than the songs of praise and thanksgiving? Simply because we allow circumstances to shut out God, instead of having God as a perfect covering for our eyes and a perfect object for our hearts.

And, further, let us enquire wherefore is it that we so sadly fail to make good our position as heavenly men—to take possession of that which belongs to us as Christians—to plant the foot upon that spiritual and heavenly inheritance which Christ has purchased for us, and on which He has entered as our forerunner? What answer must be given to these inquiries? Just one word—Unbelief.

It is declared, concerning Israel, by the voice of inspiration, that, "They could not enter in (to Canaan) because of unbelief." So is it with us. We fail to enter upon our heavenly inheritance—fail to take possession, practically, of our true and proper portion—fail to walk day by day, as a heavenly people, having no place, no name, no portion in the earth—having nothing to do with this world save to pass through it as pilgrims and strangers, treading in the footsteps of Him who has gone before and taken His place in the heavens. And why do we fail? Because of unbelief. Faith is not in energy, and therefore the things which are seen have more power over our hearts than the things which are unseen.
THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS.

"Hold fast the FORM of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy I: 13).

The form of sound words has provoked much thought in our mind of late. There are words and phrases and incidents in the Bible, which we have been very familiar with for many years, and suddenly circumstances arise, and these shine forth with a significance and force never seen before, much like a diamond seen at a fresh angle, revealing a flashing brilliance, a corruscation not previously seen. It is thus with this word, which stands at the head of this article. The Word of God is indeed living and powerful.

When Paul was writing his inspired epistles to Timothy one can easily understand the importance of the exhortation, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. I : 13). Again, "The things which thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2: 2).

Notice the emphasis laid upon the words HEARD, and the object in passing them on, viz., that learners should become teachers of what they had heard. Hence the deep importance of holding fast the form of sound words.

At the time that Paul lived the New Testament was in the making, and printing had not been invented. The church, therefore, was originated by and dependent very largely upon oral teaching. What they heard was to be carefully cherished in their memory.

We all know how difficult it is to remember correctly anything we hear. We can often remember the substance of what we hear, but can by no means repeat the exact words. If this is generally true, how much more important is it that we hold fast the form of sound words, when those words are the instruments of conveying to our minds entirely new and spiritual thoughts, vital to our well-being, the very revelation of God, the instrument of the new birth, the setting forth of our relation to Him, and the enshrining of our hopes for the eternal future. No wonder emphasis is laid upon holding fast the form of sound words.

At this present time we are immensely favoured by having in our hands the whole inspired Word of God—the Old and New Testaments. Printing enables the poorest Christian to possess himself of this priceless treasure, now translated into over one thousand languages. In this way it is comparatively easy to hold fast the form of sound words, because we can refresh our memories again and again turning to the very words of Scripture.

If anything it is more important than ever to take heed and hold fast the form of sound words. The further we, the church of God, travels on its journey the more vital is it to do so, as we see a multitude of books on spiritual subjects pouring in a constant stream from the printing press. If they expound the Scriptures, enforce their teaching by appealing to the very words of Scripture, if they help one to the understanding of the Word of God, in proportion as they do this they are helpful. But without being censorious or critical the majority of spiritual books today is more or less harmful and pernicious. One trembles as one finds young Christians often getting their thoughts on such subjects formed by the books they read about the Bible, rather than by the Word of God itself.
If this catches the eye of young Christians we exhort them with all the earnestness we possess to hold fast the form of sound words.

That is why we feel we cannot welcome the putting the Bible into modern speech, or into "basic English." The danger lies in the effort to reduce God's holy Word to the level of ordinary literature and to water down the truth of the Scriptures to suit the modernistic mind. The Scriptures are God-breathed, and we must not allow anything to rob them of their majesty and authority in our minds. Divine thoughts are given to us "Not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2: 13).

To return to the subject of the religious literature issuing from the press. So much of it is tinged with modernism, explaining away inspiration, casting doubts on the miraculous, dragging things down to man's mentality, that one is pressed in spirit to say to young Christians, **Read the Bible, Read the Bible, Read the Bible.** Soak your mind in the very words of Scripture. Be so familiar with Scripture that you will be able to test books written about Scripture, and be able to discern, when they depart from, or weaken the truth in any way. Never was there a day when this advice was more needed or so necessary.

---

**From An Invalid's Chamber.**

"I've found a joy in sorrow, a secret balm for pain,
A beautiful tomorrow of sunshine after rain;
I've found a branch of healing by every bitter spring,
A whispered promise stealing o'er every broken string;
I've found a glad Hosanna for every woe and wail
A handful of sweet manna when grapes of Eschol fail;
I've found the Rock of Ages when desert wells are dry
And after weary stages, I've found an Elim nigh—
An Elim with its coolness, its fountain and its shade,
A blessing in its fulness, when buds of promise fade.
O'er tears of soft contrition I've seen a rainbow light—
A glory and fruition, so near, yet out of sight.
My Saviour! Thee possessing, I have the joy, the balm,
The healing and the blessing the sunshine and the psalm;
The promise for the fearful the power for the faint,
The rainbow for the tearful, and glory for the saint."

*CREWDSON.*

---

**"The Morrow After The Sabbath."**

"Happy morrow, turning sorrow into peace and mirth;
Bondage ending, love descending on the earth;
Seals assuring, guards securing; watch His earthily prism,
Seals are shattered, guards are scattered, Christ hath risen.

No longer must the mourners weep
Nor call departed Christians dead;
For death is hallowed into sleep,
And every grave become a bed.
Instead of exile, rest on high; instead of sadness, peace from strife!
To fall asleep is not to die, to be with Christ is better life."

*NEALE.*
THE closing paragraphs of chapter 3 spring out of the intermeddling of the Jews in the matter of John’s baptism and his reaction to it: chapter 4 opens with the Lord’s reaction to their interference. John gladly took the place of decreasing that his Master might increase. The Master withdrew Himself to Galilee lest rivalry should be instituted, which would be so hurtful to His servant. Such was His thoughtful care for John. Moreover the Lord himself would have been belittled if treated thus. It would have put Him beside John as a kind of party leader, akin in principle to the error of the Corinthian saints who coupled the name of Christ with Paul, Apollos and Cephas. This must never be.

The direct route to Galilee lay through the district of Samaria so "he must needs go" that way as a geographical necessity. But there was also a necessity connected with the grace of God which imposed upon Him a road which brought Him to a particular city of Samaria, called Sychar. Jesus, the Word made flesh, was wearied with His journey; a testimony this to the reality of His Manhood: and not weary only, but hungry and thirsty too. He sat on the well-side about midday, as the time of greatest heat approached. Nicodemus sought Him by night. He sought a Samaritan sinner at midday. John’s Gospel specializes in the record of His conversations and dealings with individuals. It also records His conversations—usually of a controversial nature—with groups of persons, but not once does it put on record His more formal preachings, such as the Sermon on the Mount or the parables of Matthew 13. Many of us would own that it takes more spiritual skill to deal rightly with an individual than to address a crowd, and makes a bigger demand upon our courage. A perfect example of personal dealing is presented to us here.

Jesus began by requesting a drink of cold water. The Word made flesh takes the place of a humble suppliant before a very sinful specimen of His creatures! A marvellous sight indeed! Regarding Him merely as a Jew, the woman felt He was belittling Himself; but in the light of the true situation we can see how truly He had made Himself of no reputation and emptied Himself. But this very lowly and humble approach to the woman gave a most advantageous start to the conversation. If we, who aim at serving the souls of men today could always approach them with humility, we should be wise indeed.

The woman, awakened to astonishment and curiosity, could not resist asking how such a request came to be made. The answer of Jesus in verse ro set before her three things. First, the fact that God is a Giver. She had known a little of the law, but this set Him before her in a new light altogether. Second, He indicated the mysterious greatness of His own Person, since He was the Dispenser of God’s gift. She saw in Him but a Jew who asked for a drink of water. When she knew Him she would discover that He was really the Giver of a Gift of surpassing value. Third, He indicated the Gift to be "living water," thus turning her thoughts from the natural to the spiritual. Both Nicodemus and this unnamed woman were alike in having at the outset no conception of the meaning of the Lord’s words, let alone the things of which He spoke. Yet here again, there had been some indication of these things in the Old Testament. Twice in the Book of Jeremiah, for instance, Jehovah had presented Himself as "the Fountain of living waters" (2: 13; 17: 13).

The misunderstanding of the woman led to the further unfoldings contained in verse 14, which again seem to range themselves under three heads. First, the one who drinks of the living water
as the gift of Christ will have it "in him," abiding in his very being. Then, it will be in him as a "well," or "fountain," of water, "springing up into everlasting life." A fountain of life within, which springs up to the level of its Source! Lastly, the drinking of such water and the possession of such a fountain will produce abiding satisfaction. The Lord used a very strong expression—"shall never thirst for ever."

By "living water" the Lord indicated the Spirit of God. This is quite evident when we reach verse 39 of chapter 7. In chapter 3, the only begotten Son is God's gift to the world. In chapter 4, the Spirit of God is God's gift to the believer, but a gift which is administered by the Son of God; who was the Speaker, seated on Sychar's well. By the Spirit we have the life within—He is spoken of elsewhere as "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 2)—and by Him the life within springs up to the Source of the life above. In this way did the Lord indicate the life of communion and worship and satisfaction which He was about to make available for the believer. As a result, the believer today may anticipate the millennial joy, set forth figuratively in the beginning of miracles at Cana of Galilee: and not only anticipate, but also know it in truer measure and a more spiritual way.

Before proceeding with our chapter let us note the remarkable sequence of the teaching since the record of that first miracle. We have had the work wrought in us—new birth by the Spirit and the word. Then the testimony rendered to us, receiving which we set to our seal that God is true. Thirdly, the gift of the Spirit bestowed upon us, to be in us as an ever-flowing fountain, springing up to the eternal Source. Here we have presented to us in a germinal way great realities which find expansion in the Epistles.

Pursuing our chapter we notice that though the woman was still in the dark as to the significance of "living water," the Lord's further words had at least sufficiently stirred her desires to lead her to ask for it. Before He gave it, her conscience had to be reached and conviction of sin produced. In bidding her call her husband the Lord put His finger upon a specially sore spot in her life, and followed this by letting her see that her sad story lay like an open book before His eye. On her side she at once saw and confessed that He was a prophet; thus by implication pleading guilty to His indictment; yet as is so often the way when a wounded conscience exists, she endeavoured to side-track the conversation into a religious discussion, thus eliminating the personal element.

The place where worship was to be offered to Jehovah had long been a burning question. Had Gerizim displaced Moriah, as the Samaritans claimed? The Lord seized the opportunity to show the woman not only her personal sin but also the futility of the "worship" in which she and her people had engaged. In saying, "Ye worship ye know not what," He dis-owned it; and in saying, "Salvation is of the Jews," He convicted her of her unsaved condition. She stood amongst the Gentiles—"strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2: 12). So even in discussing the question of worship she was not beyond the reach of rapier-like thrusts at her conscience.

The Lord, however, lifted the whole matter of worship on to a far higher plane. He spoke of worshipping Jehovah in the light of the revelation that He was bringing—even as "the Father." This at once lifted it out of that ceremonial order of things which connected it with a holy place on earth. The law had tied people down very strictly to a holy place where Jehovah's name was set; hence the prolonged dispute between Jew and Samaritan: He lifted her thoughts to God who is a Spirit, revealing Him as Father.
This new revelation was ushering in a new “hour,” which had indeed already begun. The worship which is to characterise that hour must be in keeping with the revelation that has formed it. God who is Spirit is seeking that worship as Father, so now worship to be acceptable must be “in spirit and in truth.” Notice this further “MUST.” Worship is not something optional, or to be varied as suits our tastes. God must be worshipped in the way He Himself prescribes. All else that may claim to be “worship” is no worship at all.

True worship is “in spirit”; that is, not in flesh, not in bodily posture. This word of our Lord negates the ritualistic and ceremonial line of things which has been a snare to so many. Our capacity to offer worship in spirit lies in the possession of the Spirit of God—the Fountain of living water springing up into everlasting life—as is also indicated in Philippians 3:3. The Spirit of God may engage our spirits in true worship at any time and in any place; not merely in some sacred shrine as in Judaism.

Then again worship must be “in truth”; that is, in the light of all that God has revealed Himself to be in Christ. This negates the rationalistic line of things, which is also so common. Men speak, for instance, of worshipping “the great First Cause” in the light of the beauties of nature, while ignoring or refusing the truth concerning Him, as made known in Christ. Only in Him do we know the Father who is to be worshipped. If we do know the Father thus, our hearts are bound to be filled with worship of that spiritual nature which is acceptable to Him.

The Father seeks worshippers of this sort. He has made Himself known in order to produce this response. The downward flow of His love in revelation to us produces the upward flow of responsive love in worship. This is acceptable to Him and He seeks it.

The Samaritan woman knew of the promise of the Messiah, and these wonderful words of the Lord, coupled with the inward conviction of sin that had reached her, turned her thoughts to His advent. Her response seems to indicate that she felt a Messiah-like character about the Lord’s utterances. The Lord at once and with the utmost plainness revealed Himself to her as the Christ. That revelation she evidently accepted at once; and going back to the city, in her words to the men, she divulged what lay behind her ready faith. He must be the Christ, for had He not told her all things that ever she did? Not in detail, of course; but rather He had shown to her as in a flash that all she had ever done was to be summed up in the one word—sin. It is just the same today. Faith in Christ goes hand in hand with true conviction of sin.

The beautiful paragraph, verses 31-38, comes as a parenthesis in the story. The Lord’s words to the disciples, in verse 32, have been rendered, “I have found food to eat which ye do not know.” He was labouring for “fruit unto life eternal,” as He indicates in verse 36, and to see this end being reached in the bestowal of blessing on the Samaritan sinner was delectable food for Him. It was “the will of Him that sent Me,” said He, to do this. The light He brought was to shine for every man, as we learned at the beginning of this Gospel, so here we see it shining upon a sinner outside the bounds of Judaism. The will of God, the work of God, and life eternal for man go together here; and how blessed for us it is that they do. Further, the Lord indicated to His disciples that in their turn they were to have a share in this most blessed work, whether by sowing or reaping. In this case the Lord Himself was doing the sowing. When the reaping time came, recorded in Acts 8, the harvest was very great.

The paragraph, verses 39-42, concludes the story. The men came to
Christ as the result of the woman's testimony, and reached for themselves the same conviction. Many believed because of what she said, and many more as the result of listening to Him. They believed and they greatly desired His company.

In their confession they went even further than the woman. He was not only the Christ but also "the Saviour of the world." Mere religious pride might have made them boast that here was the Saviour of the Samaritan equally with the Jew; but only faith could have led them thus to seize God's large thought for "the world," according to John 3: 16. They had heard, and they knew; and beneath both hearing and knowledge lay faith.

In relating all this the Evangelist has led us to the fact that Jesus is the Christ. The next chapter, as we shall see, conducts us to the fact that He is the Son. Putting both together, we are again brought to the point indicated in verse 31 of chapter 20.

On What are we relying?

Upon what are you relying in this time of trouble? Where is your confidence? There is a searching and illuminating word for those, whose God is the Lord, in Isaiah 22. The city of Jerusalem was threatened with a long siege and there was great anxiety and fear. Then they set to work; they looked to the armour in the house of the forest; they made sure of their water supply; they numbered the house and pulled down some of them to strengthen their walls. They did everything that prudence and policy seemed to suggest, but they did not look to God. They did not look to the Maker of the water that they stored; they had no respect for Him. That was folly that the Lord Jehovah could not forgive (verse 14). May those who know God be kept from Israel's folly. We cannot expect anything else from those who do not know God, but He is the refuge and resource of those who do know Him and they may pray not for themselves only, but for the whole nation; they may be and should be intercessors on behalf of all men.

The wicked little insect, Pharaoh, boldly challenged Jehovah and defied His command to let Israel go. "Who is Jehovah," he said, "that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go!" In this desperate reply the King of Egypt was a figure of his master, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." We see how the controversy ended. Pharaoh's pretensions went to the bottom of the Red Sea, and Satan before long will find himself in the bottomless pit. So shall all the enemies of the Lord perish.

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

"Almost? did Jesus only almost leave the sky?
Almost become a man, and almost die?
Then shall I only almost take my cross?
And only almost count my gain my loss?
Forbid it Lord, and help me to resign
My heart to Thee, and be entirely Thine."
COMFORT.

A. E.

"So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter" (Eccl. 4:1).

WHAT a pitiful reflection for this great man, full of knowledge and experience, leading him to "praise the dead which are already dead," because they were out of it all, with even more praise for those that had never been born.

"God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore... and his fame was in all nations round about" (1 Kings 4), but, somehow, these great faculties brought him no comfort that evening. Memory was at work, he had seen many people that day, his mind was running over those vast regions where his great knowledge had made him acquainted with social and economic conditions, and there seemed no bright spot—he "considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun," and there was no comfort for him anywhere; also, he could not close his eyes to it, "behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter." The more he considered the position, so much the worse it seemed to be for, "on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they— they had no comforter."

Solomon could not offer comfort, either to the oppressed or, even, to himself for he seemed to find everything "vanity and vexation of spirit." He could give advice—"he spake three thousand proverbs"—but that was not comfort—"they had no comforter."

But "Like as a father pitlieth his children, so the Lord pitlieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 103).

"What God had promised, He was able also to perform"; and One was coming who would be able "to bind up the brokenhearted, and to comfort all that mourn." One who was willing to be "oppressed and afflicted" and to be a "learner" of terrible things that He "should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

And so, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." No cedar palace awaited Him and, indeed, there was no room for Him in the inn; to one who wished to follow Him He said, "The Son of man hath no where to lay His head."

There was no silken couch in that "desert place apart," from which "Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick."

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not," and it was not long before He was saying to some of those who did receive Him and had thus really become His own, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

What a promise is this—"He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"! "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:6).

"We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit." What "countless thousands" in every country are "mourning because of the oppression of the enemy"! How many there are in Europe oppressed beyond endurance
so that they are in despair; how many have there been alas! who, knowing nothing better than Solomon's suggestion, have chosen death rather than life.

"There be many that say, 'Who will shew us any good?' Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart . . . I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

And has the Lord put this gladness in our hearts for a special reason; is it "not for us only, but also for . . . the whole world"? "Blessed be God . . . the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Is this some part of the way in which those who have "received Him" shall be, whether in the Forces or in civilian life, witnesses unto Him "unto the uttermost part of the earth"?

Our Hope.

The children of God's great family are scattered abroad in this world, separated by seas, but we await the day when there will be no more sea; they are separated too, alas! by party names and prejudices. Will these also disappear? Yes. In heaven all the mind is one, as we sing,

"Praise the Lamb" the chorus waking,
All in heaven together throng;
Ev'ry knee to Jesus bending,
All the mind in heaven is one."

What an assembly, what a constellation of glory there will be, when "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13). No sin, sorrow or temptation; no pain, tears or death; no clouds, no prejudices, no strife. All names of idle distinction, fruit of self-will, and stumbling-blocks to the world, all gone for ever. Then shall be seen in their full meaning those words of our Lord, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17).

"I will come again and receive you unto Myself"

"Meanwhile in His beloved hands our ways,
And on His heart the wandering heart at rest;
And comfort for the weary one who lays
His head upon His breast."

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. 73: 25)

"Am not I enough, Mine own? enough, Mine own, for thee?
Hath the world its palace towers,
Garden glades and magic flowers,
Where thou fain wouldst be?
Fair things but false they are,
False things but fair—
All shalt thou find at last
Only in Me.
Am I not enough, Mine own, I for ever and alone,
I, NEEDING THEE?"
SEE THAT YE FALL NOT OUT BY THE WAY.

L. A. Anderson.

The story of Joseph is one that never fails in its interest for the young, and having heard it once, it is invariably asked for again.

Has it, however, no lessons for us who are older? It surely has. Let us see what we can gather up from the circumstances surrounding the occasion when the above words were uttered by Joseph to his brethren. Nearly 22 years had passed since he had been parted from his father and the rest of the family.

Now there were two good reasons why the brothers should **not** fall out amongst themselves.

These 10 brothers had acted very wickedly in selling Joseph, and then deceiving their old father with their lying story. This had haunted them ever since, as is evidenced by their fears and forebodings when they faced Joseph, though he was unrecognised by them. Conscience had been at work, though stifled all that time, and so it generally is when we do wrong.

We scarcely ever injure others without the matter remaining on our conscience.

But all the past in the brothers' history had been laid bare and they had been freely forgiven. This then, was the first reason why they should not fall out by the way.

Now all who belong to Christ have been freely forgiven; that is the first thing in Christian experience. Some may have been forgiven much more than others, but **all** have been forgiven everything, all proved guilty before God but all forgiven. Hence the word, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4: 32). The grace that has pardoned us all calls for like grace toward each other.

Another reason why they should not fall out by the way was the glad news they carried as to the exaltation of Joseph, and they were charged to carry this news to others. Here we have what should bind our hearts together, for our testimony is one, "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour." Him whom we once despised and hated, as much as ever Joseph's brethren despised and hated him, is alive, He lives, and has been exalted to heaven's highest throne. If we fall out and quarrel one with the other it is evident that we have for the time being forgotten this testimony that has been committed to us. Both the grace and the glory of our living Lord call for unity of heart and purpose.

But there were two reasons that made it possible for these brethren to fall out by the way. The first was the length of the journey: they had a long and tedious way to travel, and if the grace and glory of Joseph declined in their thoughts they would probably grow weary in the way, and weary men are often quarrelsome. The enemy gains an easy advantage when pilgrims grow weary. To talk together of Joseph would be the remedy in their case, and to talk of our Lord is the remedy in ours when we find the way long and weary. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10: 24, 25).

The other reason why these men might fall out by the way was their diverse dispositions and characters. We have only to read their father's description of them to see this (Genesis 49), and Joseph knew well the pride and naughtiness of their hearts. And the same reason for falling out may work among those whom the Lord is
sending forth as His witnesses. The flesh is within us all, and the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these...hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife. If we walk in the flesh we shall surely fall out by the way. They were doing it at Galatia, and Paul in plain words exposed their folly and sin. He said to them, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

What is the remedy? A very simple one. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"; and in doing this the fruit of the Spirit will not be wanting—"Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." There will be no falling out by the way if this precious fruit of the Spirit is being developed by us.

The Lord's Rebuke.

And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

The Lord is on His way to Jerusalem, the days getting near for His being received up. For the Samaritans it is enough that His face is set toward Jerusalem: they do not receive the messengers sent before to prepare for Him. The spirit of the sons of Zebedee is a flame, and they would bring fire down from heaven after the manner of Elijah, to consume the churlish Samaritans. The pleading of Elijah's example seems to imply that they were already by no means sure that the Lord would be disposed to such a visitation of an offence like this. They could hardly have been with Him so long without having learned as much of this of His long-suffering. But Elijah they had lately seen with Him, and his example they might quote with One who so completely maintained as He did the authority of Scripture. But He makes it no question of Scripture; it was they who knew not of what spirit they were. They were not of His: for the Son of man had not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.

The disciples here illustrate the danger in which we are, in seeking to reproduce the examples left us by the men of faith of old, even where most fully sanctioned by the word of God. Dispensations differ, and we must know well how to recognise the difference. Faith, too, is an individual thing which can only be exercised in one's own path with God; and the imitation of another, as that, necessarily takes us out of such a path. The carrying out of principles, or obedience to precepts is, of course, an entirely different thing; only they must be the principles of the dispensation to which we belong. From want of understanding this the Church of God has been judaised, securalised, and carnalised; an earthly priesthood, law, the rule of kings, and how much else have been introduced into it; it has usurped Israel's place and promises, and Scripture has been quoted for all this, and perverted to make it good. Here too, disciples, acting with honest enough meaning, have not known of what spirit they were.
The whole human race is (we read in Acts 17) the offspring of God "who hath made of one blood all nations of men." That is, God is Creator, and, in a secondary sense, father of the whole family. Man was made of the dust and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. "The first man is of the earth (the dust) earthy" (1 Cor. 15) and to dust he returns. We do not read of any such infusion of breath into the nostrils of lower animals. Special attention was given to man as the destined head of creation. Hence when we reach the end of the long genealogical tree of Luke 3 we read the words, "Adam which was of God," or more correctly, "Adam which was of God." Mark these words; man came directly and immediately from God. Just as Seth was "of Adam," so Adam was "of God." The degrading theory of evolution from a lower animal—a gorilla, an ape or a toad, has no place here, nor should it have in the conception of him who was created in the image and likeness of God. No, Adam was "of God." Man is "of God." That was his origin; and, though fallen and marred in every way by sin, he still retains that image. We are low enough morally in all conscience, let us not lower ourselves further. Our origin was high—inferior only to angels, let us endeavour to realize it and act more worthily of it.

Second. Children. This signifies relationship. To be a child there must be birth (John 1:12). There is no such relationship in mere adoption—no consanguinity, no participation in nature or life. Affection there may be, but that is all. Hence, God's children must be "born of God." This alone forms the family. Let no one presume to think, as alas, so many do today, that they are the children of God who have never been "born again," nor "taught of God," nor drawn to Christ by the Father—let no mistake be made here. You cannot claim God as Father, nor truly address Him as such, unless you are His child. We are not children of God by creation but by grace; and, in this view, the popular idea of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is an absolute delusion and a most mischievous error. The chasm existing between the children of God and those of the wicked one cannot be bridged by the efforts of statesmen, politicians, philanthropists or dreamers. Such well-meant efforts are a mere waste of time. There must be a change of nature effected by the Spirit of God—a new birth. This dream of the brotherhood of man was little understood by the first two brothers that ever lived, nor has the spirit of it developed during the intervening centuries, as the merciless cruelties of modern war declare.

But the family of God, nevertheless exists. The precious relation between God and man as Father and child, that are made such by the grace of that Father, the cleansing death of the Son, and the work of the Spirit within—this is a fact placed beyond all dispute, and made visible in the life and conduct of all those who are commanded to be "imitators of God as dear children." They love one another. This did not Cain, who, in a passion of jealousy slew his brother, proving that he, spite of his offering, was "of that wicked one," while Abel in virtue of his requisite offering, obtained witness thereby that he was righteous, and therefore on the divine side of the chasm. He was clearly a child of God.

The children of God have His nature, and that nature must express itself. They are "taught of God to love one another," and that not merely in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and this love is the strongest proof of their relationships with God. Oh! that the love of the 1st Christian century were but half as strong in the 20th; still thank God, spite of the abounding
iniquity of the day, we do love one another, and desire the good and blessing of the whole family of God. We "love as brethren." The family is the circle and sphere of love. And how? "For God is love"—How much might be written on this fairest feature in the divine family! The Apostle John dwells on it continually, his great theme being the display of the nature of God in love, first in His Son and then in the family; whilst giving equal force to the exhibition of His character in righteousness. He states that "God is love," and also that "God is light."

How can you explain the mystery of a man, for the first quarter or half of his life, being a God-hater and a persecutor of His children, like Saul of Tarsus, and then, for the rest of it, being a lover of God and of His people. It is a miracle. Yes, but it is the miracle of new birth. It is the mighty moral change that transfers the man from being a child of the wicked one to that of a child of God, and, thank God, such a miracle is not uncommon—it is God's work. Is this change necessary for the enjoyment of future blessings? It is absolutely necessary. Heaven would be a positive and intolerable hell to a child of the wicked one. He would (if he could enter) find not one element congenial to his nature or taste. He hated God and His holy ways on earth; nor could he love them in heaven. Oh! it is well and happy even now to be a child of such a God and Father, but what will it be, soon and forever, in yonder house of love and light and glory—all secured for us by the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Third. "Sons of God." We need not treat of angels, who are so-called in one or two passages, seeing that they do not belong to the race of man; but, while the the relation of children flows from the nature of God by whom they were begotten, the position and rank of sons is given them on account of the Spirit of His Son who now dwells within them—now—in these days of Christianity and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. The children are raised from a condition of non-age (minors) to that of full-age (majority) as we read in Gal. 4. They can cry by that Spirit, "Abba Father" after the pattern of the Son of God Himself when in the dark shades of Gethsemane.

"If children then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," true, but note the inevitable consequence:—"if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together" (Rom. 8: 17). Co-heirships in glory means companionship in suffering and testimony till the glory itself shall come, and then the whole blood-bought family, in all its members, shall be "conformed to the image of the Son that He may be the firstborn among many brethren," then shall He say, "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me"—all are in the same relation—"My Father and your Father," albeit He and they—the "I" and the children given to Him—differ so widely. What a family when all shall resemble, the Son of God—conformed to His image—He the chief foremost—most glorious! What a family when all shall be in the Father's house—at home—in the presence of Father, Son and Spirit; where evil, sorrow, death and Satan are displaced for ever by good and holiness and joy and life divine!

If a Christian complains of having to mix with the world in business, I advise him to do his business as he would if compelled to go out in the rain. If he must go out he will not let the fear of being a little wet deter him, but as soon as his work is done he will seek shelter, and not stand in the rain for pleasure. So if necessary duties carry us into worldly company it will not hurt us if we feel that company to be uncongenial and are glad to retire from it as soon as the business will permit.—NEWTON.
There seems to be a beautiful order in the quotations from the Old Testament that are given in Hebrews concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. They are well-set gems in a diadem of glory for His Head. Verse 5 gives two quotations: “Thou art My Son” and “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.” A two-fold testimony to the fact that He is the Son. The first words from the Father’s mouth when Jesus was born into this world declare His Sonship. He was always the Son; this was His eternal relationship with the Father and His coming in flesh did not alter the relationship. It was taken up in time and in manhood. What He is to the Father stands first in these glories. HE IS THE OBJECT OF THE FATHER’S LOVE AND DELIGHT.

The next quotation is on verse 6: “And let all the angels of God worship Him.” He had been made “a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” Yet it was the Father’s decree that He should not have less honour than He had before. The angels must worship Him. The second word from God’s mouth, as His beloved Son lay in the manger, tended by His virgin mother, declared His unchangeable Deity. HE IS THE OBJECT OF THE ANGELS’ WORSHIP.

The third quotation (verse 8), “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom,” declares Him to be supreme in God’s far-stretching realm, and in this supremacy He shall uphold the righteousness of God, as once He maintained it in His own life in the flesh. He is God upon an everlasting throne, and yet Man, anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions. These shall surround His throne, rejoice in His joy and bask in His favour; they shall hear His wisdom and exult in His glory. Once they were sinners, but saved by grace they are now His brethren, sanctified by Him and one with Him, but He must be and always will be above them, the Firstborn among His brethren. HE IS THE OBJECT OF THE ADMIRATION AND WORSHIP OF ALL THE REDEEMED.

The next quotation (verses 10 and 11), “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:” “They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment.” He is the Creator who made the earth and the heavens, that in them He might bring into full manifestation what God is in His righteousness as opposed to all iniquity. and when these works of His hands have fulfilled their purpose, He will set them aside as one would a disused garment, and establish a new creation in which righteousness shall dwell. But in that new creation He will be the same. As He was and is, so shall He ever be, the pledge that His word shall stand and that every thought of the heart of God that has been expressed in blessing shall abide. He is the unchanging One, and so THE OBJECT OF THE UNWAVERING TRUST OF A UNIVERSE THAT SHALL BE BROUGHT INTO BLESSING BY HIM.

Then finally (verse 13): “Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” Every foe that would resist Him—and how evil must all those be that would resist Him, who was God manifest in the flesh, full of grace and truth—will be silenced and crushed beneath His feet for ever, for no discordant voice must be heard in that world to come in which everything that hath breath will praise the Lord. He must be supreme Ruler, but also the great Leader of the loud Hallelujahs, as He is the cause and the theme of them. HE WILL BE THE OBJECT OF UNIVERSAL AND HARMONIOUS PRAISE.
THE TWO JOSEPHS.

IT is no mere coincidence that the two Josephs of the New Testament were prominent, one at the birth and the other at the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a third Joseph in Acts I, but he is of no account. The Joseph of the Old Testament was called "a fruitful bough," and these two men were of the same stock; they brought forth their fruit in its season, and their fruit abides, and their leaves have not withered unto this day. They bore the same name and in character they were alike. They are both said to be "just" men, which clearly indicates that they had walked in the fear of God though their positions in life were very different. He of Arimathea was a rich man and an honourable counsellor, while the husband of Mary was an obscure and poor carpenter of despised Nazareth, though of the house and lineage of David. His social position confirmed the Scripture which spoke of the tabernacle of David having fallen down, and yet as we consider his character and faith, we see his moral greatness; he was a true son of David, a man after God’s own heart.

They were both vessels meet for God’s use, and though we have no record of their lives before their sudden appearance in the events in which they played so important a role, we are sure that they were the subjects of God’s grace and discipline which prepared them to do His will in regard to the entrance to this life and the exit from it of His beloved Son. It was not natural for men to act as they acted, and as we consider them we are impressed with the sovereign will of God. He chooses whom He will from poor and rich; He has need of both in the carrying out of His purposes, but if they are to be of use to Him He must fashion and mould them as the potter moulds the clay, that His thoughts may control them and not their own. This He most surely did with the two Josephs.

Joseph of Nazareth had staggering problems to face, but he faced them as only a just and upright man whose heart was as tender as his conscience could. As far as we know he expressed no surprise when an angel from the Lord appeared to Him with the amazing news. "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son and Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins." He asked no questions, but discerned with the simplicity of faith the revelation as from the Lord and obeyed without hesitation or delay. He stands first in the line of New Testament worthies as an example to us of subjection to the will of God.

He was called to be the guardian of "the young Child," who was "the Son of the Highest," "a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" and "Emmanuel," and he took up the tremendous responsibility without any sign of agitation. With commendable simplicity he hearkened to his instructions from God and obeyed them. But what a test it must have been to him on their arrival in Bethlehem to find no room for Mary at the inn. Room would probably have been made for her if Joseph could have paid more than others, or if he had been a man of note like him of Arimathea, but he was a poor man and without influence, and the only place that he could find for the virgin mother when her great hour arrived was a stable, and a manger was the only available cradle for her Son, who was the Son of God, come in flesh. Only a sense that he was in the path of God’s will, who orders all things for His own glory, could have sustained him in such circumstances.

These Josephs could not have changed places. If the Lord had come into the home of the rich man the grace of God would not have shone out with the same lustre. This was the sign in
the depths that God had promised of old. So the angel announced to the shepherds, "This shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapt in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Thus came the Son of God into the world that He had made. What human mind can comprehend the greatness of this condescension? He, who being in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to equal with God, had made Himself of no reputation and had come into the world in deepest poverty; for our sakes He had become poor. I will quote from a Spirit-taught writer:—

"He came down into the lowest depths that there should be none, even the most wretched, who could not feel that God in His goodness was near to him and was entirely accessible to him—come down to him—His love finding its occasion in his misery: and that there was no need to which He was not present, which He could not meet. It was thus He made Himself known on earth, and on high He is still the same. He does not forget His human experiences... He came down, took part in all the sorrows of humanity, and entered into all the circumstances in which the human heart could be, and was wounded, oppressed and discouraged, bowing down under evil. No tenderness, no power of sympathy, no humanity like His; no human heart that can so understand, so feel with us, whatever the burden may be that oppresses the heart of man. None so near, none who has come so low, and entered with Divine power into the need, and all the need, of man." (J. N. Darby.)

As Joseph began so he continued. If we consider the carrying of the Young Child and His mother into Egypt, their sojourn there, and their return into the land, we see the same simple obedience and trust. He did what he was told to do, never going before the heavenly vision nor lagging behind it, thus he fulfilled his great mission and glorified and justified God in His choice and training of him.

The life that began in such circumstances of poverty came to its climax and close upon the cross of a felon. There was no escape from this; in plainest words the Scriptures had foretold it and the Scriptures cannot be broken. It was for this that our Lord came forth from God. To Joseph was given the heavenly command, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins." And to do this He must bear those sins "in His own body on the tree." "He was delivered for our offences." At the cross, man's sin and God's love came face to face, it was the proof and the measure of both; and as we contemplate it, we bow our heads in shame at the sin of man, and bow our hearts in adoration at the love of God. "God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." But that great fact in no wise excuses the sin of man. When He was delivered into their hands they treated Him with unparalleled insult and cruelty. He was mocked by Jew and Gentile, beaten and spat upon, scourged and crowned with thorns, and at last condemned to the most shameful and cruel death. As He hung upon the cross He was the centre of mockery and derision until He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. And they would have pursued Him beyond death; the crowning insult was that "they appointed His grave with the wicked," as Isaiah 53: 9 should read. They had prepared a rough grave near the cross in which to cast His body along with the bodies of the robbers who had died with Him. But God intervened, He cried, Halt, to the malice of men, and His beloved Son "was with the rich in His death."

God had held His man in reserve; Joseph was a secret disciple, in whose soul God had secretly wrought. He had feared the Jews while Jesus lived and had not openly confessed Him as his Lord, but now when all the world seemed against Him and His mission to earth seemed to be a complete failure, he stood forth as bold as a lion. It was an unheard of thing that a Jew.
and a Jew of high standing, should claim the body of a crucified criminal, for crucifixion was a death reserved for the lowest and the worst. But God's chosen man went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. He stood alone, against the world. He took his stand by the cross, taking on himself the reproach of it, and declaring by his act that he loved the Man whom the world had rejected.

He was God's prepared vessel, and being a rich man he had a prepared tomb, a new tomb, hewn out of the rock wherein never man had lain. There the body of Jesus was laid by tender, reverent hands, a fitting resting place for the body of Him who had glorified God on the earth and finished the work which He had given Him to do. "He was with the rich in His death."

We read no more of Joseph, but we shall see him; for the Lord will fulfil His own words:—"Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven." We do not know whether these two Josephs ever met upon earth, but they will meet in heaven and rejoice together at the grace that gave them so great places in relation to the Lord in His human weakness and need.

The Work of the Evangelist.

"I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26: 18).

The evangelist has a wonderful work to do, whether he reasons with men, as Paul did with Felix, or knowing the terror of the Lord, persuades them or beseeches them to be reconciled to God, his great object is to enlighten them as to God. He has to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

The evangelist's capital is the love of God, love commended to men in the death of Christ; the cross is his great standby, the more he is acquainted with the cross and what it means the more effective he is, for at the Cross God's love was fully revealed and Satan's deception and lies exposed. From the cross there shines the light that drives away the darkness of man's ignorance of God, and attracts him to the God who gave His Son for his salvation. The preaching of the cross cuts at the root of man's pride, but it is the power of God for the salvation of men, and as the evangelist refuses "the wisdom of the wise" and wields this power he is effective for God in the deliverance of men.

PEACE, at all times, is God's provision for us; the greeting with which our Lord ever greets us; the legacy which His death has left us. All winds and waves yield alike to Him; all things good and evil serve Him, and therefore serve His people, through His abiding care.
THE GRACE OF GOD.

My subject is the rich and inexhaustible grace of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—grace is one of Paul's great words. Every one of his epistles finishes up with this wonderful word: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," and of the 150 times the word "grace" is used in the New Testament, Paul uses it more than 100. The man who had the greatest conception of the heavenly character of our Christian faith was the man who had also the greatest conception of the grace that came down from heaven to earth in order to bring us to heaven and give us all the strength and succour that we need for our journey to heaven. In the Hebrew epistle the Christian is viewed as being on the way to heaven.

There are some things in this Epistle about this grace I want briefly to notice. In chapter 2 we have GRACE SUFFERING. The children were partakers of flesh and blood. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal God, came down from heaven and took part in the same. What for? In order that He might taste death. "When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Lord of Glory died," what do I see? I see amazing love. Love coming down to the unworthy, to the offenders, to suffer and bear the penalty of their sin. We see JESUS who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death—sin's dread penalty—tasting death in all its bitterness for us, and it was by the grace of God. Grace is this amazing love in its activities for the deliverance and blessing of those who had merited only the judgment of God.

In chapter 4 we find GRACE SUCOURING, and we feel, surely, how much we need this succour. The Lord Jesus Christ died to redeem us, but this Epistle tells us that He lives again to save and succour us, so that we might live before God as His redeemed ones. He is the Great High Priest and the Throne of Power has become the Throne of Grace, and we are exhorted to draw near. Seeing we have a Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens into the presence of God for us, we may draw near with boldness. The tense of the verb there is not the past—it is not "having drawn near," it is. "Let us continue to draw near." And we are to draw near with boldness, and that word "boldness" means "saying everything." You can go to God and tell Him things you can't tell any other body. You can bare your heart in all its weakness and simpleness and sorrow and temptation. You can draw near day by day, and hour by hour, to the Throne of Grace and there obtain mercy for every need and grace to help in every trial. It is grace for seasonable succour. Notice that word, In every time of need. That is not strong enough. When do we get this grace? Psalm 107 helps us. There the mariners were tossed up and down upon the sea, the tempest baffled their seamanship and they were at their wits' end. Then they cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard them. When was it? Just when they had reached breaking point, when they had no hope but in God. Have we known what it is to be at our wits' end? The children of Israel were there when they wanted water, when they lacked bread, when they were threatened by the hosts of the Amalekites: then they cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard and delivered them. And so it is as we are going through this wilderness journey we are often at Wits' End Corner and at the breaking point and we know not what to do. We come to the Throne of Grace and obtain mercy and we then discover that the grace of God can hold us at the critical moment. At all times and in all trials, whether small or great, we may come to the Throne of Grace.

But these people were in danger of turning aside from the grace of God
and going back to the law, from which grace had delivered them, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace. It is of the SPIRIT OF GRACE that I would speak: Brethren, do we realize that the grace that brought the Son down to suffer for us has given to us the Spirit of grace? How different is this Spirit to that of the law that made demands upon the people, righteous demands they were, but which they could never face. The Spirit of grace is the Spirit of supply and the Spirit of power for every need in the wilderness. Within us dwells that spring from heaven. What is that? The Spirit of our God. He is the Comforter, the Paraclete come alongside to help in the power of that same grace that brought the Saviour down to taste death for us. Brethren, let us not treat with indifference the Spirit of grace that has been given to us. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

I am not going to speak of the solemn warning given to those who turn aside from true Christianity, a Christianity that is marked by grace and the Spirit of grace. But there is a warning, a needful warning for us all. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.” There is the coming short of grace. It says, “Lest any man fail of the grace of God.” I wonder if there is here anybody that has never failed in grace? Do we treat each other as God has treated us? What of that word, “Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” To live outside this grace is to fail, and to act as a profane person. If we have failed in this, how are we to put it right? Confess it at once, even though it means getting down on your knees to the person to whom you have failed to show grace for, if you don’t, your sin will surely prove a root of bitterness by which many may be defiled. This verse may mean more than that, but I feel that I must press this need of maintaining grace with one another: the alternative is the springing up of some bitter poisonous plant. I have lived long enough to see it, I have known two brothers who quarrelled in their youth and never made up their quarrel, and they involved others in it and wrecked the work of God with which they were connected, and drove their families into the world.

In the last chapter we have GRACE ESTABLISHING, a lovely thought. First, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever,” unchanging in His grace. Then follows, It is a good thing to have the heart established with grace and not with meats. I want to stress that Christianity is founded and maintained in grace. The Jews thought everything consisted in abstaining from certain meats, fasting on certain days; a formal, ceremonial, legalistic religion which does not establish at all. It is grace that establishes, what God is to us in Christ. Its inexhaustible supplies flow around us. It alone will establish and strengthen and settle us. It is grace that will enable us to stand up to shocks, and who knows how many of them we may have yet? But the grace of God is sufficient for every emergency in life—and notice that it is the heart that is to be established, not the head merely nor the intelligence, but the heart. And is there any limit to that grace? No. The last word in the last book of the Bible gives us the final benediction—“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints.”

“Lord, ’tis enough, we ask no more, Thy grace around us pours, Its rich and unexhausted store And all its joys are ours.”

This grace, the grace that came down to save us, the grace that succours us in pilgrim journey, the grace that sent the Spirit of grace to be within us, and to so fill us that we do not fail of it and allow roots of bitterness to come in to spoil our Christian life and to mar and damage others. This same grace enables us to serve as chapter 12: 28 tells us—For this grace we thank Thee; give us to know it in our practical experience for the joy of our souls and the blessing of others.
"HENCEFORTH KNOW THE FLESH."

It will help us to a right understanding of this passage, if we see how it is illustrated in the life of our Lord, our perfect Example.

A striking instance of this is given in Matthew 12: 46-50. Our Lord was discoursing to the people. As He was thus engaged His mother and brethren stood outside, desiring to speak with Him. When told of this our Lord answered, "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" Then stretching His hand in the direction of His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother."

Thus He spoke in relation to the sphere of God's work and service, calculated to produce in the minds of His disciples the idea of a relationship nearer and closer and altogether different than any earthly tie. The earthly tie was on a different plane from the spiritual. The one is not to set aside the other. The natural must not intrude upon the sphere of the spiritual; the spiritual should not set aside the natural.

But though our Lord spoke thus, did He fail in filial love and care for His mother? Surely not! As a blessed Man in this world He was ever perfect in all the relationships of life.

For instance there is a supreme example of His love and care proper to human relationship. When He hung upon the cross, when life was fast drawing to a close, when His body was racked by excruciating physical torture, when the great event for which He assumed manhood, even to lay down His life under the overwhelming judgment of God as He took the sinner's place on the cross, had arrived, He even then thought of His mother with tender solicitude and deep affection. He saw John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and His mother standing at the foot of the cross. He said to His mother, "Behold thy Son," and to John, "Behold thy mother" (John 19: 25-27). "And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home." How beautifully the Lord cared for His mother, and counted on His loved disciple to take His place in caring for her.

Further it is informative to see how Scripture refers to our Lord's mother, when it is a question of a SPIRITUAL, and not a human setting. Incidentally it is a deeply interesting study as rebuking Mariolatry, that is the worship of the Virgin Mary, or setting her up as an intercessor with our Lord.*

Among the women who followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered to Him, and were standing round the cross, were Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children" (Matt. 27: 56). Note carefully that the mother of our Lord is not mentioned first in order in this list, but second. Nor is she described as our Lord's mother, but as the mother of James and Joses. This order is also carried out in Mark 15: 40. An uninspired writer would have most certainly put the name of the Virgin Mary first, but Scripture does not, and for a good reason.

Is it not significant that James, the author of the Epistle that bears his name, does not claim that he is the brother of our Lord? He surely had learnt the lesson that "though we have

*In a similar way the calling a celibate priest father is rebuked in Matt. 23: 9 when we read, "Call no man your father upon earth: for One is your Father, which is in heaven." Of course this does not set aside a child calling an earthly parent father, but it is prohibiting the calling any man on earth father in a spiritual sense.
known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know Him no more" (2 Cor. 5: 16).

This is further borne out in the little Epistle of Jude (called Juda in Mark 6: 3). He identifies himself as the brother of James. Why does he not call himself the brother of our Lord, for he was as much his brother as James? But he carefully abstains from doing so. Guided by the Spirit of God, this again illustrates 2 Cor. 5: 16.

It is true that in Galatians 1: 17-19, the Apostle Paul, visiting Jerusalem, staying with the Apostle Peter for fifteen days—by the way what a deeply interesting fifteen days it must have been—wrote, "But other of the Apostles saw I none, but James, the Lord's brother." One can understand why this is. The burden of the Galatian Epistle was a vehement denunciation of the attack on the gospel of the grace of God by the introduction of Judaising principles. The Apostle Paul was careful to define his position as the Apostle of the Gentiles, and that he owed his position as such directly to God's appointment, and that it was in no way connected with Jerusalem, nor with the other apostles sent to Israel. The matter was very serious, the very foundations of the faith were at stake. Hence his carefulness to designate which Apostle he had met, and to point out he had met none other.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read of the Apostles being found in an upper room, awaiting the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts 1: 14). Note how the women are mentioned first, and then Mary, the mother of Jesus, and finally His brethren. Mariolatry would have put the name of Mary first. Those who practise Mariolatry, deny that our Lord had brothers and sisters according to the flesh. There would be no chance of foisting this untruth upon the minds of its adherents were it not that they are kept in ignorance by the fact that the Word of God is withheld from them. They simply believe tradition and superstition and what they are told by their religious leaders.

It is very significant that the Virgin birth is not referred to in the Epistles, save in Galatians 4: 4, where we are told the Lord was "made of a woman." This expression would have been meaningless, if it had only referred to the way that all children come into the world. "Made of a woman" surely limits the human parentage of our Lord to the maternal side. It is the affirmation of the virgin birth. The way it is put is the affirmation of what was well known and believed, and not the statement of a fact, made for the first time. Again we say the silence of Scripture is full of meaning. Superstition puts the Virgin Mary on a level almost with our Lord, the Epistles say nothing about the Virgin save this one statement, "made of a woman."

When our Lord rose from the dead, and made Himself known to the sorrowing Mary Magdalene, He said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father" (John 20: 17). In the joy of her heart she was about to resume links with her Lord, the Son of Mary, the Hope of Messianic glory. But this was not to be. Henceforth she was not to know Him after the flesh, but to know Him in heavenly circumstances, in the spiritual sphere.

True our Lord carried Manhood to the throne of God. He became Man when the Word became flesh. The body in which He lived His earthly life was laid down in His sacrificial death, that body was raised from the dead. In that risen body He ascended to glory, and in that body He will come again, and for all eternity He will be God and Man, one blessed adorable Person. We know Him as the glorified Son of God in heavenly glory.
Let us quote again 2 Cor. 5: 16, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Then the Scripture goes on to speak of a new creation into which the believer is introduced, "old things have passed away; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God."

In the new creation there is neither Jew nor Greek [no national or religious distinction], there is neither bond nor free [no social distinction], there is neither male nor female [no natural distinction].

No national distinction. The writer years ago partook of the Lord's Supper in the United States. There were present Americans, English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Russians, Swedes, French and a Jew. National distinctions were lost sight of, and we enjoyed Christian fellowship together. We were all one in Christ Jesus.

No social distinction. The writer knew a Christian gentleman of wealth, a landed proprietor, who was driven to the morning meeting by his Christian coachman. They both sat down at the Lord's supper, one in Christ Jesus, just as Philemon, the master, and Onesimus, the slave, did at Colosse long years before.

No natural distinction. Brothers and sisters alike are "priests unto God and His Father" (Rev. 1: 6); brothers and sisters alike are "the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26).

True it is that brothers are exhorted to take part in assembly prayer and praise, whilst sisters are bidden to "keep silence in the churches" (1 Cor. 15: 34), and a woman is not to "usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2: 12). That holds good in time where sin has come in, but in glory every earthly distinction whether natural, social, or national, will have vanished. In eternity God shall dwell with men, and "they shall be His people" [not peoples] (Rev. 21: 3).

Let us close with a practical illustration that may help. A father and son are in the same assembly. Outside the assembly they are father and son, and right and godly parental and filial relationships should be observed. In the assembly they do not know each other after the flesh, but are one in Christ Jesus. Father and son outside the meeting; brothers in the Lord inside the meeting.

The reader can apply this line of thought in many ways, once the thought of Scripture is grasped.

---

He is the way, if any be misled;
He is the robe if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, He is bread;
If any be a bondman, He can free;
If any be but weak, how strong is He!
To dead men, life He is; to sick men health;
To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth;
A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth.

"To Thee, Lord Jesus, I direct mine eyes;
To Thee, my hands, to Thee my humble knees;
To Thee, my heart shall offer sacrifice;
To Thee, my thoughts, who only my thought sees;
To Thee myself, myself and all, I give,
To Thee alone, only to Thee I'd live."
We quote the following sentence from a letter:—"The word of Christ as a living power over the soul seems to be quite lost. You say to a man, the Scripture in such a place says so and so; his attitude is, 'Well, suppose it does, what of that?'" Our correspondent was not writing of infidels, or openly of godless men, but of Christians, of those who as a matter of doctrine would stoutly maintain that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Is his witness true? If so, herein lies the secret of the widespread spiritual dearth and death that we have to mourn. Is it true? Let our readers answer for themselves, for it is a vital matter. We press it as being the most important question that we could press.

IS IT TRUE THAT THE WORD OF CHRIST AS A LIVING POWER OVER OUR SOULS IS QUITE LOST?

By the same post that brought the letter from which we have quoted, we received a copy of a letter written by the late J. N. Darby, giving an account of the way that the Lord led him when first those truths of Scripture which so greatly affected him and his generation began to be unfolded to his understanding. What impressed us was the place that the Scriptures had in his mind and life. He says, "As a result of great soul exercise, THE WORD OF GOD BECAME TO ME AN ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY, I had always recognized it as being the Word of God.' And what was the effect of this? "The three persons in one God, the divinity (Deity) of Jesus, His atoning work on the cross, His resurrection, His seat at the right hand of God, were truths which, learnt as orthodox doctrines, began to be living realities to my soul. Not only were they truths, but I knew God personally after this manner; I had no other God but He who had thus revealed Himself, and I had Him. He was the God of my life, of my worship, the God of my peace, the only true God.'"

But not only did these as well as other great truths become living realities to him, but he was compelled in submission to the same Word to test all his association and relationship by its light, so that, what "was not in accordance with what I read in the Bible concerning the church," was judged and departed from by him. We could quote other exceedingly interesting and helpful passages from this letter, but our purpose is to emphasize the authority of the Scriptures as being God's Word to us, and the effect upon the soul and life when there is submission to this authority.

On laying down this very interesting letter we took up a paper written by the same hand about forty years after the exercises described, and we desire to bring to the notice of our readers the following forcible sentences. Speaking of the Scriptures, the Word of God, he says, "That only is the rule and measure of my responsibility, the expression of the authority of God over me. It is direct from God, and God's title is absolute, and embraces my whole being in obedience; He exercises His authority immediately by the Word. . . My first, immediate, and all-ruling relationship is with God by the Word. It has precedence of all others, and claims absolute and immediate subjection. 'We ought to obey' is the Christian's ensign; but 'We ought to OBEY GOD rather than man' is the absolute claim of God, who has revealed Himself fully, and reveals Himself immediately to us by the Word.'"

The importance of this matter cannot be exaggerated; the Scriptures are the Word of God to men; the revelation of Himself, the declaration of His will; His voice speaking in love, with many warnings and with all authority. They "cannot be broken," said the Lord. In them we learn the way of salvation; they are sufficient to thoroughly furnish the man of God (2 Tim. 3: 15-17); he
who will not obey them is no fit com­pany for any Christian (2 Thess. 3: 14); and those who wrest them and reject them do so unto their own de­struction (2 Peter 3: 16). This word LIVETH and abideth for ever; it is
the sword of the Spirit, quick and power­ful; it is the discern­er, or critic, of the thoughts and intents of the heart of man, to be heard and obeyed, and not to be criticized by him. Having such a treasure in our possession lays upon us the solemn responsibility of hearing it and being subject to it, that it may exercise its living power over our souls.

The tendency is, when fervency of spirit wanes, and the divine life within grows feeble, to escape the exercise that is necessary in order to know the truth and will of God directly from the Word, and to turn to leaders and accept what they say simply because they say it. This is the easy path, but a most dan­gerous one, for the ear becomes dull to every other voice but the favourite one, and then the result is often carnal zeal for some special line of teaching or ecclesiastical procedure which may not be wholly according to the Word, and which can be adopted without that soul exercise which subjection to the Word, demands, and thus are sects and parties formed.

It is true that the Word exhorts, "Remember your leaders" (Heb. 13: 7), and this we must do, but my conviction is that these here spoken of were God-inspired men, who, as the Scripture says, "have spoken to you THE WORD OF GOD." They were "His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3: 5), to whom the truth was first given, and whose min­istry is now embodied for us in the New Testament. About this I have no question, for it is not God's way to turn us to fallible men, who, because they are fallible, must of necessity be more or less affected by their limited outlook, but He would turn us to those whom He kept in answer to the Lord's request (John 17), and whom he made the inspired vessels of His communica­tion to us. The great Apostle commended those he was leaving behind to "God and the Word of His grace" and warned them against men who would arise amongst them speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.

It is only as the lesser men have directed us to the Word that they have helped us. If their sayings have become in any measure our guide instead of the Word, and displaced the Word one of two things is certain, either their sayings are carnal or we have taken them up carnally. The writer from whom we have already quoted con­tinues:—"If another knows THE WORD better than myself, has more spiritual power, he can help me; and that is according to the will and mind of God. But he does not come between my soul and the Word, but brings me more fully into acquaintance with what God says to me in it. My soul is only the more in immediate relationship with God by His Word, . . ."

Another able writer has said: "Leaders there always will be, and all right when it is their faith that carries them ahead of others. But faith must be in the Word of God, and have this to justify itself to others. This true guidance is always by the Word, and that is what preserves following from being a mere following of men. Apart from this, we may go easily astray in the path of very good men. Peter led Barnabas astray after this fashion. Paul says, "Follow me," but adds, "as I follow Christ."

There is danger also in looking back to anything that is short of the begin­ning, or of taking as our pattern or standard any effect of the truth that we have seen or heard of. As to this we quote again from the writings of J. N. Darby:

"Let me here engage my reader to realize in his own mind, and, if occasion call for it, insist upon it with others. . . . ‘Let that therefore abide
in you which ye have heard from the beginning: if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father’ (1 John 2: 24). Nothing has secure authority for the believer but that which was from THE BEGINNING. This alone secures our continuing in the Father and the Son. There may be much ‘reverend antiquity’; and the spirit of reverence, where the object is true, is a very important quality in the believer, but an amazing means of seduction when it is not; but as a ground of faith, the Christian must have, ‘what was from the beginning’; the authority for believing must be ‘that which existed from the beginning.’ In the Scriptures I have that certainty—I have the thing itself and nowhere else. Many may preach the truth and I profit by it; but by the Word I have the certainty of what was from the beginning, and I have it nowhere else.

Tradition holds a certain cast of mind in a thrall, from which only the Word can deliver. We must beware of this. The Pharisees of old were great sticklers for what they held to be correct, but they made the WORD OF GOD OF NON-EFFECT by their traditions, and were the most persistent critics and opponents of the Lord Jesus.

The traditions that we must follow are clearly indicated in 2 Thess. 2: 15:

God’s promises are according to His wisdom as well as His love, and they rest on His faithfulness as well as His mercy.

We never know the meaning of trust until we learn the nature of trial. It is in the trial that we have to put into practice the theory of believing in God. . . . Trial, therefore, is the school of trust. It is there we learn the lesson of implicitly confiding in God, and of waiting patiently on Him.

There are times in the believer’s life when he needs to give himself time to grasp more firmly what he has already received. There are times which he needs to spend in believing rather than in trying to understand—times of soliloquy, when he tells his soul what he knows already intellectually, but needs to appropriate spiritually.
IN the last paragraph of chapter 4, we find the Lord back again in Galilee, and it brings us to the second of the miraculous signs that John mentions. In Galilee He met with a reception that had not been accorded to Him in Jerusalem, and this second sign also had a connection with the town of Cana of Galilee.

The first sign prefigured the time predicted in Isaiah 62: 4, 5, when Israel’s marriage day shall have come, and from the purifying water the wine of gladness will be produced. The second sign presented the Lord as the One who can bring life and healing when death seems imminent. This Jewish nobleman did not exhibit the strong faith that marked the Gentile centurion of Matthew 8. His tendency as a Jew was to demand signs and wonders before believing; and belief of that sort is not genuine faith, as we saw at the end of chapter 2. Still, though feeble, faith was there in this man’s heart.

It manifested itself in two ways. First, it persisted in its appeal, when at first the Lord’s answer seemed unfavourable; fully exposing the desperate need of the son. Second, when the answer he received was a simple command to return because his son lived, he took Jesus at His word without any sign before his eyes. Here indeed are the marks of true faith; it persists, and it takes God at His word without signs or wonders or feelings.

The Lord verified His own word, and the next day the man saw that his confidence had not been misplaced. Jesus had said, “Thy son liveth”; the next day his servants met him saying, “Thy son liveth,” though they had not heard Jesus speak. Life granted even at the point of death is evidently the leading thought. And this is just what man in general needs, and Israel in particular: not just healing but life. This was the second sign, and we shall find much instruction about life—about Jesus as its Fountain Head and Giver—in the chapters that follow.

But first we are brought back again to Jerusalem that we may consider a third sign that He gave in the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda. The Jew reading this Gospel might say, “Well we are as a nation sick to the point of death, and need life; but we have the law. Ought we not to find healing there.” The third sign furnishes us with a reply to this.

A way of blessing was brought within man’s reach by the law of Moses. Only one thing was necessary on man’s part, but that one thing was wholly lacking. It demanded that he should have power to avail himself of the benefit provided. The case of the impotent man by the pool aptly sets forth the state in which every man lies if tested by the law. Sin has destroyed our power to do the necessary thing which the law demands. This was so obvious in the case of the man that he made no reference to his own powers, which had vanished, but only acknowledged that no one was available to do for him what he could not do himself. “I have no man,” said he.

Yet by his confession he acknowledged his desire to be made whole, and complete soundness was granted to him at once by the word of the Lord. What the law could not do for him, inasmuch as it was weak through the impotence of his flesh, was accomplished in an instant as the work of the Son of God, now present on earth. The man was able not only to walk but also to carry the bed which formerly had witnessed to his helplessness. The Lord bade him do this though it was the Sabbath.

The law of the Sabbath was very strict. All kinds of work were prohibited, even
to picking up sticks and lighting a fire. The Jews therefore were up in arms at once when they saw the man carrying his bed. He had however a ready and sufficient answer. The Man who had healed him had told him to do it; and a little later he was able to name that Man—Jesus. Their zeal for the Sabbath was such that from that moment He became the Object of their hatred and persecution.

The Lord uttered no word of apology or even explanation: He simply asserted which cut at the root of this legal institution. Under the law of Moses the Sabbath was instituted as a sign between Jehovah and Israel, as is made clear in Exodus 31: 12-17, though it was based upon His rest when creation was finished. As far as it concerned Himself Jesus brushed it aside. Since the creation had been invaded by sin His Father was working not resting, and He was working in communion with His Father, and not keeping Sabbaths as linked up with them.

This pointed declaration stirred up the Jews to murderous hatred for the two reasons stated in verse 18. He had broken the sign of the covenant in which they boasted, and He had coupled with His action the assertion that God was His Father; thus claiming equality with God. Verse 18, be it noted, is John’s explanation of why the Jews sought to kill Him, and not his record of the explanation furnished by the Jews—though of course it may have been the explanation which they gave. It is therefore the comment of the Holy Spirit through John, and proves that in the Sonship of our Lord there is no thought of any kind of inferiority to the Father. On the contrary it is the assertion of equality.

The answer Jesus gave to their murderous hatred, in verse 19, is very striking. The Son, who was here in Manhood, had taken the place of carrying out in perfection all the Father’s will and work. Hence He could do nothing “of Himself,” as originating it independently of the Father; but rather He acted in all things as directed and ordered of the Father. But this is intended to conduct us, we believe, to the still deeper truth that this necessity was rooted in His perfect oneness with the Father. Though Man He was so wholly and perfectly and altogether in the unity of the Godhead that it was impossible for Him to act apart from the Father. In that sense, “The Son can do nothing of Himself”; and therefore this saying far from being any confession of impotence or even inferiority is an assertion of His unqualified Deity.

“The Father loveth the Son.” These five words occur as the statement of the Evangelist at the end of chapter 3. They now occur in verse 20 as the voice of Jesus Himself. The Son, now on earth in Manhood, was in the full cognizance of all the Father’s actings, and was to engage in works greater than any yet manifested. He would act as the Giver of life and as the Executor of judgment. To quicken is to give life; and in this the Son acts according to His sovereign will, though of course His will is ever in complete harmony with the Father’s will.

Raising the dead and quickening are distinguished in verse 21. The wicked dead are to be raised, but it is not said that they will be quickened. Again, quickening takes place when resuscitation is not in question, as verse 25 shows. The Son will raise the dead, as He states in verse 28 and 29, but the point in verse 21 is that He gives life just as the Father does. In the opening verses of the Gospel we viewed Him as having life inherently, and as displaying that life so that it should be the light of men. Here we go a step further: He is the Giver of life to others. In this He acts with the Father.

But in the matter of judgment He acts for the Father, as verse 22 states. There are things which the Son disclaims, such as the fixing and revealing...
of "times and seasons," as we see in Acts 1: 7, Mark 13: 32; here we find that the Father disclaims all judgment, committing it into the hands of the Son. These facts, however, must not be used in any way to detract from the honour and glory of either Father or Son. This is specially pointed out as regards the Son in verse 23, inasmuch as the fact of His assuming Manhood lays Him open to unwarranted depreciation in the minds of those who neither understand nor love Him. He will be honoured by all in the hour of judgment; and not to honour Him today is to dishonour the Father who sent Him. The Father evidently will accept no honour save that in which the Son is honoured conjointly.

In this wonderful discourse the Lord made three statements on which He laid special emphasis, expressed by the words "Verily, verily." In verse 19 He emphasized His essential oneness with the Father in all His works, as we have seen. In verse 24 the emphasis again lies on His connection with the Father. As the Word become flesh He was the sent One of the Father, and in His word the Father was made known. So He did not just say, "He that heareth My word and believeth it," but, "believeth on Him that sent Me." We believe on the Father through the word of the Son; so that presently Peter writes to saints, "who by His do believe in God" (1 Pet. 1: 21). Now here He announced that such simple hearing of faith produced three amazing results: the possession of life eternal; preservation from judgment; passage out of death into life.

How many ten thousand times has this great verse been used to bring light and assurance to the souls of anxious and enquiring sinners! May it yet be used many thousand times more! The authoritative assurance it breathes lies on the very face of it. We are well rewarded, however, when we look a little more closely into its depths. The Son gives life to whom He will and He executes all judgment. He speaks the life-giving word, which conduct the soul in faith to God, and at once the life is ours and into the judgment we shall never come. We have become the subjects of the first of those greater works of which He has spoken, and into the second we never enter. He laid emphasis on the positive side by speaking of life in a twofold way. It is not only that which the believer possesses, but that also into which He passes out of the realm of death.

If we speak of life as connected with this lower creation, we deal with something which defies our analysis and definitions, yet obviously the word on our lips has more senses than one. We contemplate, for instance, not only the vital spark in man or beast but also the conditions needed for that spark to exist. There is no fish life without water; no human life without air. Even so there is no spiritual and eternal life without the knowledge of God; and no knowledge of God without the revelation which reaches us in the word of the Sent One and the faith which receives it. Because of this, we believe, Jesus spoke not only of the believer having eternal life but of his passing out of that spiritual death which is marked by utter ignorance of God into the realm of life which is filled with the light of the knowledge of the Father. No wonder He laid such emphasis on this wonderful statement.

And in the next verse He emphasized the further statement that a period of time was then dawning in which this great life-giving work of His would specially be carried on. In this verse we view the work more from the side of His own sovereign action and faith is not specifically mentioned, though of course no one does "hear the voice of the Son of God" apart from faith. This "hour" has lasted till the present moment, and through the centuries multitudes have heard the voices of the preachers of the word without hearing His voice in the word. Only those who have heard His voice have lived. They have lived because, as the next verse
tells us, the Son now come forth in Manhood, has life in Himself, as given of the Father. Life was in Him essentially, for the statement, “In Him was life” (1:4), is connected with His eternal existence, and His incarnation is not mentioned till verse 14; but here we see that in Manhood the Son is given of the Father as the Fountain Head of eternal life for men. We possess it derivatively, whereas only that which is possessed inherently and essentially can be communicated to others. This great life-giving work is His alone and now is the time of His so acting. In the deep-seated silence of innumerable hearts His voice has sounded: they have heard and lived. We must not invert the order of the words, as some have been inclined to do. It is not, “they that live shall hear,” but, “they that hear shall live.”

But further, the Son of God is also the Son of Man, and so He is not only the Fountain of life but also the authoritative Judge of all. As Son of Man He was to be “lifted up” as under man’s judgment. Presently we shall hear the people saying, “How sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” (12:34). Well, in the coming day they will know who He is to their irretrievable ruin! Though at first sight it seems most marvellous that all judgment should be vested in A MAN, yet we are not to marvel. Another hour will strike when the voice of the Son of Man will be heard, and this not only by some but by all—whether good or evil.

Only those who heard the voice of the Son of God and lived had the power to do good. The life expressed itself in the good, as its product and proof. The rest simply did evil. The voice of the Son of Man will lift out of the grave all without exception, for there is a resurrection of judgment as well as a resurrection of life. They are distinguished here, though we have to go to other scriptures to discover that a wide interval of time separates them. Both however are in the future, for the words, “and now is,” do not occur in this connection. The words in verses 22, 24, 27, 29, translated variously, judgment, condemnation, damnation, are fundamentally the same. It is well to bear this in mind.

But though all judgment is in His hands, He does not even in this act independently or apart from the Father. Having taken up Manhood, He does not leave the place He has taken but carries it out in perfection. Had He said, “My judgment is just; because I am the Word who became flesh,” He would have stated what is absolutely true; but He based the assertion on this—“because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me.” All judgment may safely be committed into the hands of a Man of this order, and in this sense He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing.”

In Matthew 20:32, Jesus uttered the actual words, “Not Mine to give.” In Mark 13:32, He said in effect, “Not Mine to know.” Here He says in effect, “Not Mine to do.” All three statements are made in view of the lowly place of dependence which He took for the glory of the Godhead and our salvation, and they do not in the least militate against His supreme place in the unity of the Godhead. They show us something of what is meant by His making Himself “of no reputation,” or, “emptying Himself,” according to Philippians 2, and thus we get a glimpse of the true “kenosis” of which Scripture speaks, and we find it far removed from the evil “kenosis theory” formulated by unbelieving theologians, which attributes fallibility and error to our Lord.

The truth was that, though Himself so great, He was here wholly for the will of the Father, and all His judgments were according to the Father’s thoughts. Even as regards witness to Himself all was left in the Father’s hands. It is customary among men to advertise themselves, but thus it was not with Him.
THE cross is reached, and He is placed upon it, two malefactors with Him, one on either side, and now He pleads for those who have placed Him there, in ignorance in which they have done it: a thing which leaves them yet the possibility of shelter in the city of refuge; and which Peter takes up afterwards in his pleading with them to repent and turn to God (Acts 3: 17).

And now the cry begins to ring out, though in mockery, of salvation. "He saved others," say the rulers, "let Him save Himself, if He be the Christ the chosen of God." Even the soldiers take it up after their own fashion. "If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself." And then one of the robbers makes the impossible conjunction: "If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us."

The rulers know no more of salvation than the soldiers or the robber. A Christ who would save Himself could not be the Christ predicted by the prophets, or the Saviour of others. Isaiah had pictured exactly what was passing before their eyes. "He hath poured out His soul unto death: and was numbered with the transgressors, and bear the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

But it pleased God to give a lesson of salvation which was to accompany the story of the Cross, just in the place where every eye directed to that Cross should see it. Suddenly the voice of one of the malefactors rebukes his fellow. He, a dying man involved in the same sentence, does he not fear God, before whom he is soon to stand? Does he not fear with that sin upon him which had brought them both justly where they were? But here was One who had done nothing amiss.

Then with this guilt upon himself, and confessing it, he turns with the boldest possible prayer to this confessed sinless One. "Lord," he says, "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." Immediately he is answered—more than answered—"Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Here is a pattern of salvation, outlined in the sharpest manner that could be imagined, and placed in the most conspicuous place that could be given it. Without works, except bad works, without sacrament or ritual of any kind, by no slow process and by no conditional salvation, this condemned malefactor is given at once the perfect assurance of a place that very day with his Lord in Paradise.

Thus the answer of grace goes beyond even the boldness of the prayer, and when indeed does not grace exceed all possible expectations? Who could have asked or thought that God would give His Son to die for sinners? And He who has done this, "How shall He not with Him freely give us all things."

The mockery and the insult called forth no response from the blessed Sufferer; He seemed all unconscious of it, but the need that sought Him, the faith that recognized under such disguise the Lord of glory, drew from the smitten rock the living waters.

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5: 24).

To crucify the flesh is certainly not to gratify it. The Christian cannot make provision for the flesh, or gratify it in any way, without bringing a cloud over his soul.
HIS NAME.

“His Name shall be in their foreheads” (Rev. 22: 4).

“Thou shalt call His Name JESUS” (Matt. 1: 21).

“His Name” occurs first in the first chapter of the New Testament and for the last time in its last chapter, and the fragrance and light of it pervade the Book. In the Old Testament the name of Adam is developed, the man by whom sin entered into the world and death by sin. This issued in darkness as well as death, for ignorance and distrust of God is darkness. In Isaiah’s graphic language, “Darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people,” and it was into such conditions that Jesus came. There were some exceptions, just a few, a believing remnant, looked for redemption in Israel and caught the light of the first rays of the glory of the coming Redeemer. Of His coming one of these watchers for Him said, “The Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, through the tender mercy of our God”; and when He did appear in the midst of Israel the words of the prophet were fulfilled. “The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” For light instead of darkness and life instead of death we are dependent upon Him whose Name is JESUS.

His first coming was not as the lightning that flashes out of the east and shineth even unto the west, such His second coming will be (Matt. 24: 27); His first coming was gentle as the dawn, making none afraid. He was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but He laid aside His glory and made Himself of no reputation and was found in fashion as a man—a Babe in a manger-cradle, for there was no room for Him at the inn. It was then that His Name was given to Him, a Name proclaiming His great humility and the object of His coming. “Thou shalt call His Name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.” “Unto us a child is born.” We are not afraid of a child! “Unto us a son is given.” We do not shrink in terror from a son!

There could be only this one reason for His coming in such a manner. If God had desired to send to men a message of warning, or entreaty, or command, a servant like unto the prophets would have done, for at sundry times in such manner God spoke to men of old. If He had intended to make an example of sinners by executing His righteous judgment upon them, an angel or two would have sufficed, as in the case of the guilty cities of the plain. But now something beyond the power of men and angels had to be done. The time had come when God would reveal Himself as the Saviour-God, and who could reveal what God is but God? The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. “The fulness of the time had come and God had sent forth His Son, made of a woman” (Gal. 4: 4). And “all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

If sinners were to be saved God must come down to them, and if God comes down to sinners He must come as the Saviour. His very nature demands it, for God is love, and His wisdom found a way by which He can save according to the righteousness of the eternal throne. And the Name of Jesus was the pledge to men of this. Blessed Name. Name of reproach on earth, name of ignominy on the cross. Name indelibly engraved upon the hearts of His own. Name that shall call forth the eternal praise of the limitless realm of the Redeemer-God.
But He had to pay a great price in order to make good His title to that Name. The cross with its inconceivable sorrows and the shedding of His precious blood was the cost to Him. The accusation nailed upon His cross was, “This is JESUS,” and it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, for all the world to read. The rejected, suffering Nazarene, crucified for us, wounded for our transgressions—“This is Jesus,” and apart from that cross He could not have been Jesus. The chief priests mocked Him, saying, “Come down from the cross that we may see and believe.” He could not have come down from the cross, for His Name was Jesus, and had He come down as they mockingly demanded He would have been compelled to divest Himself of that Name and there would have been no salvation for any sinner, and the work that God gave Him to do would never have been done.

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.” Hear the witness of Simon Peter when filled with the Holy Ghost he spoke of Him. “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses” (Acts 2: 32). “Know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ” (2: 36). “The God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus” (3: 13). “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour” (5: 30, 31). And Paul adds his witness to that of Peter, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2: 9-11).

It is God’s command “that we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ,” and the sins of all who obey this command are forgiven them “for His Name’s sake” (1 John 2: 12), and all these belong to Him, and the Spirit of the living God is even now writing His Name upon the fleshy tables of their hearts. But the great end in view lies ahead of us, for “in the ages to come God will shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Then His Name shall be in the foreheads of all His own. “As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” All trace of the first man, fallen and degraded, shall have passed away and we shall be like Him—the last Adam, for “we shall see Him as He is.” His mighty power will effect this change, for “He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”
What God is in His own blessedness and love will shine forth on all around Him, and “His servants shall serve Him,” without faltering or failure; with willing service and in fulness of joy, “And they shall see His face.” There will be no cloud, no distance there to mar the communion and intimacy of that heavenly scene.

“With eyes undimmed shall we our God behold,
Behold Him face to face and walk in light.”

Conformed to the image of God’s dear Son, His Name shall be in our foreheads; indelibly engraved there for all the universe to see that we belong to Him: His brethren, in the midst of whom He will be eternally pre-eminent. Like Him, too, in spite of the world, the flesh and the devil; like Him, fruit of His sacrifice and death, then He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And we shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness (Ps. 17: 15).

“Like Jesus in that place
Of light and love supreme;
Once Man of Sorrows full of grace,
Heaven’s blest and endless theme.”

“Thou shalt call His Name Jesus.”
“His Name shall be in their foreheads.”

Gifts from Christ.

“When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Eph. 4: 8).

No one can receive a gift from the glorified Head of the Church without being intended, by the Head Himself, to use that gift for the good of the whole assembly of God. The gifts given by Christ are given to the assembly, and there can be no narrower sphere of exercise than that of the entire Church.

It is hardly necessary to insist upon the fact that a true gift from Christ will be recognised by those who are walking in subjection to His will. If a man who is a baker bakes bread that is good and digestible, and his customers thrive upon his rolls and loaves, they are surely right in recognising him as a baker. In like manner, if souls are fed, encouraged and strengthened by a man’s ministry, they are certainly right in looking upon him as a gift from Christ.

If a truly gifted person sees grace working in another he will rejoice over it and magnify the grace, there will be no jealousy in his heart. or if it arises for a moment he will judge it as evil and of the flesh, which can only mar his testimony, rob him of power, and mar his work. A greater gift will not say to the lesser, “I have no need of thee,” nor the lesser, “I am of no use because another outshines me.” One might use the illustration that the lights, large and small, are to shine together; there is no reason why a small light should be snuffed out because a larger one is near.

The ground is very wide (“until we all come to the full knowledge of the Son of God”), and woe be to him who would interfere with or restrict the use of gifts in any way that is not according to the scope of the Giver. It is wonderful to see how the Lord will bless and use gifts that He has given, even in this day of confusion, when there is real dependence upon Him.
SEATED ON HIGH

1. “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3).

When the glory of Jehovah passed by (see Exod. 33:22 and 23) Moses was put in a cleft of the rock, and even then could not look upon God’s face and live. But here is the Son of God, who is the brightness, the very fulness of that glory, the express image of God, the One who upholds all things by His mighty word, seen seated on high. He is God’s Son and occupies the position by reason of who He is and what He has accomplished, and in the virtue of His own power and authority; having made purgation for our sins. He is here in His own inherent right, in all His greatness, and none can take that place from Him.

2. “We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb. 8:1).

“Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Christ Jesus,” says the writer (see ch. 3:1-6); and may we see His excellency as we do so.

(a) This One is greater than Moses. Moses who gave instructions as to the building of the earthly tabernacle under the special direction of God was greater than the materials comprising that tabernacle; so the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Son over His own house “whose house are we,” is greater than the house, and is “counted worthy of more glory than Moses.”

(b) Again our High Priest is not one which cannot be touched with our infirmities (ch. 4:15), but the high priest of olden days was “compassed with infirmity,” and he had therefore to offer sacrifices for himself as well as for the people (ch. 5:2 and 3). Then the high priest was taken from among men (ch. 5:1), but Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest but was appointed by God as such (ch. 5:5).

(c) He is also our Forerunner who is entered within the veil (ch. 16:19 and 20). In contrast to the high priest who only could go in once a year, our Forerunner has entered and we have access by Him into the holiest; a forerunner presupposes some coming after him.

(d) Then again Melchizedek was a great man indeed, and was a priest before ever the Aaronic priesthood was brought into being. Abraham brought tithes to him. Now Abraham’s descendants were Isaac, Jacob, and from thence Levi and the priesthood. In due course the children of Israel paid their tithes to the priests, but here we are reminded that Abraham, the precursor of the priests, actually paid tithes to Melchizedek (ch. 7:1-8). “Now consider how great this man was” (v.4). But he has gone and passed away for ever, “but this Man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood” (v.24) and is a greater than Melchizedek, “wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (v.25).

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum. We have such an High Priest (ch. 8:1) and by virtue of His greatness (ch. 7:25) He is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

2. “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12).

Here is another reason for His being on high. As all types were fulfilled in Christ, so is He not only the high priest but He is also the Sacrifice—“through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ
once for all" (v. 10). No longer a multitude, and ever increasing number of sacrifices for sins, but the one perfect sacrifice—Himself, and by virtue of all its value He sits on God's right hand.

4. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12: 2).

"Looking unto Jesus"—He whose name was called JESUS, for He should save His people from their sins—the lowly One. He having in effect accomplished all God's plans and purposes now awaits to see them in actual living fulfilment when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Heb. 2: 14). Knowing that this shall surely come to pass, He, Jesus, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God in anticipation of that future day.

He is seated on high as Son in His own right; as our High Priest and Intercessor; as the Sacrifice offered once for all; as in joyful anticipation.

May we each one realize more and more that nothing can ever alter any of God's plans and purposes. Christ will be the fulfilment of them all.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings"

The children's voices made music in His ears, the only music for the Son of David in David's city, the city that was soon to resound with the cry, "Away with Him; crucify Him!" But that which was music in His ear moved the chief priests to indignation, and they ask, "Hearest Thou what these say?" His answer silenced them: "Yea; did ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise"? No, they had never read, and yet they had read, for they searched the Scriptures; but it was with blind eyes, and deaf ears and stony hearts, they refused to take the place of the little child, for they were the wise and prudent. So they read words but the words meant nothing to them. How much of our Bibles have we read? We read and yet we have never read, unless we have the spirit of the little child. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

"So shall ye be My Disciples"

A disciple is a learner. A learner not only of the Lord's truth, but of the Lord's humility. He has to follow his Master both in doctrine and in suffering. He must always be at his Master's feet. He must never be above his Master. And so the true disciple finds that in following he has perpetually to descend. For his Master is the very embodiment of humility. "He made Himself of no reputation"—emptied Himself. And the disciple must not seek for himself anything above that which his Master sought for Himself. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." The Master was among us as one that served. Though Lord of all, He took the place of a servant. It was as such He glorified His Father. It is as such that we shall glorify our Lord. Oh! for this spirit of self-abnegation—this mind which was in Christ Jesus. There is no real following until we know what it is to ignore self. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." This denial of self is not the end, but the condition of following the Master.

Our speech ought to show that we are the subjects of Divine grace. We may minister grace to those who hear our words. Let the Lord of Grace fill the heart and control every thought and desire, and then from the lips will flow words of quickening grace.
The Gospel of the Glory.

“According to the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted” (I Timothy 1:11. New Translation).

To preach forgiveness of sins and relief from judgment with sure hope of heaven at the end is good as far as it goes, but the gospel of the glory of the blessed God is according to His purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world was, and takes us out of the world in spirit now. It brings us into salvation and a holy calling with the enjoyment of eternal life now (2 Tim. 1:9, 10; Gal. 1:4). The gift of the Holy Spirit is the distinctive mark of this gospel by which the believer comes under the new Head (Christ) and begins to learn the glorious range of truth connected with the new eternal order of things in Christ the Sacred Man.

Thus apprehended the gospel leads into a large place where all things are of God. Here all is of His eternal purpose and we apprehend what it is to be before God in the relationship calling of sons, and relationship which associates us with the Son of God as His brethren; and still further, gives us to know what it is to be united to Christ the risen Man, and to realise the blessedness of His risen life as members of His body. It is thus we are led to the great truth of “the mystery” (Ephesians 3) in which we perceive the Church set in the midst of the nations as the Body and Bride of Christ. Here the grandeur of God’s thoughts and intentions are reached, and in that wondrous plan, for which creation was a necessity, fills our souls with adoration; that grand redemption scheme by which God would provide out of the fallen race of man a Bride for His Son.

The magnitude and grandeur of it will ring through the whole redeemed creation, its joy and delight permeating every family in that glorious scene, and yet, sad it is to say, how little those who form part of it are in the joy of it today. May we not repeat with increasing emphasis that the refusal of the gospel of the glory of the blessed God is the cause. Our poor, selfish little hearts having got the assurance of escape from hell with the hope of heaven, like the Israelites of old, we refuse the pleasant land and thus miss the wealth that God has for us now, with the result that He is slighted in His very best.

Assuming that we have entered into the new creation by the door of the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, we come properly to the truth of the Church. None would affirm that the truth of the Church can be known this side of the Cross, nor indeed any of the blessings of Christianity, for every link that abides must lie on the other side of death. In the Church we come to the great fact of the Body of Christ which is the mystery, the outstanding feature of Paul’s ministry, given to him by revelation as the central part of eternal counsel and much spoken of as the masterpiece of God.

The Church, that is the whole aggregate of believers between the Pentecostal Baptism of Acts 2 till the Rapture of saints to heaven of I Thessalonians 4, are all baptised into one body by the Holy Ghost, which constitutes an organic unity as in the life of Christ the Head. This blessed secret of grace revealed to faith gives the way the blessed God has taken to provide a Bride for His Son. As members of the Body each are seen outside the original Adamic relation, for nothing but what is of God can be there. Even here, there is in Scripture a progressive idea. In I Corinthians the saints are viewed locally as Christ’s Body, providing a circle for the manifestations of the Spirit in the saints, as gathered together. In Colossians the ground is enlarged. Here the whole Church is seen as the Body of Christ, so that the thoughts, sentiments, and feelings of the Head come out through the mem-
bers in the energy of life as delivered from empty and formal religion. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink . . . which are a shadow of things to come, but the body (substance) is of Christ.”

In Ephesians, we reach, by way of the gospel this same truth of the Body, and there, too, we are led on to the great truth of the Church as the Bride of the Lamb. Here the truth is carried on to give an answer to the beautiful type presented in Adam and Eve in the garden. Before Eve was the wife of Adam she was part of himself. The Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, was taken from Him in death which shows the perfection of the ways of God and the ulterior thoughts before Him in His dealings with the first man and woman before sin was permitted to come in. While speaking of such things as ulterior thoughts, we are privileged to know that they existed long before, and indeed were the purpose for which Adam and Eve were brought upon the scene.

This glorious theme opens out from its place in eternity, taking a large place in Scripture till it crowns the New Testament revelation and stands as the keystone of the arch of divine dealings from eternity to eternity. It will stand at the centre of a redeemed universe in the time of millennial display, and after time has ceased to be will be the centre and metropolis in God’s eternal day. An intellectual apprehension of it is the cause of its being lost sight of, but he that has once drunk in the truth and been illuminated by it will never again be able to turn to this world for satisfaction.

While the Mystery is an integral part of the glory system, there is something else that calls for thankful and devout appreciation, something indeed, which in the very nature of things carries us inside beyond display to love’s divinest conceptions. Passing, as we have said, by the gospel of glory into new creation, we come into not only the mystery—which links us in relationship with Christ, the Head—but into the place of sons, in the glorious calling of sonship, in relation to our God and Father. A calling which associates every beloved saint with the Son as His companions, in all the blessedness of the life, love and counsel of that glorious Godhead, who would have us there for its own eternal satisfaction and delight. This is shown in the words, “Before Himself in love.”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the world’s foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before Himself in love” (Eph. 1: 3, 4). How could it be possible for anyone enjoying this blessed relationship to seek even the very best, whether in the sphere of nature, or the system of the world?

Sonship is a new holy relationship which necessitates the gift of the Spirit. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father.”

The Spirit is not only the power by which the relationship is formed, but also the source of the holy affections and feelings inherent in and proper to the relationship. Sonship associates saints with the Son in life, nature and rank; His God is their God, His Father their Father; His nature, life and all its associated feelings and sensibilities are theirs by virtue of the calling of God which is Sonship. The Son is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. 2). He sets them free in the freedom of the House (John 8) and holds nothing from them as to its secrets (John 15). He is the builder of that House as He is the Architect of creation and takes pleasure in His brethren as His royal associates. They are in the life, nature and acceptance of the Son. The relationship is His eternally; it became available for them in the purposes of the eternal Trinity and without it they stand before God in the company of the Son in a condition of life and love as if sin never had existed.
This, then, is the blessing, and with it there is access, peace, rest, joy, complacency and delight. It ensures both condition and position, nor is there the slightest necessity to wander from it. The Spirit indwelling is the source of supply; He supplies the filling up of all connected with the life by opening up the Scriptures and all the priceless treasures connected with Divine Persons, divine purpose and divine life, which both enriches and engrosses in a way that is educative and serves as a course of training for all that is yet to come.

There are many other sectors in this glorious circle of truth, but the two mentioned are the main parts as opening out the position of saints in connection with each of the Holy Trinity. Sonship connects with the Father, and the mystery views us in relation to our Lord the risen Man, which all is under the union and power of the Holy Spirit. There is also reconciliation, the new man, the holy priesthood and the Sanctuary with its services to which they are called. All connects with a new order into which we come by the Gospel, but if there is a defective apprehension of that Gospel, nothing can be right. The refusal of the new creation leaves the saints undelivered from the man of sin and shame, and there is no way out. It dishonours God by ignoring the wisdom and beauty of the perfect combination of all His ways in time with His eternal counsels. It dishonours Christ by connecting Him in incarnation with fallen man and thus strikes a blow at the cross. For if our Lord is becoming man linked Himself with a fallen race to adorn it, He is disqualified from His redemption work, and on the other hand, if man is uplifted from his fallen state by the incarnation there is no need for the Cross. It also ignores the presence of the Holy Spirit who is here to maintain the interests of the Father and the Son.

The Unity of the Spirit.

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (this is the essential, real, and abiding unity).

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 
"One God and Father of all, who is above all, through all and in you all" (Ephesians 4: 4-6).

What mighty bonds of unity! The Spirit of God, the lordship of Christ, the universal ubiquity of God, even the Father, all tend to bring into unity those connected with each as a divine centre. All the religious relationships of the soul, all the points by which we are in contact with God, agree to form all believers into one in this world, in such a manner, that no man can be a Christian without being one with all those who are so. We cannot exercise faith, nor enjoy hope, nor express Christian life in any form whatever, without having the same faith and the same hope as the rest, without giving expression to that which exists in the rest. Only we are called on to maintain it practically.—J. N. D.

With regard to our position, of joy and blessing in Christ we are one. With regard to our service, we have each our service, we have each an individual place according to His divine wisdom, and according to His sovereign rights in the work. "Unto every one of us is given grace [gift] according to the measure of the gift of Christ." That is to say, as Christ sees fit to bestow.
The first witness, John, was just a man. Jesus needed no such testimony, yet He mentioned it if thereby some might listen and be saved. In verses 33-35, Jesus is really bearing witness to John, who had borne witness to the truth as a burning and a shining lamp. John’s witness was marked by both warmth and light, yet he was only a lamp—for that is the word the Lord used—whilst Jesus was the true light, like the sun shining in its strength. Now the sun needs no witness from a mere lamp, even though it burns and shines.

The works which the Father had given Jesus to finish were like beams of light thrown off by the sun, they were a greater witness to Him than anything that John could say. They were so obviously Divine that they proved Him to be the Sent One of the Father. And then, in the third place, the Father Himself had borne witness to Him—notably at the time of John’s baptism—but they being utterly carnal, had no appreciation of it. They wanted something which would appeal to their natural powers of sight or hearing, and knew nothing of that word of the Father which brings spiritual illumination.

Lastly, there were the Holy Writings. These did indeed testify of Him, and they searched them. They thought they had eternal life in the Scriptures, but Christ is the Giver of it, and to Him they would not come. If by searching the Scriptures men are conducted to Christ then indeed they have eternal life through the Scriptures, otherwise they merely gain knowledge of a technical, theological sort and remain in spiritual death. These words are most illuminating as to what the true function of Scripture is.

The Lord proceeded to show that He thoroughly knew His opponents. He was here in His Father’s name, and hence the honour and glory that man can offer was nothing to Him. They had nothing of the love of God in them and hence were greedy for honour, one of another, instead of seeking that which comes from God. In their minds they glorified men, and this was as ever an effectual barrier to faith, and they could not believe. Jesus came in His Father’s name; which means He was seeking His Father’s glory. All that was foreign to them and they refused Him. Another would come in his own name, and therefore seeking his own glory: that would exactly suit them and they would receive him. In these words the Lord predicted the coming of antichrist, in whom the false glory of man will reach its climax.

In these words also were exposed the evil motives lying deep in the hearts of His opponents, yet He was not their accuser. Moses was that through the law that had been given by him. They boasted in Moses because they felt that great man conferred some honour upon themselves, but they did not really believe him. Had they done so they would have received Christ. Verse 39 applies to all Old Testament scriptures: they testify of Me.” Verse 46 alludes specifically to the early books written by Moses; and he wrote of Me.” This, then, is the key which unlocks all the Old Testament—the main theme is the Christ who was to come.

The way in which the Lord linked His words with Moses’ writings is very striking. If men refuse the earlier testimony through the servant they will not receive the Son, when He speaks. And so indeed it is. The men today who disbelieve the books of Moses and even deny his authorship, do not believe the words of Jesus. This is perfectly clear, inasmuch as He endorses here the very thing they deny. We must make our choice between the rationalistic modernists and Christ. They have stepped into the shoes of His Jewish opponents:
that is all. The two questions, "How can ye believe?" and "How shall ye believe?" are very striking. As the love of God is in us, as the glory of man fades in our eyes, we shall accept and believe the Holy Writings, and they will lead us in faith to Christ.

Chapter 6 brings us back again to Galilee, and we read of another of the great "signs" which Jesus did. This miracle of feeding the five thousand has evidently a special importance since it is related in each of the four Gospels. Our chapter gives us the teaching, based upon it and relating to it, which makes apparent its significance. The miracle itself is described in such a way as to emphasise the Lord's resource and foreknowledge.

Jesus first addressed Himself to Philip. Now this was the disciple who did believe Moses' writings, as we saw in chapter 1: 45; yet when tested he did not look beyond the purchasing power of money. Jesus Himself "knew what He would do." In such an emergency the best that could be said of other servants of God would be that, not knowing what to do, they looked to God for direction, and got it. But here was One who knew what to do, and knew He had power to do it. Before Andrew spoke of the lad with his small loaves and fishes, He knew about them.

To have such knowledge, and wield such power as to know with absolute certainty what one will do, is the prerogative of Deity. Statements such as this are common in this Gospel: see 2: 24, 25; 13: 3; 18: 4.

Though His knowledge and power were such, He did not disdain the small supplies which the lad offered, nor did He ignore the disciples with their small understanding and feeble faith. He made them the distributors of His bounty. The original food supply was the lad's; the hands that distributed were the disciples'; the power and grace were His and His alone. So manifest was this to the men that partook of the bounty, that they connected it with heaven and declared that He must be the Prophet that should come into the world, as Moses had said. People were led to that conclusion on a number of occasions—see 4: 19; 7: 40; 9: 17—yet to be lasting it had to be a stepping-stone to deeper conclusions. In chapter 4, it led to the conviction that He was the Christ: in chapter 9, to the conclusion that He was the Son of God.

With these men the loaves and fishes had acquired too much importance, and desiring a continuance of supplies so easily procured, they took counsel to force a kingship upon this Prophet. Now we have just heard Him say, "I receive not testimony from man," and again, "I receive not honour from men," so we are not surprised to find that He will not receive a kingdom from the hands of men. The glory of the greatest earthly kingdom that man can erect is but tinsel before Him. So He departed into the solitude of a mountain, while His disciples set out to cross the lake. Matthew 14: 22, tells us that He constrained His disciples to enter the ship while He dismissed the crowds by Himself. John's account explains His actions. They would easily and enthusiastically have fallen in with the proposals of the people, but He thoughtfully removed them from the scene of temptation.

But though He would accept no earthly kingship by democratic vote, He showed Himself to be complete Master in other spheres, though the display of this was for the eyes of His disciples only. Both wind and sea can display a force in the grip of which man is but a toy and a plaything, but over which He is supreme Lord. The disciples in their day, and we in our day, need to apprehend Him in this light. An earthly kingdom with plenty of food easily appeals to a carnal mind. The spiritual mind is formed by knowing Him as the Master of both wind and wave, and the powers they represent. Revealing Himself thus to the disciples, their fears were dispelled, and they found themselves conducted
at once to their destination, when they willingly received Him into the ship. Ponder this incident with care, for we very specially need to know Him in this way. He is today not dealing with an earthly kingdom, but proving Himself supreme above adverse forces while conducting His saints through them.

The crowd knew nothing of His miraculous crossing of the sea, yet they sensed that something unusual had happened and they sought Him on the further side, wishing to satisfy their curiosity as to the mode of His transit. The Lord did not satisfy it, but rather at once showed them that He knew the unspoken thoughts of their hearts. The seeing of miracles is not enough, as we learned in chapter 2: 23-25, but even that was in their minds supplanted by the pleasure of abundant food. They spent their energies in seeking the food that perishes: He, the Son of Man, sealed by the Father, was the Giver of food that endures to life eternal. They should seek that.

His answer to these men bears a strong resemblance to His approach to the Samaritan woman, in chapter 4. There water was in question, here bread; but in both cases the well-known material substance was turned into a symbol of a great spiritual reality and the hearer brought face to face with that, though there is no evidence of these men receiving blessing as the woman did. The “living water” was the Spirit, that He would give. The “living bread” was Christ Himself, come down from heaven, the food of eternal life for men. That food can only be received as a gift in which the whole Godhead is concerned, since it comes from the Son of Man, sealed by the Father—and that seal, we know, was by the Spirit.

The woman no more understood at first the import of the Lord’s words than did these men; but her response was, “Sir, give me . . . ,” whereas theirs was, “What shall we do that we might work . . . ?” A tell-tale difference this! The men’s question at once drew forth the assertion that faith in the Sent One of God is the very beginning of all work that is according to God. If men do not believe on Him whom God sent, in no proper sense do they believe in God; and they remain in spiritual death, since life is presented to them in Him. Alas! they did not believe, as verse 30 shows, but instead they demanded a sign, suggesting that if it were spectacular enough it would create faith in their hearts. And then, anticipating that He might refer them to the sign of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, which they had just witnessed, they attempted to discount that by referring to the miracle of the manna, ministered to their fathers in the wilderness through Moses for the space of forty years.

This called forth the emphatic statement of verse 32. It was not Moses but God who gave that bread from heaven, which was only a figure of the true. The true bread out of heaven is the gift of God, and He was now being revealed as Father by the One who was that gift. He had Himself come down out of heaven as the Giver of life to the world. In natural things bread only sustains life and in no sense gives it; but the spiritual always transcends the natural. The material figure serves to direct our thoughts to the Divine fact, but can never contain its fulness. Jesus was here as both the Giver and the Sustainer of life; and this in relation to the world and not merely to the small Jewish nation, amongst whom He moved. We have noticed this feature before: the Word having become flesh, He cannot be confined in His light and life-giving powers to any circle less than the world.

Their response to this, in verse 34, looks more encouraging, yet in it there was no faith, as verse 36 shows. It led, however, to the Lord very definitely and plainly presenting Himself as the bread of life, and stating that in coming to Him in genuine faith every desire would find its satisfaction. The
gift from Him of the Spirit leads to heart satisfaction in chapter 4. Here, the reception of Himself in faith leads to the same blessed consummation. In the knowledge of Himself all the fullness of the Godhead is revealed to us, and may be appropriated by us. This it is that satisfies. These men showed no sign of coming to Him, but the Father was active in His purposes and grace, and hence a response there was going to be.

In this setting stands that great and assuring gospel statement, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." In chapter 1, we saw that though "no man receiveth His testimony," yet some did receive His testimony. Now for the first time we discover what lies behind the paradox. There is the sovereign grace of the Father, which has given certain to the Son, and these without any exception come to Him. These happy individuals are impelled towards Him, as far as their own consciousness is concerned, by a variety of things, differing in almost every case; yet beneath all as the ultimate explanation lies this gift of the Father to Christ—a love-gift, we may call it.

All that the Father has given come, and none that come are cast out by the Son; and that not only because of His own grace and personal love for such, but because they are the Father's gift, and because the very object of His coming down from heaven was to carry out the Father's will and thus reveal the Father's heart. The Father gave them in order that, coming to the Son, He might be to them the Giver and the Food of life, and thus the Father made known to them, they might be satisfied indeed. There is no possibility of any slip between the Father's gift and the Son's reception. As we observe thus the context and bearing of the passage, we see how rightly and happily the evangelist directs the anxious soul, who is turning towards Christ and about to come to Him, to the golden words, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Then again, the Father's will is not only that the Son should receive in life-giving power the one who comes to Him now, but that all should be consummated in resurrection at "the last day." The Jews had the light of the Old Testament and looked forward to the time of Messiah's presence and glory as the last day. The Lord's words here amply confirm the thought and show that though we may have the life now in a world that is marked by death, we are to know the fulness of it in the age that is to come. How delightful is the connection between verses 37 and 39—no one will be cast out now, and nothing will be lost as we move on to the day of glory; and both in keeping with the Father's will.

Verse 40, while expressing the same truth as verse 39, amplifies it somewhat. The same persons are in view, but described first as, "all which He hath given Me," and then as, "every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him." The first describes from the viewpoint of Divine purpose; the second shows the corresponding action of faith in our responsible lives here. This "seeing" the Son is, we believe, as much faith as believing on Him. Many there were who saw Jesus as He walked on earth without "seeing the Son" in any true sense. But where eyes were spiritually opened and they saw the Son and believed on Him, eternal life was received in the present (see also 20:31), and the world of resurrection life will be entered at the last day.

The Jews promptly displayed themselves as being wholly without faith. They only did see the Man Jesus, thinking they knew His parents; that He was the Son, come of David's seed according to the flesh (see Rom. 1:3) was utterly unperceived by them. Thereby they made it plain that they had no part nor lot in this matter. They were strangers to that drawing of the Father apart from which no man actually does come to Christ.
Verses 39, 40, and 44, each end with resurrection. They set before us the Father's gift to the Son according to His purpose, His drawing to make the gift effective, and the resultant faith on our side, which leads to the present possession of eternal life, and the certainty of its fulness in resurrection. The Lord found in Isaiah 54: 13, a forecast of this inward work of the Father; and He knew that what He is going to do in Israel's children, who shall be redeemed and restored when the age to come dawns, He was doing then, and He is still doing today. No man has seen the Father in a natural way. Only those who are "of God" see Him, and that by faith.

Verses 40 and 46 are linked together by the two expressions, "seeth the Son," and "seen the Father." Faith is needed for both, and the Father is only seen if the Son be seen. Let us beware, therefore, of theories which tamper with the Sonship of Jesus. The Sonship and the Fatherhood cannot be disconnected. The Divine and eternal Fatherhood cannot be retained if the Divine and eternal Sonship be discarded.

**The Christian.**

A Christian is like a standard rose tree; the stem is the briar, and the top the rose. So long as all the ability of the man is directed to the rose, all goes on beautifully, but when the briar is allowed to bud and shoot out, then the rose is weakened. Any one can see how every way advanced the briar is because of the rose; thus incomparably am I morally elevated here on earth, because of the Spirit of Christ; and everything that advances the rose advances me; while everything which promotes or gives an opportunity to the briar, only reduces me to the low state from which grace has raised me.

In Adam the flesh is our governing principle, but in Christ it is His Spirit leading us all into all the happy beautiful traits of the manner and conduct of the perfect Man on earth. Nothing more natural, simple and easy, because true, than the ways and bearing of our Lord on earth. May we indeed learn of Him, "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit".

The divine life of the Christian expresses itself in all true moderation, not insisting on one's rights, after the manner of the natural man, but found in submission to one another, in mildness and balanced behaviour, whose true response and calm dignity plainly declare that which the mouth witnesses—"The Lord is near".

It is only as we walk in the Spirit that we are a match for the wiles of the enemy. He will let you alone, and not care how often you preach if the Spirit is grieved within you.

A noble youth of Rome, discovered that the Son of God had loved him and given Himself for him. Realising the features of this love, that had been set upon him apart from any merit in him, he asked of Hermas, "What can I do in return for such love as this?" The old Christian took the young convert and shewed him something of the sins of Rome, shewed him the need of souls, and the need of a Saviour such as he had found. Here, said he, you will find an altar and here you may become a sacrifice—said Paul the aged apostle in that same city, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
JOHN BUNYAN, the humble tinker of Bedford, probably did not know what a debt he would put Christians under when he penned his wonderful allegory, "The Pilgrim’s Progress." The devil raged, and put him in prison. The Lord put a pen into his hand, and by its instrumentality produced this wonderful allegory, which has done more to break the fetters of sin binding convicted sinners, done more to guide them to the way of salvation, done more to establish converts in Christian walk and deportment, than all his oral ministry could have accomplished, if he had been allowed his liberty. It is pleasing to see how the devil can outwit himself, and how God can make the wrath of man to praise him.

What has made "The Pilgrim’s Progress" so wonderful lies in the extraordinary knowledge the Bedford tinker had of the Scriptures, his wonderful knowledge of the difficulties of the human soul, and how the Bible meets them. No wonder that outside of the Bible itself it has been the world’s best seller, translated into far more languages than any other book. If memory stands aright, "The Pilgrim’s Progress" has been translated into over 150 languages.

One could quote many things out of this wonderful book, that would edify, but there is one expression that seems particularly appropriate at this present time of trouble. Christiana, the wife of Christian, the pilgrim, had accomplished the journey from the city of Destruction as far as the land of Beulah. Aged and tired she waited, as so many saints of God have waited, for the summons to 'go hence to be forever with the Lord.'

At last the time drew near. A stir of interest in the town arose when a messenger from the celestial city arrived, carrying a letter addressed to Christiana. The letter contained these words: "Hail! good woman. I bring thee tidings, that the Master calleth for thee, and expecteth that thou shouldst stand in His presence, in clothes of immortality, within these ten days."

When the messenger had read this message he gave her a sure token that he was a true messenger, and that he was come to bid her haste to be gone. In the words of Bunyan the token was "an arrow sharpened by love, let easily into her heart, which by degrees wrought so effectually with her, that at the time appointed she must be gone."

The expression, "an arrow sharpened by love," has an air of genius about it. Whilst John Bunyan used it to describe a last mortal illness, which in a matter of ten days would end in death, we think we can apply it to the many trials that occur as the result of this terrible war.

I was talking to a lady very recently. She told me when the war broke out her husband’s business was destroyed at a stroke. Then their house and furniture were demolished by a bomb. Living in a very dangerous part of the south coast of England, they were then forced to leave the district, and so, practically penniless and homeless they found themselves evacuees. These disasters were sufficient to crush anyone, but the lady told me in her trials she was made conscious that she needed something she had not got. Then it was a friend gave her a copy of "The Journey and its End," which was used to her conversion.

Her trials were indeed like a sharp arrow that could penetrate her flesh, and prove to be a sore discomfort. But she learned after all it was "an arrow sharpened by love," for in her earthly misery room was found for the blessings of the gospel, and she found salvation and peace with God.
It may be some will read these lines who are suffering from trials brought about by this war: a young man torn from the bosom of his family and finding himself in barracks or camp or on a battleship; a mother mourning the break-up of her home; the business man faced by financial ruin through no fault of his own. May these tried ones discover that the arrow of affection is sharpened by a hand of infinite love, and learn that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28). That they may "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let their requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 6, 7).

Let us be Glad and Rejoice.

A. M. Chambers

Let us give thanks and sing!
   Meet is it to give praise
For that untiring care
   That follows all our days,
For every gift that from above
   Comes down from Thee, Thou God of love.

A Father's tender hand
   Has led us to this hour,
Covered our lives have been
   By that almighty power,
Thy mercies far exceed our praise
   Yet children's thanks we humbly raise.

So is Thine own great Name
   By praises magnified,
And unto us Thy gifts
   Are truly sanctified;
As thus we own, by grace divine,
   Ourselves and all we have are Thine.

Let us give thanks and sing!
   A foretaste this of songs
That through Eternity
   Shall be on myriad tongues,
As all the hosts in heaven rejoice
   When there they hear the Father's voice!

God's promises are according to His wisdom as well as His love, and they rest on His faithfulness as well as His mercy.

We never know the meaning of trust until we learn the nature of trial. It is in the trial that we have to put into practice the theory of believing in God. ... Trial, therefore, is the school of trust. It is there we learn the lesson of implicitly confiding in God, and of waiting patiently on Him.
THE GOSPELS

Not everything that the Lord said and did has been recorded in the Scriptures. The Gospels are a divine selection by the Holy Spirit, and they are fully adequate to set forth all that was spoken by the Son of God when here. His works spoke volumes as well as His words. Every utterance of the Lord has a fulness which is immeasurable. Christians have been writing and speaking on them for nearly two thousand years, and fresh beauties and glories are being disclosed in them every day. The Holy Scriptures are the greatest marvel in the world, and the Gospels are the greatest marvel in the Scriptures. The four Gospels are a little book which could be read in a day, but there is concentrated there what will fill eternity with its blessedness.

John supposes that if all the things which Jesus did were written one by one, "not even the world itself would contain the books written." If men had written these narratives in their own ability they would never have known when to stop. But the Holy Spirit has given all that was necessary for us in words marked by simplicity and dignity. As we read we are in the presence of the ineffable majesty and yet infinite grace of THE WORD. There is fulness of divine communication, constraining the soul to worship as it is realised that God has made known in His beloved Son all that was in His heart and mind towards men.

"He gave gifts unto men"

"Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . . And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers."

What a complete and glorious work is that which the Lord has accomplished for us, and of which the giving of these gifts is the precious testimony. When we were slaves of Satan, and consequently of death, as well as slaves of sin, He undertook to bear the judgment that hung over us for the glory of God. He went down into death of which Satan had the power, and so complete was His victory, and that as a Man, so entire our deliverance, that He has rescued us from the yoke of the enemy, and uses the privilege which His position and His glory give Him to make those who were captives before, vessels of His power for the deliverance of others also. He gives us the right, as under His jurisdiction, of acting in His holy war, moved by the same principles of love as Himself. Such is our deliverance that we are the instruments of His power against the enemy—His fellow-labourers in love through His power.

"Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it," and having done this the good of His church must be ever near His heart, and having given Himself for it, He will withhold nothing that will be for its good. Because of this He has given gifts. And these gifts if near the Giver and in concert with His heart, will desire to be ever at His disposal to serve all the Saints. It is the work of the great enemy to prevent the gifts from the Head of the Church from exercising their service to the Lord and to all His own.