

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

"Thy Word is Truth."

THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL VOLUME

Comprising the years
1942, 1943 and 1944

**"The law was given by Moses, but grace and
truth came by Jesus Christ."**

John 1: 17

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INDEX

A

- AFFECTION FOR HIM L. A. Anderson 215
 AIMING HIGH J. Houston 260
 ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT 288

B

- " BANNER FOR THEM THAT FEAR HIM,
 A " J. T. Mawson 65
 " BECAUSE THOU DIDST IT " A. J. Pollock 133
 " BEFORE YE ASK HIM " A. J. Pollock 277
 BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL
 F. B. Hole 11,
 29, 39, 59, 75, 91, 105, 125, 138,
 152, 173, 189, 204, 219, 236,
 253, 268, 283.

C

- " CALLED UNTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF
 HIS SON " J. F. English 232
 CHRIST . . . BECAME POOR J.W.S. 63
 CHRIST CRUCIFIED, GLORIFIED, SATIS-
 FIED, MAGNIFIED I. Fleming 265
 CHRIST HIMSELF, THE THEME
 I. Fleming 156
 CLOSING MESSAGES, THE F. B. Hole 241
 " COFFIN IN EGYPT, A " A. J. Pollock 8

E

- ENERGY OF FAITH, THE A. J. Pollock 245

F

- FAITH OR CIRCUMSTANCES—WHICH?
 J. Houston 249
 FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON, THE 257
 " FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME " J.W.S. 209
 FOUR DIVINE PRINCIPLES
 A. J. Pollock 57
 FROM SADNESS TO GREAT JOY
 J. T. Mawson 193

G

- " GLORY OF THE LORD, THE " A. J. Pollock 70
 GOD AND HIS GRACE J.G.B. 149
 GOD'S CARE AND ORDER J. Houston 201
 GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF US
 J. Houston 207
 GOD'S WAYS IN DISCIPLINE
 J. Houston 217
 GRACE AND LOVE J. T. Mawson 113

H

- " HE SHALL NOT FAIL " E. P. Brown 19
 " HE WILL NOT EVER BE THRESHING
 IT " J. T. Mawson 33

I

- " I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT " — 161
 IN LAODICEAN DAYS J. F. English 281
 IS THIS ADMAGEDDON? A. J. Pollock 36
 " IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER " 223

J

- JOY AND HOPE R. McCallum 49
 JUDGMENT—SEAT OF GOD AND OF
 CHRIST J. N. Darby 62

L

- " LIFE OR DEATH . . . ALL ARE
 YOURS " 177
 " LIKE THE ENGRAVINGS OF A
 SIGNET " J. T. Mawson 81
 " LORD HATH HIS WAY, THE " I. Fleming 1
 LOVE OF CHRIST, THE I. Fleming 43

M

- MODERATION Moule 96
 MULTUM IN PARVO A. J. Pollock 169
 MY DOCTRINE — 69

N

- NEW ORDER, THE A. M. Chambers 134

O

- OCCUPATION WITH GOOD J. Houston 44
 OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES, THE
 R. McCallum 25, 47, 109
 OLIVE TREE, THE FIG TREE AND
 THE VINE, THE A. J. Pollock 182
 OPENING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,
 THE J. T. Mawson 145
 OUR LANDING E.R.M. 99

P

- PATIENCE OF JOB, THE J. T. Mawson 186
 PEACE AND HOLINESS J. Houston 143
 PETER'S RESTORATION J. Houston 279
 PRAISE I. Fleming 56
 PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE WAR
 A. J. Pollock 88

PROVISION FOR THE WILDERNESS, A
A. J. Pollock 262

R

- RAIN FILLETH THE POOLS, THE
A. J. Pollock 120
REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST THE
A. J. Pollock 150
RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION,
REDEMPTION R. McCallum 123
ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, THE
J. J. Anning 6

S

- SEA AND THE SANCTUARY, THE
D. Ross 97
SECOND WORD, THE A. J. Pollock 225
SHEPHERD, THE A. M. Chambers 148
SINS REMEMBERED NO MORE
J. T. Mawson 95
SOME NIGHT THOUGHTS
J. T. Mawson 102
SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH OF
GOD A. J. Pollock 210
SONSHIP IN THREE ASPECTS
J. Houston 229
SOWING AND REAPING
L. A. Anderson 234
STATE OF ASSEMBLIES, THE
J. G. Bellett 135
STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK
R. McCallum 3

T

- THAT BLESSED HOPE J. T. Mawson 54
THINGS A. M. Chambers 87
THINGS THAT ABIDE J. Houston 86
" THOU ART THE SAME " J. T. Mawson 164
THREEFOLD CORDS OF SCRIPTURE,
THE J. Stoddart 51
TOBIAH, THE ENEMY J. T. Mawson 17

U

- UNIVERSALITY AND POWER OF THE
GOSPEL J. T. Mawson 165

V

- VICTORY E. P. Brown 118

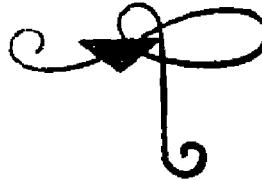
W

- WARNING AND REBUKE F. B. Hole 273
" WEAK BROTHER . . . FOR WHOM
CHRIST DIED, THE I. Fleming 214
WELL CARED FOR A. J. Pollock 21
WHERE MEN WENT OFF THE LINE 85
WHY DOES GOD ALLOW IT?
A. J. Pollock 198

- WITNESS: LEADER: COMMANDER
F. B. Hole 100
WITNESS OF SIMON PETER, THE
J. T. Mawson 129

Y

- YOUNG TIMOTHY — 251



Scripture Truth

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" THY WORD IS TRUTH "

1942

"THE LORD HATH HIS WAY."

Inglis Fleming

"The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet . . . The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: and He knoweth them that trust in Him" (Nahum 1: 3, 7).

WHAT comfort for troubled hearts is found in these verses! What a resource we have in our God! What calm in His presence! What assurance as we "trust in Him"!

Nahum writes in view of the Assyrian armies being used of God in the chastisement of His people, Israel; and, when that chastisement was accomplished, of the complete overthrow of the proud and boastful desolator. "**The Lord hath His way.**" "The whirlwind . . . the storm . . . the clouds," obey His will. **All** are under His command. **All** is permitted by Him for the present good of His own and for His ultimate glory through them.

Thus in the times of trouble and turmoil among the nations, of distress and perplexity and stress and strain among men, the Lord is the haven of rest for His loved ones. "His children shall have a place of refuge." That refuge is in **Himself**, in "the secret place of the most High." **There** they abide under "the shadow of the Almighty." **There** in the time of trouble they are hidden "in His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle," and set by Him upon a rock (Ps. 27: 5).

Thus David exhorts us to "Rest in the Lord ["Be silent before Him,"] "Let your hands hang

down"] and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him that prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil" (Ps. 37: 7, 8).

God IS and He is above all. His "way is in the sea," and His "path in the great waters," and His "footsteps are not known" (Ps. 77: 19). Happy are we that we know HIM, though His way and path and footsteps among the nations or in our individual circumstances are not understood, or are misunderstood.

"**The Lord hath His way.**" That way is perfect (Ps. 18: 30). "His ways are right" (Hosea 14: 9).

"The persecuting emperor little knew what he was giving us when he banished the apostle; no more than Augustus, in his political plans as to the census of the empire, knew he was sending a poor carpenter to Bethlehem, with his espoused wife, that Christ might be born there; or the Jews and Pilate's soldiers, that they were sending the thief to heaven when they broke his legs in heartless respect for their own superstitions or ordinances. God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him

work, and not think much of man's busy movements: they will accomplish God's. The rest of them all perish and disappear. We have only peacefully to do His will." So wrote one (J. N. D.) of old.

As the same author has said:

"And stayed by joy divine,
As hireling fills his day;
Through scenes of strife and desert life,
We tread in peace our way."

"The Lord hath His way." That way is perfect and right, as we have seen. And He can "gird us with strength" and make our "way perfect" (Ps. 18: 32). For He makes a way for His own "in the sea and a path in the mighty waters" (Isa. 43: 16).

"Yet a little while, a very little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not delay." Till then the just is to walk by faith—in confidence in God (Heb. 12: 37, 38).

We know that it must be, "Overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is: and I will give it Him" (Ezek. 21: 27). For He, the despised and rejected of men, **must reign**. That He "must suffer," was prophesied of Him "in all the Scriptures." In the fulness of time He came and the prophecies were fulfilled. That "He must reign" is prophesied of Him "in all the Scriptures." And "in its own times," it will be fulfilled. So "though it tarry, wait for it: because it will come, it will not tarry" (delay) (Hab. 2: 3).

"The Lord hath His way." We do well in this testing time to remember that we are **Christians**. As such we are called with "a heavenly calling," our "citizenship is in heaven," our hope is "laid up in

heaven." Ours is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for" us (1 Pet. 1: 4).

We forget this and are in danger of settling "on our lees," and dislike being "emptied from vessel to vessel."

"The Lord hath His way" in "the whirlwind" of things political, ecclesiastical and individual, to **shake** us out of settling and resting here, for **this** is not our **rest**, it is defiled. "Arise ye, and depart," is written large and plain upon all "under the sun." Soon we shall hear the voice of our Beloved say, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

He has "promised" to "shake all nations" before "the Desire of all nations" shall come. Meanwhile "we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12: 28, 29).

"The Lord hath His way." Knowing Him, revealed to us in His well-beloved Son, and in the atoning work accomplished at the cross, we say with Nahum, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

He delights in our confidence.

"Oh, how great is Thy goodness," cries the psalmist, "which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men." Goodness is "laid up" and "wrought" for those who fear and **trust** in Him. He esteems our reposing in Himself.

We who are parents delight in the trustful reliance upon us of our children. We appreciate being confided in by them. Our God and our Father values our hearts' crying, “I will trust and not be afraid.” He **knows**, He is acquainted fully, with those who repose in Himself and who can say,

“We leave it to Himself
To choose and to command;
With wonder filled, we soon shall see,
How wise, how strong His hand.”

In “that day” His wisdom and strength, in all that has pained and perplexed us today, will be seen by our wondering eyes, and exultingly we may exclaim, “Oh the depth of

the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are **all** things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. II: 33-36).

So while we wait for “that day” let us remember that amid the turmoils and twists and tangles of present life “THE LORD HATH HIS WAY.”

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK.

R. McCallum

God in Creation; God in Control; God in Christ

SOME hundred years ago Henry Rawlinson, a subaltern in the employment of the East India Company went to Persia to help to re-organise the Persian army. While engaged in this work he became interested in the Behistun inscriptions and at great personal inconvenience and risk obtained “squeezes” of these cuneiform or wedge-shaped writings which were in an unknown language. But industry and the genius of man recovered the lost language in strange characters, and the fact that a number of scholars, served with the same copy, could supply virtually the same translation was sufficient guarantee of the soundness of the basis of the science of Assyriology that had been laid. The discovery opened up new fields of

literature and new vistas of past history.

It is well, however, to imagine why it was that Rawlinson and his co-workers were able to translate what at first seemed to be mere meaningless incisions upon rock. Doubtless if a sheet of paper with a pencil were given to a baby, or even to a chimpanzee, it would very soon be covered with hieroglyphics which, I think we shall agree, would baffle any “brains trust” to decipher, however intelligent and sustained the effort. The reason for defeat would be obvious. Behind the writings there would be no mind comparable to the mind of man. The cuneiform inscriptions were deciphered and intelligible just because behind them there was the mind of

a man, for the Behistun tablets set forth the hereditary rights of Darius Hystaspes to the throne of Persia.

The romance of the recovery of a lost language may well serve to remind us of facts too often overlooked in the realm of nature. When we investigate occurrences in the natural sphere, what do we find? In our studies of sound, light, heat, magnetism, electricity, natural science, do we find ourselves investigating a tangled skein of unrelated and apparently unintelligible phenomena, or do we find in nature the evidences of mind, comparable to yet infinitely transcending the mind of man? The answer is simple, and inasmuch as we do not associate mind with what is inanimate but with persons, it seems easy and natural to trace God in Creation—a God who is at once personal and transcendent.

Every workman is known by his works. When at midnight we look up into the vault of heaven and behold the star-spangled skies: when we look at the Milky Way with its countless hosts, compared by one to the gleaming helmets of innumerable warriors in serried ranks, we are prepared to believe that, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork:" we believe in fact that God planned that great concave. Nor is our conviction less, but, if anything increased when we turn from what is great to what is very small. With Cowper the poet we say,

" How sweet to muse on His skill displayed,

Infinite skill in all that He has made:
To trace in Nature's most minute
design

The signature and stamp of power
divine!"

It is the fool, as Scripture declares, who has said in his heart, "There is no God."

Yet we have to admit that when we turn from the comparatively simple evidence that we have cited in the material and physical sphere to a study of the moral realm, our vision of God as all-powerful and wise is apt to be obscured. We do not live long before we are compelled to recognize the prevalence of sorrow and suffering and pain and death. Inscrutable mysteries challenging belief in the goodness of God confront us before we have attained to grey hairs. Nor are the evils only personal, but social, national and international. On every hand we find bad faith, broken covenants, strife, miscarriage of justice, chains for virtue, silk and satins for vice, "right for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne," blood-lust, and it would seem all the forces of hell let loose upon earth. The sceptic asks derisively, "Where is your God?" and many a believing heart is reduced to despondency at the apparent indifference of God to the prevalent evil.

The problems that confront men today are not new. They are as old as sin, and the light which God has been pleased to shed upon them is as old as the book of Habakkuk. For these were the circumstances that perplexed the prophet. Amongst God's chosen people there was rank indifference to the commandments of God. Strife and contention marked the people and miscarriage of judgment and justice characterised those who bore rule. At the same time, the Chaldeans, wicked, hasty, implacable and insatiable in blood-lust, flourished and were on the point of invading the land of God's people;

and surpassing strange!—God was doing nothing. Provoked to break silence, the prophet complains of Divine indifference to the tragic situation. Wisely he addresses his complaint to God and in great grace God answers the despairing prophet. He answers by assuring him that He is working, although it may be difficult to recognize the Divine hand as operating amidst the prevailing confusion. Indeed He, the Almighty God, has raised up that wicked people the Chaldeans and is using them as a scourge to discipline His people.

To this the prophet answers in effect, “O God! this is worse than ever. It would be inconsistent to use a less righteous nation to punish a more righteous one”—very much as people today marvel at the triumph of unscrupulous might, and wonder whether God is indifferent, impotent or inconsistent. But the prophet wisely resolves to keep silence and to wait upon his watch-tower “to see what He [God] will say unto me.” He realizes that God speaks in history—not only past history, but present and future—and that human wisdom consists in waiting in patience for God to justify Himself. While in this very becoming attitude God gives to him a vision and declares to him a principle; both producing the solid conviction that God’s purposes may await His good time, but must materialize and prosper, and that humble belief and dependence in and on Him result in blessing, while the haughty and proud secure their own destruction.

As he is privileged to review the past favours of God to His people, Israel, and to behold in anticipation the judgments of God upon all His enemies, his belly trembled, his lips

quivered and rottenness entered into his bones, but at the same time he was filled with such a sense of the majesty and faithfulness of God that all his misgivings are composed, and assured in faith he glories in God. The miserable dirge of doubtings and fears gives place to one of the most remarkable outbursts of confidence and rejoicing to be found in Scripture. Under the most appalling conditions that it is possible to contemplate—“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls”—although all should fail, says the prophet, God remains, and “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” May a like confidence and a similar experience be ours.

Let us note lastly that it is in the God of his salvation that he trusts. God has been fully, authoritatively and finally revealed in the person of His Son whom He sent to be the Saviour of the world. Creation reveals God but gives an incomplete revelation of Him. Faith can trace the hand of God and find a revelation of God in human history, and where it cannot understand it can trust, but if we would really know God we must learn Him in Christ. His love, His holiness, His power are here revealed. We rejoice that we are not called upon to judge of the love of God by the circumstances in which we find ourselves, but we can say with the apostle, “God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” In the death of Christ we have the abiding witness to the

love of God, a witness that admits of no denial, and with this historical background, that Habakkuk never possessed, we can raise our hearts and voices in praise and worship "to the Chief Singer."

Amidst the perplexities of the modern world and all its tragic possibilities, may the Lord preserve us in confidence in Himself and as a rejoicing people, singing praises unto the Lord.

THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

(1 Peter 2)

J. J. Anning

TWO priesthoods are written of in this chapter—the holy and the royal. The first answers to our Lord's position on high and the second to the coming manifestation of His glory on the earth. They may be represented by the priesthood after the order of Aaron and that after the order of Melchisedec, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Christ is now within the Veil and those who belong to Him fulfil a holy priesthood in the offering up of spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgivings to God through Him. But it is of this royal priesthood that I would now write because of its present everyday importance in the way of "shewing forth" the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. The Lord has been rejected and cast out of this world and you and I are left to shew forth, in its darkness, His praises. The importance of this cannot be over much stressed and how humbled we are when we take stock of our lives since we were first filled with joy on coming to Him and finding a Saviour.

Are we now manifesting His praises? Soon, we shall see Him and His praise will be shewn, but what about the present time? As those "brought nigh," we know a little of the priesthood of worship—what do

we know of the royal or kingly part? Are we shewing forth His glorious light in the darkness of the world, and witnessing for God?

The Lord said to the man out of whom He had cast the legion of devils (Luke 8: 39), "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee." The woman who came into the Pharisee's house, uninvitedly (Luke 7) is said by the Lord to have loved much, her many sins being forgiven. May God touch our cold hearts with a remembrance of whence we have been called out—from the darkness and blindness of unbelief into His marvellous light.

It is wonderful and precious how, in the chapter we now consider, God brings home to us by the Apostle Peter the facts of His wondrous love, and grace, with its triumph over sin. The Hebrew saints are reminded that as a people they had been cast off by God because of disobedience and idolatry. Exodus 19 tells us that they were to be a peculiar treasure unto Jehovah, above all people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation—"If ye will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant." Hosea's prophecy tells us how they had lost their status, "for ye are not My people and I will not be your God" (chapter 1: 9).

The first verse of the following chapter shews how grace abounded over Israel's sin—"Say ye unto your brethren Ammi [or My people] and to your sisters Ruhamah [one who is pitied, an object of mercy]."
In verse 15 of the same chapter we read how the Valley of Achor—the place of God's judgment after the entering into Canaan—was to be "a door of hope" and a place of singing.

Peter reminds his readers, including ourselves, of all this. Love has triumphed through Christ. The judgment of God becomes in Him, the door of hope, because guilt and judgment have been met by Him and for ever put away. What had been lost by disobedience is obtained by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. Jew and Gentile alike who come to God through Christ are thus called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, those once far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For them is the privilege of "going in" as holy priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Also—and this is the object one wishes to stress—there is the "coming out" as royal priests to shew forth, in a dark and cloudy day, to this poor world the virtues

and praises of Him who hath called us.

To me it seems that the practical significance of this kingly priesthood is much overlooked. May writer and reader in truer measure represent our Lord in this world in His absence, pending His return to reign over it. The Lord when down here was the light of the world. In His absence it is for us, who have been the objects of His great love, grace and power, who have been called out of darkness into His marvellous light, to be witnesses for God and to shew what great things He hath done for us.

Service in this royal priesthood is evidently a whole time position for each one of us. It is not, so I gather, public service in preaching the gospel or ministry to the Lord's people, but rather a practical shewing forth in our daily lives the praises and virtues of Him who hath done such great things for us—a manifestation of over-abounding mercy that others may take notice of it.

In closing let us note Revelation 1: 5, 6 (N.T.), "To Him who loves us and has washed us from our sins in His blood and made us a kingdom of priests to His God and Father: to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen."

The Knowledge of Christ.

How admirably does the knowledge of Christ exalt everything that it pervades; and with what consoling power does it descend into all that is desolate and cast down, all that groans, all that is humbled in this world of sin! Three times in these two verses (Col. 3: 23, 24), while holding their conscience in the presence of God, the apostle brings in the Lord, the Lord Christ, to fill the hearts of these poor slaves, and make them feel who it was to whom they rendered service. Such is Christianity!

"A COFFIN IN EGYPT."

A. J. Pollock

THESE are the last four words in the Book of Genesis. "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen. 50: 26).

"A coffin in Egypt" seems a tragic anticlimax to the day when the haughty Pharaoh took the ring off his own hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, put a gold chain round his neck, and proclaimed him ruler over the whole land of Egypt, the mightiest country of that day. Forerunners cried in advance, "Bow the knee," and as Joseph advanced through the crowds every knee was bowed and everyone paid him homage. And Joseph only a young man of thirty!

His had been an extraordinary experience. When a lad of seventeen he had dreamed of his future eminence. His father had given him a coat of many colours, which mark of favour earned him the hate of his eleven brethren. This hatred was accentuated when he dreamed two dreams, one that of binding sheaves in a field, when his brethren's sheaves rose up and made obeisance to his sheaf; the other, that the sun, moon and eleven stars had made obeisance to him.

So deep was their hatred that when the lad went at his father's bidding to enquire after his brethren as they tended their flocks in the fields of Dothan, they conspired to murder him.

Restrained from this evil intent by the entreaty of Reuben, they sold him for twenty pieces of silver to a passing band of Midianite merchant-

men, killed the kid of a goat, dipped the coat of many colours in its gore, and thus deceived the old father, who came to the conclusion that his favourite son, the child of his loved Rebecca, had been killed by wild beasts.

Arrived in Egypt he was sold to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. What must have been the young fellow's thoughts? Bitter they must have been. Strange that he should dream of future eminence, and here he was degraded, sold twice over for a few pieces of silver, and held in captivity as a slave in a foreign land.

But this was not all. Finding favour with his new master, he underwent perhaps the greatest temptation a young man can be put to. His mistress implored him day by day to dishonour God and his own body. Nobly he resisted this terrible temptation. The woman, having been balked by her husband's slave of her evil desires, concocted a vile story to her husband, which he believed, and in his rage he flung the youthful Joseph into prison. Being the captain of Pharaoh's guard, he placed him in the prison where the king's prisoners were bound.

That it was a terrible experience we learn from Psalm 105: 18, where speaking of Joseph, we read, "whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron." The margin of the Bible says, "**Hebraism:** his soul came into iron." Have we not a saying in English, "The iron entered his soul"? Nothing is more depressing than day after day, night after night, summer and winter, and year in year out, to be in captivity of

such a nature. The utter weariness, discomfort, sameness, hopelessness of the situation is a great test under which character will go under, or be brought out. Trials make or mar a man. They prove what stuff he is made of.

The hand of God was in all this, little as it looked like it. In the king's prison house were two servants of Pharaoh, his chief baker and chief butler. They too dreamed dreams but they were troubled dreams. Joseph interpreted these dreams to the consternation of the one, and the comfort of the other.

The chief butler found himself in due course out of prison, and reinstated in the responsible post of being Pharaoh's cupbearer. Joseph had asked the chief butler to mention his evil case to Pharaoh, but in base ingratitude he had forgotten his promise to do so.

Pharaoh himself dreamed dreams, which in those superstitious days were sinister and mysterious. When none of his magicians and wise men could interpret the dreams, the chief butler remembered Joseph's services in the matter of his dream. He told Pharaoh of Joseph. Joseph to his great astonishment was brought in haste out of his prison, shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and stood before Pharaoh.

He interpreted his dreams, that there were to be seven years of great plenty, of abundant harvests, to be followed by seven years of biting famine. He gave Pharaoh good advice as to preparing for the years of famine with the result that Pharaoh on the spot chose Joseph to be the greatest food controller the world has ever seen. In one day this slave only thirty years of age, apparently in

hopeless captivity from man's standpoint, was lifted out of his dungeon to be ruler over the whole of Egypt.

Now we see how God fulfilled the dreams of the lad of seventeen, and in the intervening years was preparing him for this wonderfully exalted position by passing him through this dreadful experience, that, like as steel, heated and cooled, heated and cooled, should be well tempered, Joseph might develop character and trust in God, that would stand him in good stead. Remember he was only thirty years of age when this amazing transformation took place.

He kept his place of honour and power for eighty years, and died, and his career ended with a coffin in Egypt. Was that all?

The coffin was not to rest in Egypt till it and its occupant should crumble into dust. Joseph had faith. He knew of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He believed them. So he said to his brethren, "I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." (Gen. 50: 25)

Joseph was a man of faith, a man of vision. His bones remained in Egypt for something like three hundred years. Had God forgotten? Generations came and went. A Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. Evidently Joseph's brethren had the care of the coffin, and the trust was handed down from generation to generation.

Moses arrived on the scene. God's promises were fulfilled. The child-

ren of Israel left Egypt, a redeemed people, redeemed by the mighty power of God, and Joseph's bones went with them. There never has been such a funeral procession in the history of mankind, a procession lasting forty years, accompanied by six hundred thousand men besides multitudes of women and children. Was there ever such a funeral?

The coffin in due time with its contents was deposited in its final resting place as far as this earth was concerned. Was that the end in Joseph's mind? Surely not! We have enough indication in the Genesis narrative what a wonderful product of God's grace was Joseph. How was God with him! How he was trained by terrible suffering for his exalted future! How he bore his remarkable honours with credit to the God, who had called him to this providential task, which brought his father and brethren into the land of Goshen, where they multiplied till the time should come when God would fulfil his promises to Abraham to give his seed the promised land of Israel.

But more. Joseph's name shines in the gallery of faith-worthies unfolded to us in Hebrews 11: "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." (verse 22) His was a true and simple faith. His interests were not in Egypt with its glory and splendour,

but with the people of God. When they should leave Egypt, an event of which he was assured, he gave commandment that his bones should leave too.

Doubtless he looked still further ahead, and wished his body to be in the land of Israel in view of the day of resurrection, and the day when God's promises to Abraham should be fully carried out. At that time the truth of the resurrection as synchronising with the coming of the Lord for His saints was not known. Christ had not yet come in flesh. But there is no doubt that Joseph believed in the God of resurrection, and in the coming of the promised Messiah, and by this act of commanding that his coffin should not rest in Egypt, but find its final repose in the land of Jehovah's choice, he exhibited in a wonderful manner the way that faith worked in him.

May all this be an encouragement to us who read these lines. We are living in very difficult times. We need simple faith in God. Circumstances may seem sadly against us. But God is able, and He will not suffer us to be tried above that we are able. With the trial He will make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10: 13) The day of suffering will soon be over, and the day of glory, a day without a cloud or a tear, an endless day will be ours in the blissful company of our Lord.

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.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 6: 47—7: 44)

THE murmuring of the Jews called forth another of those weighty statements of especial emphasis, which are frequent in this Gospel. Jesus is the bread of life, and those who appropriate Him by faith have life eternal. This great fact stands, without any reservation or qualification whatever. The manna in the wilderness had been recalled by the Jews; the Lord now uses it as in sharp contrast with Himself. Their fathers were dead, though they partook of the manna. He was the bread come down from heaven, and to partake of Him meant deliverance from death. Their fathers were dead spiritually as well as physically, for they had not faith (see Heb. 3: 19) though they ate the manna. The man who eats the bread come down from heaven never dies spiritually, whatever may happen to him physically.

In verses 50-58, the Lord speaks of eating Himself or His flesh as the living bread no less than seven times, and of drinking His blood three times. His language is figurative, yet really very simple. That which we eat and drink we appropriate in the fullest and most intense way. It is wholly and irrevocably ours, and ultimately becomes part of ourselves. It is consequently a very appropriate figure of faith, for that is just what faith effects in a spiritual way. By incarnation the Son of the Father was amongst men, truly come down from heaven, and thereby all that was revealed in Him was made available for men, but only to be actually appropriated by faith. Hence men must eat of that bread,

and eating they live for ever.

The latter part of verse 51 brings in a further thought. This "bread" is His flesh, to be given not for the Jewish nation only but for "the life of the world." Here the Lord indicates that His incarnation was in view of His death. Wholly blinded, the Jews plunged into arguments among themselves, and this brought forth another statement of extreme emphasis. Apart from the death of the Son of Man, appropriated by faith, no one has any spiritual life in him. The Son having come in flesh as Son of Man and died, life depends upon faith in Him. Before He came there were many who believed in God, according to the testimony He had given, and they lived before Him. But now that the Son of God is come, He is the testimony and everything hinges upon Him.

The tense of the verb, "eat," in verses 51 and 53, is worthy of note. Darby's "New Translation" renders, "if any one shall have eaten . . ." and "unless ye shall have eaten . . ." respectively. It signifies an act of appropriation, once for all accomplished. This act there must be if a man is to live toward God—no life without the faith-appropriation of the death of Christ. This, however, does not militate against eating as an habitual thing, which is set forth in the four occurrences of the word in verses 54, 56, 57, 58. The life that is received has to be nourished and sustained; hence the one who has eaten still eats; in other words, he who has received the life by the original appropriation

of faith now lives on the same principle—"The just shall live by faith." He has believed, and he goes on believing.

The habitual eater has eternal life and, in verse 54, for the fourth time resurrection is brought before us. What underlies this fourfold mention undoubtedly is that eternal life is to reach its fullest expression and fruition in resurrection at the last day. It is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament: "life for evermore" (Psa. 133: 3), "everlasting life" (Dan. 12: 2), and in both cases Messiah's day, which is "the last time," is anticipated. Daniel 12 speaks of a national resurrection for Israel, how they shall rise up from amidst the dust of the nations; but in our chapter we have individuals in view, and the resurrection is not figurative but vital and real. When Paul mentions eternal life he usually has in view its future fulness in resurrection; for instance, "the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6: 22). In John it is habitually presented as a present reality though, as the Lord's words here show, its fulness in the age to come is not excluded from our thoughts.

He who thus eats and drinks not only has the life but he "dwells" or "abides" in Christ, and Christ in him. Moreover, as verse 57 shows, he is put into the same relation with Christ as He was in with the Father. As the Sent One of the Father, commissioned to reveal the Father, the whole life of Jesus was lived on the Father's account, as drawing everything from Him. Just so, in regard to Christ, shall live the one who appropriates Him habitually by faith; and so living he abides in Christ and Christ in him. One

can only exclaim, What a marvellous character of life is thus opened to the simple believer, and how little we have entered into it experimentally! This is indeed, in contrast to the manna, the true bread that came down from heaven; and the life, into which by eating we are introduced, abides for ever.

These remarkable teachings of our Lord had a very testing and sifting effect upon His disciples, and many were offended. His saying was "hard" to them; but wherein did its hardness consist? In that it cut at the roots of their national religious pride. To be told, "Ye have no life in you" except there be this eating and drinking, was intolerable to them. Why, they took it for granted that life was theirs as the nation owned of God, and they had not abandoned that idea though they thought they had found the promised Messiah in Jesus. Now He knew "in Himself" that these disciples were thus objecting under their breath, since He knew all things, and as a consequence He proposed to them an even greater test.

That of which He had spoken had involved His incarnation by which the fulness of the Godhead had been brought down to us, and His death, by which life has been made available for us: now He speaks of His exaltation and glory. If they stumbled at the thought of the Son of God coming down, what would they say to the Son of Man going up? In our chapter then we have the first and last items in that "mystery of godliness" of which 1 Timothy 3: 16 speaks—"God was manifest in the flesh . . . received up into glory." Note that He ascends as Son of

MAN. It was a wonder that God should descend to earth: it was no less a wonder that Man should ascend to heaven. Jesus of Nazareth is in heaven (see Acts 22: 8). And He is "where He was before." A striking witness this to the fact that His Person is one and indivisible, however much and rightly we may emphasize the force and meaning of His various names and titles, as well as distinguish between what He ever was and what He became, as we did when considering the opening verses of this Gospel.

The teaching of this chapter is completed by verse 63, where the Holy Spirit is brought in. Nothing proceeds from the flesh that profits in this matter: it is the Spirit who gives life. The Father is the Giver of the true bread of life: the Son is that bread, and as Son of Man gives His flesh for the life of the world: the Spirit quickens. All is of God, and nothing proceeds from man. How dead man is this chapter shows, for the Lord's words, which are spirit and life, were only an occasion of stumbling to them. The Evangelist interrupts his record in verses 64 and 65, to tell us that Jesus spoke in the full knowledge of this, and that not only did He know in Himself what they thought and said, but also who believed and who did not, from the very beginning, and who should betray Him.

It was at this point apparently that many of those spoken of in chapter 2: 23-25, revealed themselves in their true character. Vital faith was not theirs, and they disappeared. Jesus then tested the twelve, and Peter, their spokesman, uttered a fine confession of genuine faith. He recognized the Sent One of God, who had the words of eter-

nal life. Mere men may have the words of science or the words of philosophy, and occasionally words of wisdom, but only the Son of God has words of eternal life. So there was no alternative, no possible rival upon the horizon of Peter's faith. Christ was unique and alone. Surely, by the grace of God, He is that for us too. Yet He was not that even for each of the twelve, and the Lord took the occasion to show that the heart of Judas Iscariot was completely open to His eye. He had not placed him amongst the twelve under any misapprehension of his true character.

At this time Galilee was still the scene of the Lord's ministry, and in a remarkable way the hearts of all men were being manifested. We have seen spurious disciples going back, a genuine disciple making the confession of faith, the traitor disciple being unmasked: in the opening of chapter 7, we find the Jews of Jerusalem adopting an attitude of murderous hostility, and then His brethren according to the flesh are seen in a sceptical frame of mind. They really did not as yet believe in Him, they did not understand His methods and His avoidance of ostentatious publicity. They wished Him to display His powers in the capital city in a way that would capture the world for Himself. Their advice the Lord refused. The world could not hate them, for they were not as yet in any way separated from it. It hated Him because from the outset He was essentially separated from it and testified against its evil works.

Moreover, He only acted according to the Father's will, and hence His time was not yet come. They acted according to their own thoughts, and hence any time was

their time, according to the spirit of the world. If we read 1 John 3:12, 13, we see that the situation in which the Lord was found had been typified by that of Abel. His righteous works in His Father's name testified against the evil works of the Jews and they were aiming at His death, and would encompass it when His hour was come. At the appropriate moment He did go up to the feast of Tabernacles, while many were seeking Him and discussing Him in private. This shows us that the mass of the people, though not identified with the leaders who wanted to kill Him, were all too indifferent. They were full of curiosity and questions, and they argued their varying opinions, yet they were not sufficiently moved to reach decision. How like the situation today! Some murderously opposed, some sceptical, false disciples leaving, traitor disciples prepared to sell out, the masses indifferent, but some, like Peter and the ten, discovering the Lord of life who is without a rival.

In the midst of the feast Jesus appeared and taught. At once the power of His words was felt and enquiry raised. He had not been through the schools of men yet He spake thus! How was it? He answered their question by saying that His teaching proceeded from the One who sent Him. He had come forth to utter His words and was doing so to perfection. Any difficulty that His questioners felt sprang from their own attitude. If only they had a real desire to do the will of God they would have recognized that His teaching was of God. If we desire to do God's will we are of necessity marked by **sincerity** and **subjection**, and our con-

victions become clear and correct. The mists of doubt shroud the minds of those who are merely triflers or curious.

Jesus was indeed speaking not from Himself but from God, and thus His truth and righteousness were manifest. He had come to seek the glory of God instead of seeking His own by speaking as from Himself. If it had been unrighteousness for Him to have sought His own glory, though all glory was rightly His, how much more unrighteous is it for any of us who serve Him to seek our own glory, seeing that rightly we have no glory at all. A very searching and convincing thought for all of us! The standard that the Lord set is the test for us.

For the people, however, Moses was the test, and judged by that all were guilty. Jesus knew they sought to kill Him, and here was a most flagrant violation of Moses' law. The crowd repudiated what He said, and it is possible they were ignorant of the devices of their leaders; but they showed their animosity by the terrible charge that He had a demon. Jesus replied by referring to the miracle of chapter 5, performed on His previous visit to Jerusalem, and by showing them how unrighteous and superficial their judgments were by their practices in regard to circumcision. Others intervened at this point, and by their remarks corroborated the Lord's assertion of their murderous intent and overthrew the people's repudiation of it. Yet they did not believe in Him; they were stumbled by imagining they knew His human origin. Still the reality of things was made clear by these men thus cancelling each other out.

Knowing their words, Jesus took them up in His teaching in the temple, to show that while they knew Him and knew He had come from the carpenter's shop in Nazareth, they did not know the One that sent Him. They had some knowledge of the human side, but to the Divine side they were wholly blind. Yet there were those impressed by His miracles and inclined to believe that He might be the Messiah. The Pharisees and chief priests remained in implacable hostility and sent to apprehend Him, but His hour was not yet come. They had no real power against Him, and verses 33 and 34 show this. When His hour was come very shortly, He would go to Him that sent Him, and pass into a region that they would never enter—a region in which He ever dwelt. He spoke thus of His death and resurrection from a very exalted standpoint. Verses 35 and 36 reveal to us once more their utter incapacity. They had not the smallest inkling of the meaning of His words.

The eighth day of the feast of Tabernacles was to be "an holy convocation," according to Leviticus 23. On that day, when the gladness of the people was supposed to reach its climax, Jesus made His second great pronouncement about the "living water." He knew that none of these Jewish festivals slaked men's thirst, and that there were some who were conscious of this. So He invited them to come to Him and drink, since through faith in Himself the Spirit was soon to be ministered. He had spoken to the woman of Samaria of the Spirit indwelling as a Fountain; now He speaks of that same Spirit causing the flowing forth

of rivers. Out of the inward parts of the believer these rivers are to flow. The significance of the figure seems to be that the Spirit is to be not only received but spiritually assimilated if the outflow is to take place. Out of the "belly" and not out of the head the rivers will flow.

This is to take place "as the Scripture hath said"; that is, it is not the quotation of a written statement, but rather something indicated in a more general way. For instance, Ezekiel 47: 1-9, had predicted that waters should flow from the Millennial Temple, and that its waters should be living since, "everything shall live whither the river cometh." Further, "the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there" (Ezek. 48: 35). The living waters will signalize the fact that the living Lord is in their midst. But the Spirit was to be given when Jesus was glorified on high, long before the Millennial Day is reached, and He signalizes His presence and His indwelling of believers by the outflow of the living waters in a spiritual and not a material way. The Scripture thus had spoken of these things. Again and again we see verified the fact that what Israel will enjoy in a more material way in that age is to be known by the believer in a spiritual way in this age.

Verse 39 is important as clearly defining the relation between the glorification of Jesus and the shedding forth of the Spirit. By that act the church was to be formed, and as the body united to its Head. Jesus was here incarnate but, before as Lord and Christ He takes up that intimate headship, four further steps were necessary—death, resurrection, ascension, glorification. Then the

Holy Ghost was shed forth, and the living waters began to flow in Jerusalem and elsewhere. Looking forward, the Lord Jesus promised this, and attached no qualification to "he that believeth on Me." It was not for the apostolic age only but for us also. Why are the rivers so little seen? Is it because our inward parts have been clogged with other things, and but little open to the operations of the Spirit of God?

Verses 40-44 show us the people still hesitant and mystified. Some expressed one opinion and some

another. Some would have apprehended Him yet no one did so. It appeared to end in futile discussion; but it revealed the presence of a deep rift of division. There are many ways of being against Christ and only one way of being for Him—the way we saw Peter take at the end of chapter 6. The rift, like some great canyon of Colorado, exists today, and all other cleavages among men are but shallow ditches compared with it. There is still a division among the people **because of Him.**

The Soul's Relations with God

The apostle ends his epistle to the Colossians with some important general exhortations. He desires that saints should continue through prayer in communion with God and in the sense of their dependence on Him, conscious of His nearness to them, and of His readiness to hear them. For that which speaks to the heart for our walk is not enough; the soul must know its own relations with God, exercising itself in those relations; and it must receive directly from Him that which assures it of His love. There must be perseverance in this. We are in conflict with evil, which has a hold upon our own hearts if we are without the strength of God. We must therefore commence with God. We must watch therein with settled purpose of heart, not merely as an occasional thing: any one can cry out when he is in need. But the heart separated from the world and all that is in it occupies itself with God, with all that regards the glory of His name, according to the measure in which we are concerned in it. The conflict is carried on with a tender and freed spirit, having only His glory as the object, both in the assembly and in the individual walk. But thus one understands that God works, and that He does not forsake us, and thanksgiving is always mingled with the prayers we address to Him.

A Sure Token.

The object of Paul's mandate (1 Timothy 1) is the love of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, and never the subtleties of argument or of human imagination. This is a sure token for souls that are sound in the faith and guided by the Spirit of God. Speculative questions do not act on the conscience, nor bring into the presence of God.

TOBIAH, THE ENEMY.

J. T. Mawson

WE are not surprised that Nehemiah was sorely grieved when he returned to Jerusalem after a long absence and found that Eliashib the priest had prepared a great chamber in the house of God for Tobiah the Ammonite and installed him there. In that chamber had previously been stored the wealth of God's house, for aforetime they laid there the meat (meal) offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of corn, and the new wine, and the oil. These supplies were necessary for the maintenance of the energy and life for God in His house; they were given to the Levites and the singers and the porters and were the offerings for the priests. But they were all cast out when Tobiah entered the chamber and his household stuff filled the place instead (Nehemiah 13).

Now this Tobiah was an enemy of Israel and of God. He was an Ammonite, and in the Book of Moses it was written that the Ammonites should not come into the congregation of God for ever, because they met not the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them that he should curse them (ch. 13: 1-2). This old enmity was strong in the man and very active, for when first Nehemiah went to Jerusalem Tobiah was "grieved exceedingly that a man had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (ch. 2:10). And when the wall of the city was rebuilt he was "very wroth and conspired with others to fight against Jerusalem" (ch. 4: 7, 8). Eliashib was a traitor to God and His people when he gave Tobiah this chamber

in God's house; he was the Quisling of his day, and the result was that the service of God ceased, for the Levites and the singers fled every man to his field and the temple was forsaken.

The incident is not recorded on the sacred page merely to interest us in the joys and sorrows of the Jews, but for our learning and that we might be warned by the treachery of Eliashib. I will give the story its simplest application and for this will quote a familiar passage from the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price" (ch. 6: 19, 20). Think of this amazing fact —through the infinite grace of God your body is His temple. Now your body is governed by your mind. It is the great chamber pictured in our story and everything for God's glory through you, and your own spiritual blessing and prosperity depends upon what is stored in your mind. As Eliashib the priest had "the oversight of the Chamber of the house of God" so you have the oversight of your own mind and there goes into it that that you choose. And what goes into your mind controls and directs your body and life. The flesh stands in striking analogy to Tobiah. It is that evil nature in men that makes them "lovers of their own selves" and enemies of God, for "the carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8). Eliashib who ought to have stood for God to the death against the entrance of the

Ammonite, was allied with Tobiah the enemy, and he allowed him to fill the great chamber with his household stuffs, and the meal and frankincense and wine and oil and corn for the service of God's house ceased to flow into it. So if "the flesh" is allowed to clutter up and control your mind there will be no room in it for the things that are true and honest and just and pure and lovely and of good report, and the God of peace will not be with you (Philippians 4: 8, 9). And His praise and service will cease in your life. "To be carnally [fleshly] minded is death" (Romans 8: 6).

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God, but ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8). Yet the flesh may assume a dominating place in your life; your safety lies in cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart and walking in the Spirit. It was God's mercy to Israel that Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. The record tells us that he said, "It grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat (meal) offering and the frankincense." Nehemiah's work seems to be analogous to the work of the Holy Ghost. He is sorely grieved

when your mind is controlled by the things of the flesh and He works to restore you the joy of God's Salvation. If you find the flesh too strong for you, remember that "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," and that the Spirit of God now dwells in you and "walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."

The Spirit is the power by which Tobiah and his household stuff is cast out and it is by the Spirit that what is good is brought in. He waits upon us to fill our minds with Christ, for of Him the Lord said, "Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth . . . He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I that He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you" (John 16: 13-15). What a range of things is here: here are the meal offerings and the frankincense and everything else that can energise your soul and make you not only a Levite in service but a priest in worship and a happy singer of the praises of God. Consider the story well and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

"Peace unto you" (John 20)

Peace at all times is God's provision for us; the greeting with which our Lord Jesus Christ ever meets 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.

"HE SHALL NOT FAIL."

E. P. Brown

HAVE these words ever appealed to you? To me they have come with great power and comfort. How pregnant with meaning they are! There is such certainty with them and give the sense of power and resource which fills us with encouragement. The One of whom they speak is none other than God's blessed Son, our precious Saviour and Lord.

Let us consider the import of the words. First of all read Hebrews 1, verses 10 to 13. Everything created will pass away and perish, an almost incredible statement, especially when one realizes the enormous extent of the creation, but in spite of all the science of man and the unbelief of man's heart, the fact remains. Equally so does the fact stand out in its greatness—"Thou art the same and Thy years shall not fail." He is the Eternal One, above, beyond and apart from all that is material, eternally the same; age cannot affect Him, death has been overcome by Him, all must bow to Him and He shall not fail. Think of His eternal character and rejoice that you are eternally linked with Him by links of His own forging, and His love is as great as His power.

Now let us consider His power. At His Word men fell before Him as dead. At His Word the dead were raised, the blind were given sight, the lame walked, and devils were cast out. Was there ever one failure in His glorious pathway? I speak reverently just to bring home the wonderful fact—He shall not fail. Consider His last days on earth, when He faced the sorrows and

agonies of Calvary, did the awful prospect cause Him to fail? Listen to His words spoken to His Father in John 17, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." Oh! the triumph of this statement and how we exclaim in adoration "He shall not fail." Thank God we say "No, He could not fail." The power was there, unknown to men, but so wondrously displayed in all that followed—the rent veil, the opened graves and best of all in the rolling away of the stone from before the tomb and the message delivered to His own, "He is risen."

May we then think of the resource we have in Him. Turn to Deut. 31 and read of the address given by Moses to the children of Israel. After the journey through the wilderness was over and God had proved His faithfulness, the enemy had to be faced and the difficulties to be surmounted. Was it possible to go through? There was no call then to increase their output of arms, or to drill the men to action as the only way to overcome and to gain the victory that was essential. The one resource was God Himself, and Moses can say with confidence, "I will not fail thee." In Joshua 1: 5, "I will not fail thee," is the glorious message Joshua was given with which to go forward—His one great resource was God Himself, and did He fail? We know the sequel so well and ever since it has been just the same. In Job 19: 14 we read, "Thy kinsfolk have failed," and how true it was, but did the Lord fail him? We have only to read on to the end of that book and find, "So the Lord blessed

the latter end of Job more than his beginning." In Psalm 73: 26 we read, " My flesh and my heart faileth," but in our weakness does He fail? Read on and hear those soul-stirring words, " God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Blessed be His name, " He shall not fail." Thus we can go on multiplying incidents of His faithfulness, but does it come home to our hearts?

We look around and are so often cast down. We sing:

" Earthly friends may fail or leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve
us":

but how good it is to be able to add

" But this Friend will ne'er deceive us." He shall not fail. No matter what the circumstances, no matter how dark the way, no matter

what the sorrow, He shall not fail. He ever lives to make intercession for His own and He never fails to supply the succour and sympathy they sorely need. Thank God we can say always, " He shall not fail."

The world is plunged in war and bloodshed and how many there are who almost lose their faith through fear and they wonder why God does not intervene, but has He failed? Read the 77th Psalm and you have the answer, those wonderful verses from the 11th onwards. He cannot and will not fail, but we need to realize His power, His resource and His grace if we are to have our fears allayed, and truly we must turn to Him in prayer if we are to find for ourselves that He shall not fail.

" We'll praise Him for all that is past
And trust Him for all that's to come."

Ah, Jesus Lord! whose faithfulness in heaven or on earth,
No human lips can celebrate enough to tell Thy worth!
I render thanks to Thee, that Thou in lowly guise wast born,
That Thou didst stoop to pity me, a helpless one forlorn.

Thy Name Lord Jesus is a store of all the heart can need,
Enfolding every precious thing, fruit, blossom, leaf and seed!
He spends his time most worthily, who seeks that Name to know,
Its ocean-fulness riseth still as ages onward flow!

Apart from Jesus' precious Name, I've nothing to desire,
All else beside, e'en were it mine, my heart would only tire;
Apart from Him, there's nought of worth, created things are vain:
He is my glory and my wealth, my honour and my gain.

Thy precious Name, **Lord Jesus Christ** ! is better far to me,
Thou art the wealth that can be found in earth, or air, or sea!
Thou art the Paradise, set forth by God's own hand of love;
Thy presence is itself the heaven, where I shall dwell above.

WELL CARED FOR.

A. J. Pollock

THE Christian is indeed well cared for. He has

- (1) **A Father in Heaven;**
- (2) **A Tireless Intercessor;**
- (3) **An unfailing Advocate;**
- (4) **"Another Comforter";**
- (5) **Angelic Ministries.**

If the Christian lacks care or comfort, it is because he does not avail himself of all the blessings of these spiritual agencies, which we have enumerated.

A FATHER IN HEAVEN

It is an amazing thought that we have a Father in Heaven. There are two sides to the Fatherhood of God, one in which He is seeking worshippers, who shall worship Him in spirit and in truth. On that line we are out of touch with earth, its sorrows, its weaknesses, its trials, and in spirit have entered into a region where there is nothing but what is heavenly and spiritual, a sphere where there is no weakness or disappointment. (see Gospel of John.)

But thank God we have a Father in Heaven who takes care of His children in respect of their sorrows and difficulties and temptations. This comforting side of the Father's care is emphasised particularly in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. What a comforting Scripture it is when we read, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, BEFORE ye ask Him" (Matt. 6: 8). There we are bidden not to be like the heathen, who think they will be heard for their much speaking. We are bidden to shut our closet door and speak with confidence to

our Father, who knows BEFORE we ask Him, what we stand in need of,

Again we are bidden not to seek what we shall eat or drink with anxious care or with a doubtful mind for our Father knoweth what we have need of (Luke 12: 29, 30). We are told to consider the ravens, the most greedy of birds, and yet they do not want. Our Father careth for them. We are told to consider the lilies, toiling not nor spinning, and yet Solomon, the most glorious of all the Kings of Israel, was not clothed like one of them, which tomorrow is cast into the oven.

Nay, rather, we should care for God's interests and let our heavenly Father care for our interests. "Seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke 12: 31).

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, yet not one falls to the ground without our Father's knowledge. And we are assured that we are of more value than many sparrows. With such a Father we are well cared for.

A TIRELESS INTERCESSOR

Not only has the Christian a Saviour, who died for his eternal blessing, but that same Saviour, risen from the dead, now at the right hand of God, lives to ceaselessly intercede for the believer as he passes through the sorrows and temptations of this earthly pilgrimage. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8: 34).

The Epistle to the Hebrews brings before us very plainly the Lord Jesus as our great High Priest, our Intercessor before God. "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" (Heb. 7:25).

"Able to save to the uttermost." No circumstance, no combination of circumstances beyond His power of succour. No storm but what the believer will be able to weather with the help of such an Intercessor.

We remember how when Amalek attacked the children of Israel in the wilderness that Moses instructed Joshua to choose out men and fight the enemy, whilst he would stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. Whilst Moses held the rod of God uplifted in his hand the children of Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand Amalek prevailed. It was a pathetic sight to see his companions, Aaron and Hur, putting a stone under Moses on which in his weakness he could rest, and one on either side propping up his hands, and keeping them steady till the setting of the sun, and the victory was won. Thank God, our High Priest lives for ever in the power of an endless life. His hands are never heavy nor weary. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. "Able to save unto the uttermost." Yes, for every step of the journey. A day or two ago the writer was speaking to an aged Christian, who is very near to her very last earthly step who realised this. Our Great High Priest is sufficient for this and every step.

How cheering to know that continually our great High Priest is

engaged on behalf of every believer. We are living in terrible days. Men are dying on every hand. Limbs being torn from the body by the brutality of war. Limbs being frost-bitten, ending in death. Men bleeding to death. Starvation facing many a child of God. Epidemics taking their terrible toll of life. Christian pastors in prison or concentration camps. Never was this poor old earth witness of such sufferings on such a colossal scale in every part of the world. Yet we can say with confidence that our great High Priest is able to save to the uttermost. Hallelujah!

AN UNFAILING ADVOCATE

What if the believer sin? And who does not sin? Does his sin deprive him of salvation? Thank God, a thousand times no. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from ALL sin" (I John 1:7). This is true and most gloriously true. Our salvation depends on the grace of God and the atoning efficacy of the work of redemption wrought out on the cross of Calvary by our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But at once the writer of the epistle is careful to tell us that though the precious blood cleanses from **all** sin, the believer cannot say he has no sin. If he does he deceives himself and nobody else. If the believer sins, his course is not to apply to the blood for a fresh cleansing—that cleansing is once and for ever—but he can confess his sin to God and seek restoration of communion, which sin has broken.

We are assured in these sad circumstances that "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).

It is not cleansing by blood, that is done once and for all; it is cleansing by water, **moral** cleansing that is needed.

The title, "Advocate," signifies One, who is competent to take up our case, and carry it through successfully. We are told that our Lord "came by water and by blood," that there are three witnesses in earth, "The Spirit, the water and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5: 6 and 8). Judicial cleansing of the sinner is once and for all, the moment he truly trusts the Saviour, never to be repeated. The moral cleansing must go on all the time, if sin asserts itself, or else happy relationship with the Father is interrupted in its communion, and only through the services of the Advocate can communion be restored. What a solace to know our Lord is ever available for us. His services will only deepen our sense of the seriousness of sin and cast us more and more upon the keeping grace of our Advocate and Great High Priest.

ANOTHER COMFORTER

Sorrow was filling the heart of the Apostles as they realised they were about to lose their Lord's care on earth. How they leaned on Him. How they valued His protection and guidance. No wonder they were filled with dumb grief and apprehension as to their future. How the words of our Lord must have fallen on their ears with unutterable relief and joy:—"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John 14: 16). Our Lord had been indeed their Comforter while they sojourned with Him

during the years of His ministry on earth. "**Another** Comforter." That meant that though our Lord was going back to the Father He would still be their Comforter. The word, Comforter, is the same word translated Advocate in 1 John 2: 1. It means one alongside to help, the blessed Paraclete.

What a comfort to each of us, and more than comfort it is, to realise that we have a Divine Person alongside to help. Can there be any doubt as to His ability to render all the help we need? Is there any difficulty too great for Him to overcome? Surely none. Our Lord makes constant intercession for the saints on high. "The Holy Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered... He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8: 26, 27). How well off we are with one Comforter in Heaven and one Comforter—another Comforter on earth—Divine Persons, the eternal Son and the eternal Spirit, One with the eternal Father in the unity of the Godhead. How well off we are.

ANGELIC MINISTRATIONS

We are not told much in the New Testament of the ministry of angels. But we are told, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). We have a few cases that are prominent. The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought forth the imprisoned Apostles, and directed them to preach in the Temple all the words of this life. The angel of the Lord delivered Peter from prison and restored him to the praying band of disciples in the house of

Mary, the mother of John Mark. The angel of the Lord stood by the Apostle Paul on the tempest-tossed ship labouring in the Mediterranean sea, giving him the cheering news that God had given him the lives of all who sailed with him. An angel spoke to Cornelius telling him to send for Peter, who should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved.

There is good reason why we are not told much about the particular way the angels minister to the saints, for we are warned in Colossians 2:

18 against "worshipping of angels." We see the tendency to this in ritualistic circles. So we can see the reason why little detail is given. But we may rest assured that constantly in more ways than we dream of, we are receiving daily the ministrations of angels. We are indeed well cared for.

CONCLUSION

With such marvellous resources may we not trust more than we do, and face trials sorrows and temptations with a more resolute mind and a stouter heart?

The Word.

In the four Gospels, or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle John, deservedly compared to an eagle, has lifted his enunciation of the truth to a far higher and sublimer point than the others. The other Evangelists walked, so to speak, on earth with our Lord as Man. Of His Godhead they said but a few things. But John, as if he found it oppressive to walk on earth, has opened his treatise as it were with a peal of thunder; he has raised himself not merely above the earth and the whole compass of the air and heaven, but even every angel host and every order of the invisible powers, and has reached even to Him by whom all things were made, in that sentence, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD."

The Word is not merely a divine Being—He is God. From His eternal existence—"In the beginning was the Word" we ascend to His distinct personality—"and the Word was with God," and finally to the full truth of His substantial Godhead—"and the Word was God."

"The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." There is nothing like that! The deep, unspeakable, unfathomable love of that bosom is the love that has visited us. It is heaven to the heart to be silent and still, and in simple faith let such a revelation tell its own tale upon us.

What the Lord Jesus was in any one place at any one time, He was always and everywhere; so that, if the mirror of the Gospel history were to be broken to a thousand fragments, every fragment would yield the same image; "God manifest in flesh."

THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

R. McCallum

ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. There are many who claim to believe the New Testament while disbelieving the Old. Such a position is altogether untenable. We are all familiar with the phrase that the New is latent in the Old and the Old is patent in the New. An intelligent understanding of the New Testament Scriptures demands and presupposes a knowledge of the Old. For example, no one can understand the Epistle to the Hebrews without having some knowledge of the Book of Leviticus. The Book of the Revelation and the Book of Daniel go together, and to deny the one is ultimately to deny the other. The man who denies the Old Testament Scriptures is like a man who finds himself sawing off a branch upon which ultimately he requires to sit, and it is a very dangerous position to be in.

On a former occasion, when speaking on the Bible and Science, I said that the scientific facts disclosed in the Old Testament are never at any time set aside or superseded. It would hardly be true to say that Old Testament truth is at no time superseded in the New Testament Scriptures. I suppose we shall all agree that it is—but it is never superseded by contradiction; it is superseded by what I may call substantiation or transfiguration; the shadow gives place to the substance, the type gives place to the reality, that which is partial finds its fulfilment in that which is perfect; we might say in the One who alone is perfect, in Christ Himself, and it is true that there is in the Old Testament Scrip-

tures a progression of doctrine. It is not that man has made greater and greater discoveries of truth until he has improved upon that which was imperfect and attained to that which is high and wonderful, but God in His gracious dealings with men has been pleased to disclose the truth as man was able to bear it.

We have read again tonight that stately portal to the pages of Scripture, “IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.” It is true, I believe, that the statement that God created the heavens includes the earth, but the writer adds “and the earth” in order to direct our attention to the fact that it is with earth that God is going to deal, and it is the relationship of God with men upon earth that is disclosed in this wonderful Book. Genesis 1 gives us an understanding of the created material order of things that cannot be got apart from the revelation that God has given to us in the pages of Holy Writ. If we would understand the created order we must understand this, that in the beginning God, who had no beginning, created the heavens and the earth, and I shall speak of this under three headings (for which I am indebted to Dr. Campbell Morgan). We have in this chapter, CREATION, CHAOS, and COSMOS. (1) God created the earth; (2) it was without form and void, darkness dwelt or brooded upon the face of the deep; (3) God renovated the earth in preparation for the abode of man, and in due time He brought forth man as His greatest work, a spiritual being, not merely having an under-

standing of that which is without, not merely having a comprehension of himself as distinct from others, but capable of apprehending God. That has never been given to the lower creation. If we would understand the moral order, we must go to the 3rd chapter of Genesis. There we have exposed the cause of all the havoc and the ruin which we find on every hand, and I am bold to say if we reject the explanation of the misery and sin and death which is given to us in the 3rd chapter of Genesis, we have no other explanation that is intelligible or philosophical. God's explanation is the supremely philosophical explanation of all that we find in this world of ruin and sadness today.

Satan, not in the form of a degraded serpent going on his belly, but doubtless transformed as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11), a shining thing, appeared to our first mother and he suggested that the restriction that had been imposed by God upon Adam and Eve was in the first place unkind; secondly he rather contradicted that by stating that the restriction was not real, for said he, "in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt not surely die**," and thirdly that God was only seeking to withhold from man that which was calculated to make him god-like and therefore the restriction was unjust. Eve was deceived: Adam became partaker of her sin and by man's first disobedience sin, with all its attendant train of suffering and death, entered into the world, and so death passed upon all men because all have sinned.

It is wonderful how on occasion God comprehends great vistas of

human history in small compass. In the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis some two thousand years are covered, dealing with mankind in general, but from chapter 12 onwards the record deals with one race—Abraham's seed. God took up the Hebrews for a special definite purpose, and the story thereafter details the careers of those central figures, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. If we ask why God took up this special people the answer would seem to be fourfold: (1) that in the world there might be borne a testimony to the fact that there is but one God; (2) that they might witness to the blessedness of serving Him; (3) that they might be the repositories of the oracles of truth (for to them were committed the Scriptures); and (4) that through them there might come in the flesh the One who was to be the Saviour of the world, for did we not read the promise made, that the Seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, and that withal His heel would be bruised?—a wonderful pictorial metaphor, the first prophecy in Scripture. Let me say this in passing, that in reading the Scriptures we require at all times to use what I may call sanctified commonsense and spiritual vision. The literalist is often the man who errs. For example, Nicodemus was a literalist. When the Lord said, "Ye must be born again," he could only grasp the literal significance of the words. When Christ spoke of the leaven of the Pharisees and the disciples said, "It is because we have taken no bread," the disciples were pure literalists. But if we turn for a moment in thought to the 3rd chapter of Genesis, it would be truly foolish and destructive of all history to make

the story of Adam and Eve an allegory. It is not an allegory; it is history; it is fact. Yet we must not be altogether literal or we shall make the story end with a bruising of the head of the snake and the bruising of the heel of a man. We have got to have spiritual vision; for a true application of the promise we have to look down through the ages and see that this One promised was to be peculiarly, pre-eminently the woman's Seed. It is intimation, indirect it may be and somewhat nebulous, but nevertheless discernible by spiritual vision, of the incarnation of Christ. We discern One who is to come, born of a woman, entering into conflict with the originator of evil, triumphing over evil—bruising the serpent in its highest part while He Himself is to be a sufferer, suffering in His lowest part. We see the Seed of the woman bruised at Calvary's Cross, and by faith we see Him there gaining the victory, and if tonight we see the head of the serpent more uplifted than it ever has been, by faith we look on to the time when he will be taken and bound and cast into the pit. Christ has triumphed by death; by apparent weakness and defeat He has gained a glorious victory in which I trust everyone of us here has been called by the grace of God to share.

Now the book of Genesis largely dwells on those persons of whom I have spoken, and I think they set forth for us various aspects in the life of a saint. In Abraham we see specially set forth the CONFIDENCE of the child of God: in Isaac we have set forth SONSHIP; in Jacob, PILGRIMAGE, and in Joseph, SUFFERING which leads ultimately to glory, and the path of

the child of faith is one that oftentimes entails suffering in this world. We look on however through eyes often dimmed by tears, to that day when with Christ we shall be glorified. The book of Genesis ends with the bones of Joseph in a coffin in Egypt.

And if the book of Genesis ends with the people of God in Egypt, it is fitting that it should be followed by Exodus when we find this people led out from Egypt's bondage. Exodus opens with the story of bondage that had come upon God's chosen people in the land of Egypt. It is a magnificent Book on which one is tempted to dwell at length—a wonderful story of the providence of God. In the early chapters we have the birth of Moses himself, and we see that everything hangs on the most slender threads of providence. I would say to those who are teachers of Sunday School scholars, take courage from the part played by Miriam. We see Miriam watching over the babe, and in caring for the babe she is caring for the destinies of a whole nation. We see the cry of an infant gaining the womanly heart of Pharaoh's daughter, and the one who should have been cast out in death is protected in the only place where protection was possible, in the King's Palace, and is brought up amongst the learning, the science, literature, and politics of Pharaoh's Court, being trained there for the accomplishment of the purposes of God.

God was caring for His people. God had His eye upon Moses. The commandment of the king shall be literally fulfilled; he is cast into the waters and he is brought forth "drawn out" as his name indicates and preserved for the mighty purpose for which God had raised

him up. A goodly child indeed, and the faith of his parents was answered in his recovery from the waters. Trained in the home of his mother in early infancy, afterwards trained in the palace of the King, we see him a type of Christ in the dangers he survived; we see him too, to be a type of Christ as he steps voluntarily from the throne of royalty and identifies himself with a downtrod-

den people; we see him as a type of Christ in the solitude of the wilderness; we see him as a type of Christ as he leads out his people. He has in view that they should have in their hearts the consciousness of nationhood, and that there should be led out not only a people, but a nation. When God delivered them, He did it by blood.

(To be continued)

The Excellency of Christ.

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."

" Fervent in spirit; serving the Lord " (Romans 12)

If the Lord has called you to any service you cannot be negligent or slothful in it without suffering loss in your soul. Devotedness to the Lord will produce diligence in His service—the love of Christ constraineth us—and where these are lacking the light and joy of God's favour are not likely to be the conscious portion of the heart.

" 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.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 7: 45—8: 36)

AT the end of chapter 6, we had Peter's tribute to the supernatural power of the Lord's words; they were "words of eternal life." We now find that the same power was felt by men who were on the opposite side of the deep cleavage that ran through the nation. The religious leaders had sent men to arrest Him but they returned without Him. The only explanation they gave of their failure to touch Him was, "Never man spake like this Man." They did not understand what He said, but they felt that no mere man ever spake as He did; that His words placed Him in a different category altogether. They might be ignorant, but their sensibilities were not wholly deadened.

Their leaders, who had sent them, lacked not only sensibilities but scruples also. They did not lack an immense conceit of themselves; so much so that they were sure that their own rejection of Jesus was incontestable, and so final that everybody ought to accept it. If the crowd, or any of them, did not, it only showed them to be ignorant and accursed. So these false shepherds just cursed the sheep, and left it at that. Yet their own ignorance began to peep out, for the effect of their triumphant question as to whether any of the rulers or Pharisees had believed in Him, was spoiled by Nicodemus who was both a Pharisee and a ruler. Though not yet prepared to come out as a definite believer, he revealed by his question that he did not conform to their unbelief. Further, their sneer as to

Galilee only revealed their ignorance as to whence Christ had come.

The scene presented to us, in these closing verses of chapter 7, shows what an astonishing likeness exists between the present-day, modernistic religionist and these men. True, the written Word of God is more in question now, rather than the Living Word as then, but there is just the same triumphant assertion of the supreme place of human cleverness and knowledge. The modern phrase is, "All scholars are agreed . . ." —agreed in denying or even ridiculing the Word of God. But now as then all scholars are NOT agreed, and the dissentients are not just a unit like Nicodemus in the Sanhedrim, as also their faith in Christ and His Word is far clearer and more definite than his. Moreover, like the ancient religionists, our modern specimens are just as wrong in their basic facts. Christ was not "of Galilee" as they ought to have known; but they did not trouble to look beneath surface appearances. Modern unbelief is wealthy in speculations, guesses, fancies, and sadly bankrupt in solid facts.

However, they felt that they had decisively settled the point, and they retired to the comfort of their own homes, whilst Jesus, the Word made flesh, without a home, spent the night on the Mount of Olives. Returning early in the morning to the temple, He was confronted by some of these very opponents with a case which, they hoped, would impale Him on the horns of a dilemma. The crowd might be ignorant of the

law and cursed; they knew the law right well and thought themselves blessed by it; they also knew the kindness and grace of Jesus. So they set the sinning woman in the midst and quoted the law of Moses against her. The result was not what they expected. The Lord turned the law like a searchlight upon them, and its convincing power reached even their hardened consciences. These double-dyed religious hypocrites, who had talked glibly enough of the curse coming on the crowd, now saw the curse of the law looming up against themselves, and they disappeared.

The action of Jesus in stooping down and writing on the ground is very significant. Here was, if we may say so, the finger that once wrote the law on two tables of stone—the law that wrote a sentence of doom against Israel. The same finger had written a sentence of doom against a proud Gentile monarchy in the days of Daniel, upon the plaster of the wall. The writing substances are striking. The inflexible law written on inflexible stone; hence the despiser of Moses' law "died without mercy," since the law cannot be twisted as rubber is twisted. Plaster is friable and easily broken, like the strongest and proudest human kingdoms. Jesus wrote on the ground. What He wrote there we are not told, but we do know that He was going "into the dust of death" (Psa. 22: 15), where He wrote a full declaration of the love of God.

In Revelation 5, the book of judgment is produced, and a strong angel with a loud voice issues the challenge, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals there-

of?" Jesus issued just that challenge, though in different words. The result of the challenge then will be that "no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth" was able to open or even look upon that book; just as here every accuser slunk away. Then the "Lion" who became the "Lamb" is left to execute the judgments alone. Here "Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst"; yet it was not the hour of judgment but of grace, and so the One who had the right to condemn did not exercise it. He was "full of grace and truth." He turned the searchlight of truth on the hypocrites, and extended grace to the sinner, with a view to her deliverance from the sin.

Out of this incident sprang a solemn controversy between the Lord and the Jews, and the account of it fills the rest of the chapter. His opening words, in verse 12, refer to the incident and are the key to what follows. In the beginning of the Gospel we saw that the Word was the Originator of life, and was the Light which shone in the darkness. Chapters 3-7 have presented Him to us as the Source of life eternal. Now He comes before us as the Light, and at the end of chapter 12 the result of that presentation is summed up for us. Jesus is the light not of Israel only but of the world, and the one who follows Him will have the light of the life manifested in Him, no matter whence he may have come. The one who did not follow Him remained in darkness, even though he were the most orthodox Jew imaginable.

In chapter 5 the Lord had pointed out how ample was the witness borne to Him, so that He was not in the

position of coming to them with self-produced credentials. The Pharisees now seized upon the words He then used and attempted to convict Him on the ground of verbal inconsistency. He neither withdrew His words nor explained them. He simply appealed to things of a far higher nature which convicted them of ignorance and error. In mere men their self-knowledge is small. What is behind them and what is before, both are shrouded in a veil of impenetrable mystery. There was no such limitation with Him. His self-knowledge was Divine and eternal. These Pharisees were as ignorant of themselves as they were of Him. They were also in error, since all their judgments were formed by the flesh, in which no good dwells. In their fleshly judgment of His words they were wrong, though clever in pouncing upon what looked like a contradiction.

In the case of the woman the Lord had refused the place of Judge. It will be His in a coming day, but not today; and He disclaims it again to the Pharisees in verse 15. Yet in His disclaimer He again commits Himself to a verbal paradox, since He asserts the truth of His judgments, seeing He is so wholly one with the Father who had sent Him. In the age to come all judgment will be His, yet He will execute it in fullest concert with the Father. So also in the matter of witness to Himself, the full weight of the Father's authority lay behind it. This reference to the Father on His part only served to bring to light complete ignorance on their part. The Father can only be known in the Son, whom they would not receive. If only they had known the Son they would have known the Father.

Verse 20 bears witness to the power of these words of our Lord as also to the power of His Person. His words made them wish to apprehend Him, but there was that about Him which hindered them, until the hour came when He gave Himself up to their will. The Lord however continued His witness to them.

He had been going their way and seeking them in grace. A moment was now coming when He would go His own way and they would seek Him fruitlessly and die in their sins. Then they would be cut off from Him and from God for ever. This complete turning of the tables would be not only just, but appropriate. Again in verse 22 we see complete ignorance with the Jews, and that their minds were sordid to the last degree. They were indeed "from beneath" in every sense of the words. This led the Lord to draw the sharp contrast between them and Himself. First as to **origin**: they from beneath; He from above. Second, as to **character**: they of this world; He not of this world. Third, as to **end**: they were about to die in their sins and be for ever excluded from God; He was going to the Father, as He had already inferred. Only faith in Him could avert their doom—the faith that would discover in Him, "I AM." There is no word representing the "he" in the original, hence it is printed in italics. In Exodus 3: 14, God had revealed Himself as the great, "I AM," hence this statement of Jesus was virtually a claim to Deity.

The Jews had not discerned this for the moment but they evidently saw His claim was a great one, for they at once asked, "Who art Thou?" They received an astonishing answer, "Altogether that which

I also say to you " (New Trans.). He was the truth, and His speech was a true and exact presentation of Himself. This could not be said of the best and wisest of men. If we would, we cannot accurately manifest ourselves in words. If we could, we should shrink from doing it, being what we are. His words were the true revelation of Himself; as we might expect when we know that He is the Word who became flesh. Let us ponder this word of Jesus very deeply, for it carries with it the assurance that in the Gospels we have a real and true revelation of Christ. They give us what He did as well as what He said; but **by His words alone** we may truly know Him, though we never saw Him in the days of His flesh. What He said, that He is altogether.

Verse 26 shows us that all that He had to say concerning men was equally the truth, because all was spoken of and from the Father. They were wholly ignorant of the Father, and wholly unbelieving as to the Son present amongst them. When they had lifted up the Son of Man there should be a demonstration of the fact that He really was " I AM," and that in every sense the Father was with Him. His lifting up was His death, and that accomplished resurrection would supervene, which would declare Him to be, " the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness " (Rom. 1: 4). Then they would know, in the sense of having perfectly ample demonstration before their eyes. Some few did know, in the sense of being enlightened by the demonstration, but the mass deliberately closed their eyes against the light. Still the

demonstration that He was wholly and ever pleasing to the Father was there for every eye to see.

The power of His words was felt and many took the place of believing on Him. The Lord tested them by telling them that the one who was not a mere nominal follower but a disciple indeed is characterized by continuing in His word; that is, in the whole truth that He brought. Continuance is ever the test of reality, and where that exists the truth is known in its emancipating power. The devil enslaved by the power of his lie: Christ liberates by the power of God's truth. He did not flatter them by telling them that as God's nation they were free. He set before them that true spiritual freedom which is the result of the knowledge of the truth. **That** they needed, and so do we.

Many failed under the test, for their national and religious pride was wounded. They might be Abraham's seed after the flesh, but to claim they were never in bondage to any, while in complete subjection to the Romans, only proved their blindness. By His emphatic statement of verse 34, Jesus directed their thoughts to the slavery of sin. Men cannot practice sin without being enslaved thereby—a tremendous thought for every one of us. Now the place of the slave is outside, but in contrast to him is the Son, whose place is inside and that for ever. And the Son not only has that abiding place Himself but He can set free the slave, introducing him into that which is liberty indeed. Thus he who is one of the "disciples indeed" becomes "free indeed."

(To be continued)

"HE WILL NOT EVER BE THRESHING IT."

J. T. Mawson

" Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the ploughman plow all day to sow ? doth he open and break the clods of his ground ? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place ? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working " (Isaiah 28 : 23-29).

To get the true interpretation of any passage of Scripture one must not separate it from its context, and this passage is no exception to that rule. The chapter is a " Tribulation " chapter. It describes what God will do when the crowd of infidel Jews that are yet to be in power in Jerusalem make a pact with Antichrist and his ally the Beast, and consequently with the devil, whose power and subtlety these supermen will wield and practise. They will make a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell (verse 5). This will not only be the climax of their apostasy but a definite challenge, and defiance of God. They will consider themselves safe from God's interference, and will say, " Peace and safety "; then shall their destruction come. " For the Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim. He shall be wroth as in the Valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act " (verse 21). His strange work is judgment, His strange act the destruction of these scornful men. It is strange work because He is the

God of all grace, and willeth not that any should perish; but the Day of Judgment has been appointed: He is compelled to judge because men slight His mercy and defy His authority.

The great tribulation will be the time of " Jacob's trouble " (Jer. 30 : 7), but it will be " the hour of temptation that shall come upon the whole world," as our Scripture indicates. " Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of Hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth " (verse 22); for all the world is guilty before God, and at that time the acceptable year of the Lord will have closed and the day of vengeance of our God will have come. As we think of that day, we may well thank God for the grace that has turned us to Him from idols to serve Him, the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, our Deliverer from the coming wrath
1 Thess. 1.

But the chapter closes with a sure and certain hope beyond the tribulation, and with instruction as to the ways of God. The plowman plows all day to sow: his plowing is not the end but a means to an end, and the end is a harvest of grain. When the grain is ripe, he reaps and threshes: but "he will not ever be threshing it." The threshing is not the end, but it has an end in view; that end is the separating the chaff from the wheat and the cumin and the barley and the rye. And it is "his God that doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him" (verse 26). And will not God who has given men wisdom in these things be wise Himself in what He does? He will break up the fallow ground in His people's hearts with the ploughshare of His chastisement and judgments, that they will cry to Him in their sorrow, then their hearts will be prepared for the sowing of His Word within them. John the Baptist also prophesied of this tribulation period when he said, "His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3: 12). The great tribulation will destroy the chaff, but it will bring to light the wheat and secure it for the Lord's garner. We are assured of this by His word through the prophet Amos. Said he, "I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (chapter 9: 9).

And what of our day? Has our Scripture any message for us? It surely has. These are not the days

of "the great tribulation," but they are days of tribulation nevertheless. The ploughshare of sorrow is cutting deeply into multitudes of lives. God is ploughing up the fallow ground: has He no aim in this, and is He indifferent as to results? Nay, He is preparing hearts for the reception of His Word, the Word of His grace, which tells us that He is a very present help in time of trouble; the God of all comfort, He offers Himself to the burdened and bereaved as a Refuge and a Saviour through Jesus Christ the Lord.

The threshing has its application to those who have found a refuge in Him. To all such the Lord has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And our word "tribulation" " is derived from the Latin 'tribulum,' which was the threshing instrument or harrow, whereby the husbandman separated the corn from the husks; and Roman 'tribulatio' in its primary significance was the act of this separation" (Trench). " 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 which is given unto us. Tribulation may come upon us in diverse ways; in sickness or in separation from those who are dear to us, in bereavement, in persecution, or oppression by unreasonable and godless men; but if we know the end that God has in view in permitting it, we shall glory in it.

Further, the husbandman does not treat all the grain alike, in that fitches are threshed with a threshing instrument, that the cart wheel is not turned about on the cumin, the staff is used for the fitches and the

rod for the cumin. He does not break his bread with the wheel of his cart nor bruise it with his horsemen. And this wisdom, we are told, cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts. And shall He not act wisely with His own? He knows our frame, our tendencies and infirmities, and He orders His ways towards us in infinite wisdom, and His wisdom is the servant of His love.

Let us trust Him. "The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower." We can surely say, as in the words with which our chapter closes, "He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." And to Him, the Only wise God and our Saviour, be glory and majesty dominion and power both now and for ever. Amen.

It is possible

It is possible for those who will indeed draw on their Lord's power for deliverance and victory, to live a life in which His promises are taken as they stand and found to be true. It is possible to cast **every** care on Him, daily, and be at peace amidst the pressure. It is possible to have affections and imaginations purified through faith, in a profound and practical sense. It is possible to see the will of God in everything, and to find it, as one has said, no longer a sigh, but a song. It is possible, in the world of inner act and motion, to put away, to get put away, **all** bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and evil speaking, daily and hourly.

It is possible, by unreserved resort to divine power, under divine conditions, to become strongest, through and through, at our weakest point; to find the thing which yesterday upset all our obligations to patience, or to purity, or to humility, an occasion today, through Him who loveth us, and worketh in us, for a joyful consent to His will, and a delightful sense of His presence and sin-annulling power. These are things divinely possible. And, because they are His work, the genuine experience of them will lay us only lower at His feet, and leave us only athirst for more and more.

Our deepest need, when the heart is alive with desire, and conscious of impotence, is first to realize, and then to submit to, Him of whom "it is witnessed that He liveth."

"He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." That is true not for the Universe only, nor for the Church only, but for the individual, for thee; and not for the eternal future only, but for the present; for the disorder of the soul, thy soul, today. It is the Lord who speaks, sitting on the throne. See Him as such, come to Him as such; and expect to find, and even now, that God is true, and God is able.

IS THIS ARMAGEDDON?

A. J. Pollock

THE magnitude, the horrors, the anguish of this present world-conflagration is causing many to ask the question, Is this Armageddon? Never in all the history of the world has there been witnessed such titanic struggles, such vast masses of men locked in deadly conflict; such wealth, millions upon millions of money, poured out like water. The whole scene is so staggering that with bated breath is the question asked, Is this Armageddon?

The asking of the question shows a belief in the reliability of Scripture, that its prophecies will come true, and yet an amazing ignorance, not even a superficial knowledge of what the Bible says on the subject. The name, Armageddon, only once occurs in Scripture. We read:

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the Kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air . . . and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake" (Rev. 16: 13-18).

Scripture shows clearly that the present conflict is not, and cannot in any phase of it be Armageddon. We ask the questions:

- (1) **WHERE is Armageddon ?**
- (2) **WHO will be the great actors in this battle of all time ?**

(3) **WHERE will the battle take place ?**

(4) **WHAT will be the result of Armageddon ?**

(1) **Where is Armageddon ?** Armageddon means the hill Megiddo. If you will look at your map of Palestine you will find a town marked Megiddo, between Mount Carmel and the sea on the west, and the windings of the River Jordan on the east. Between these two points there is the great fruitful valley or plain of Jezreel. This plain of Jezreel (its modern name is Esdraclon) has been the battlefield again and again in the history of the children of Israel. It is clear no fighting has occurred so far in the place called Armageddon.

(2) **Who will be the great actors in this battle ?** Rev. 16: 13 and Rev. 19: 11-16 tells us. First there is the great triumvirate of evil—Satan, the Beast (head of the revived Roman Empire) and the False Prophet (the Antichrist, King of Jerusalem). It is clear that the present time is not Armageddon for these sinister figures in the last days—the Beast and the False Prophet—have not as yet appeared. Satan invisible, with demonic subtlety, is at work even now, but up to the present the Roman Empire is not revived and the Antichrist has not arrived, though many antichrists are preparing his way.

Rev. 19: 11-16 tells us that our Lord will Himself in person head the armies of heaven. There is no doubt that this chapter describes the battle of Armageddon for verse 20

tells of the annihilating victory that must of necessity be if our Lord "in righteousness . . . doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19: 11), and that the Beast and False Prophet are taken captive and consigned to the lake of fire burning with brimstone, and the Devil himself is chained up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, the period of our Lord's reign upon the earth commonly called the Millennium.

(3) When will the battle of Armageddon take place? The Book of the Revelation is divided into three parts, (1) "the things which thou hast seen, and (2) the things which are, and (3) the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1: 19). The things which John saw are recorded in Rev. 1: 12-20; "Things which are" are found in Rev. 2 and 3—the addresses to the seven churches in Asia, using the present condition of those assemblies as prophetic of Church history from the time John wrote to the second coming of our Lord for His heavenly saints to catch them to the air (1 Thess. 4: 13-18).

Rev. 4 to 22, 1-6 narrate "the things which shall be hereafter." This brings us to the point: "When will Armageddon take place?" Not until **after** the rapture, the fulfilment of 1 Thess. 4: 13-18. Not until the seven seal judgments have been fulfilled as narrated in Rev. 6. The seal judgments may take years to run their course. These are succeeded by the seven trumpet judgments and they in turn partly successive and in the end coincident with the seven vials—trumpets and vials being more intense judgments and in a marked way directly the outpouring of Divine wrath—"in

righteousness He doth judge and make war."

When we turn to Rev. 16 we find in verse 12 the sixth angel pouring out his vial on the great River Euphrates, preparing the way for the Kings of the East, the vast hordes of China, Japan, India, etc. to take part in this last historic battle. So we see much must intervene before that battle takes place. At the time of the sixth vial the terrible great tribulation will be in full force. Then we find in verse 16 these vast armies will be gathered by Satanic influence in a place called Armageddon, upon the great plain of Esdraelon.

In verse 17 we find the seventh angel pouring his vial into the air. The result is startling. Voices, thunders, lightnings, a mighty earthquake, the cities of the nations falling. This earthquake must be widespread and devastating beyond imagination and is well described as "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great" (Rev. 16: 18).

(4) What will be the result of Armageddon? Chapter 19 tells us of the **personal** intervention of our Lord in this battle. In largely symbolic language we read of Heaven being opened and our Lord seen on a white horse, emblem of bloodless victory. Surely if He intervenes victory is assured, and no casualty could take place in the armies that follow Him. His names are impressive, "Faithful and True," "The Word of God," "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

The battle takes place. "The supper of the great God" is spread—a supper of judgment, flesh of kings, of captains, of mighty men,

of horses, of all men. The Beast and False Prophet are taken and cast into the lake of fire. The Devil is bound in the bottomless pit and the long promised golden age, which men have dreamed of, will begin, the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ for a thousand years, the Millennium, a reign of righteousness and peace.

Such will be the battle of Armageddon. The name means the Hill

Megiddo—a hill in prophetic language means opposition to God and to Christ. The forerunner of our Lord prophesied that “ every mountain and hill shall be brought low ” (Isa. 40: 4), and so it will be till He is triumphant.

We answer the question that gives title to this article, Is this Armageddon? with an emphatic NO.

Is the thought of the Lord's nearness welcome or ungrateful to your soul? Is the expectation of being with Him, without notice or delay, pleasant to your heart?

The true practical walk of a believer gives a right answer to these enquiries. “ Let your moderation be known unto all men—the Lord is at hand.” “ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold, the Judge standeth before the door.” Moderation, or holy restraint in the use of present things, and gracious, liberal consideration of others, are approved as among the right ways of a saint, and such as would stand the light of the Lord, if He were at the moment to appear. Are our ways, then, such as suit the thought of His nearness, and would abide the light of His presence? Have they, or have they not this voice in them, “ Come, Lord Jesus”? Could vanity, could uncleanness, could the desire of gain, could the lust of distinction? Has the haughty look that voice in it? Has carnal levity, or spiritual sloth? We know that these cannot desire the day of the Lord, for it is to them “ a day of darkness, and not of light.” Our behaviour should be such as would introduce us to His presence without disturbance; for He comes, not to regulate, but to gladden us—not to put us in a right path, but to close a right path in glory.

J. G. B.

To be in communion with God the conscience must be good, must be pure; and if we are not in communion with God, we cannot have the strength that would maintain us in the faith that would enable us to persevere in the profession of the truth, as God gives it to us. Satan has then a hold upon us, and if the intellect of one in this state is active, he falls into heresy. The loss of a good conscience opens the door to Satan because it deprives us of communion with God; and the active mind, under Satan's influence, invents ideas instead of confessing the truth of God. The apostle treats the fruit of this state as “ blasphemous ”; the will of man is at work and the higher the subject the more an unbridled will possessed by the enemy goes astray and exalts itself against God, and against the subjection of the whole mind to the obediences of Christ, to the authority of the revelation of God.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 8: 36—10: 18)

IN these words of our Lord, recorded in verses 32 and 36, we may surely see the germ of that which is more fully expounded in the epistles. Romans 6 unfolds our death with Christ, leading to our being "made free from sin," which in its turn leads to "newness of life." This answers to verse 32 of our chapter; while verse 36 finds its counterpart in Galatians 4: 1-7, connected with 5: 1. The redemption from under the law, wrought by the Son, coupled with the sending forth of the Spirit of the Son into our hearts, has brought us into the liberty in which we are to stand fast. The Son has set us free indeed.

In verses 37-44, the Lord very solemnly exposes the hollowness of their claim to be Abraham's children. There would have been some value in their claim if they had shown themselves to be his children in a spiritual sense by displaying his faith and doing his works. Actually they were marked by hatred and the spirit of murder. Cain had shown that spirit, and he was "of that wicked one, and slew his brother" (1 John 3: 12); so, too, they were doing the deeds of their father, and thus manifesting themselves to be of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning and had no truth in him. Hatred and lying are both fathered by the devil, and those characterized by these two things thereby betray their spiritual origin.

Jesus speaks of Himself, in verse 40, as "a Man that hath told you the truth." Others spoke of Him

as a Man, and saw no more in Him than that; but it is striking that in this Gospel, which presents Him as the Word made flesh, He should speak of Himself as a Man. Thus the truth is balanced for us, and both His essential Godhead and His perfect Manhood made abundantly clear. He set forth the truth, and those who had God for their Father would both love the truth and love Him. His opponents had an evil origin, and could not hear His word—the revelation that He brought. Consequently they were wholly unable to understand His speech—the words in which He clothed the revelation. This is what verse 43 tells us.

Notice how the Lord's words totally destroy the false idea held by so many concerning the "universal Fatherhood of God," though these Jewish religionists only went so far as to claim a universal fatherhood of Abraham, and therefore of God, for their nation. Jesus said, "If God were your Father . . ." It was a denial. The devil was their father. The Fatherhood of God is limited to those that believe, as Galatians 3: 26 states.

Before these Jews stood One whom not even His bitterest foes could convince of sin, and He told them the truth. That truth honoured the Father and delivered men from death, yet they refused the truth, dishonoured Him, called Him a Samaritan, and said He had a demon. They gloried in Abraham though they had to admit he was long since dead. The Lord met

them as One who knew He had come forth from the Father, was honoured of the Father, and was going to enter upon His own day, to which Abraham had looked forward, and which by faith he saw.

The Jews, as ever, utterly misunderstood His words. He spoke of Abraham seeing His day, and they thought it meant a claim on His part to have seen Abraham. Their mistake served to bring out the great and emphatic pronouncement, "Before Abraham was, I AM." At a certain moment Abraham "was." The verb used here is the same as in chapter 1: 14, where we read that the Word "was made" or "became" flesh. The verb for "am" is the one signifying abiding existence, as used in 1: 18; the Son "is" in the bosom of the Father; and it is used in the past tense as to the Word in the by-gone eternity in 1: 1 and 2. Jesus therefore said, Before Abraham came into existence, I eternally AM.

This tremendous claim moved the Jews to attempt His death by stoning, and had it been false they would have been quite right. It surely moves our hearts to adore Him, and to adore the grace that brought Him into Manhood and so low for our salvation.

The murderous intentions of the Jews did not fail because they lacked fixity of purpose but because He was beyond their reach until His hour was come. Hiding Himself from them Jesus left the temple, and as He passed on He encountered a blind man who was to bear striking witness to the leaders of Israel, and in his own person become another "sign" that here amongst them

was indeed the Christ, the Son of God.

The question which the disciples raised may seem curious to us, but it expressed thoughts which were common among the Jews, finding their basis in Exodus 20: 5, which speaks of the iniquity of the fathers being visited upon the children. The Lord's reply shows that affliction may come without there being any element of retribution in it, but simply in order that God's work may be manifested. It was manifested here in working a complete deliverance from the affliction. It may be just as strikingly be manifested by complete deliverance from the depression and weight of the affliction, while the affliction itself still persists; and so it is often seen today. It was then the "day," marked by the presence on earth of "the light of the world." Jesus knew that the "night" of His rejection and death was approaching, but until that time He was here to do the Father's works, and this blind man was a fit subject for the work of God, though he had made no appeal for it, as far as the record goes.

The action taken by the Lord was symbolic, as is shown by the name of the pool being interpreted for us. Jesus was the "Sent One," who had become flesh, and of His flesh the clay mixed with His spittle was the symbol. Now seeing eyes would be blinded if plastered with clay, and blind eyes rendered doubly blind. Just so it was for the spiritually blind; the flesh of the Word was a stumbling-block and they saw only the carpenter's Son. For us who believe in Him as the Sent One the reverse is true. It is by His

revelation in flesh that we have come to know Him, as I John 1: 1, 2 shows. His flesh is darkness to the world: it is light to us. We can adopt the language in a spiritual sense and say we "washed, and came seeing." The rest of the chapter shows that the blind man got the eyes of his heart opened as well as the eyes of his head.

Once his spiritual eyes were opened his measure of light increased. The very opposition he encountered served to produce the increase. The questioning of the neighbours sprang from curiosity rather than opposition, and it served to bring out the simple facts with which he started. He knew how his eyes were opened and that he owed it to a Man called Jesus, though His whereabouts he knew not.

His case was so remarkable that they brought him to the Pharisees, and here at once the antagonistic spirit prevailed. There was no difficulty in finding ground for their opposition for the miracle had been wrought on the sabbath. Again Jesus had broken the sabbath, and this at once condemned Him in their eyes. To fail in this matter of ceremonial observance was fatal: He could not be of God—a conclusion quite typical of the Pharisaeic mind. Others, however, were more impressed by the miracle, and so a division was again manifested, which led them to ask the man what he had to say of Him. His reply showed that the Man called Jesus was to him at least a Prophet. This was more than they would admit, so they questioned the truth of his miraculous cure.

The parents were now called into the discussion, only to testify that

he was indeed born blind, so his cure was beyond question, though fear led them to refer all further enquiry to the man himself; and the fact comes out that the verdict of the Pharisees on the case was a foregone conclusion. Anyone confessing Jesus to be the Christ was to be excluded from all the religious privileges of Judaism. Thus their base motives stood revealed, and they pursued their examination of the man not to elicit the truth but to discover some possible ground for condemning either Jesus or the man, or both.

Would he ascribe the praise to God, while agreeing that the Man by whom God's power was exercised was a sinner? The man avoided this subtle trap by simply affirming again the one point as to which he was immovably certain. Like a skilful general who declines battle on ground chosen by the enemy and will only meet the foe in his own impregnable position, so he declined mere theological discussion, in which he was no match for them, and took his stand on what he knew had been wrought in himself. The man's words in verse 25 are full of instruction for us. The unlettered ploughboy of today can humbly yet boldly confront the numerous counterparts of both Pharisees and Sadducees, if content just to testify of that which the grace of God has done for him and in him.

Next they attempted to extract from the man more exact details of the method Jesus employed, if perchance they might find a point of attack. By now, however, he had perceived their antagonism, and his question, "Will ye also be His disciples?" had in it a touch of sarcasm:

This stung them to the point of losing their tempers, so much so that while declaring their adherence to Moses they committed themselves to a declaration of ignorance as to the origin and credentials of Jesus. They took the "agnostic" attitude, just as so many do today. This, however, was a fatal admission. The loss of their tempers was followed by the loss of their case from an argumentative point of view. The simple believer, if he sticks to the foundation facts as to which he can bear witness, will suffer no defeat when he encounters the agnostic.

These Pharisees, who posed as the supreme religious authorities of the day, not only professed ignorance as to this most vital question, but also demanded a verdict on the question wholly contrary to the evidence. Beneficent power had undeniably operated, working deliverance from evil: they professed ignorance of its source, yet demanded that He who wielded it should be denounced as a sinner. The man, however, had felt the action of the power; he knew it was of God, and the wicked opposition he encountered only helped him to the further conclusion that Jesus Himself was "of God" indeed.

Having lost their case and failed to corrupt the thoughts of the man, they resorted to violence and cast him out. As regards Judaism he was excommunicated: was there anything for the poor man except heathenism with its blank darkness? **Yes, there was.** Jesus Himself was morally outside it already; from the outset of this Gospel He has been so viewed, as we have remarked before; though He was not outside it in the fullest sense till He was led outside

the gate of Jerusalem to die the malefactor's death. In verse 35 we see the rejected Saviour finding the rejected man and propounding to him the greatest of questions—“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” The question reached him in an abstract form. The man hesitated, for he wished the Son of God to be before him in concrete shape. Where should he find Him that he might believe? Thus challenged, Jesus plainly presented Himself **as the Son of God.** The man at once, and as plainly, accepted Him as such in faith, and worshipped Him.

So once more we are conducted to the main point of this Gospel as expressed in verse 31 of chapter 20. The man had been led step by step to the faith of the Son of God and to life in His name, and the opening of his physical eyes had been a sign of the greater work of opening the eyes of his mind and heart. In verse 39 we have the comment of the Lord on the whole scene. He had come into the world for judgment—not in the sense of condemning men, but as producing a discrimination that cut down beneath surface appearances and reached men as they really were. Some, like this man, had their eyes opened to see the truth: others who professed to be the seeing ones, like the Pharisees, might be blinded and manifested as being blind. Some Pharisees who were present suspected that He referred to them, and their question gave an opportunity for their perilous position to be shown. Their sin lay in their hypocrisy. They had **intellectual** sight yet were **spiritually** blind and their sin remained; whereas those really blind, and confessedly so, are rather objects of compassion.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Inglis Fleming

THE love of Christ is a theme which will engage the thoughts of the ransomed for all eternity. Never will it be forgotten, never will it be eclipsed, never will it cease to be the subject of our praise and adoration.

But already we are called to contemplate it in its preciousness as again and again the Spirit of God directs our attention to it in the pages of inspiration. Turn now to Romans 8: 34-37—

"Who is he that condemneth?" It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, which also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

"It is Christ that died." In His love to us Christ has been into death. When we were far from God in darkness and enmity, when we loved Him not, but contrariwise hated and rejected Him, He loved. And His love took Him into death that He might exhaust the judgment that was our portion and free us for ever from all that was our desert and due. His love was stronger than death. The many waters of judgment could not quench it, and the many floods of wrath and woe unutterable could not drown it.

But He is risen now. **"Yea, rather is risen again,"** says the Holy

Spirit. In this connection He would rather engage our thoughts with a risen Christ, He would rather present Him as the Victorious One risen again for our justification, risen again where we can share with Him in life and relationship before His Father and His God. He loves us in resurrection as He loved us in death.

"Who is even at the right hand of God." The One who died is risen, and is exalted now to the highest place of glory. But He loves us still. He is there for us. As our Representative He has gone in, and His love will know no rest until His own are with Him there.

"Who also maketh intercession for us." His love leads Him to present service for His own. By love He serves them in all their need. He ever intercedes for His loved ones. Knowing their weakness and need He ever prays on their behalf, drawing for them all the supplies of mercy and grace required by them while on their homeward way.

He has loved us in death, He has loved us in resurrection, He loves us in glory. He loves us in such fashion that we are ceaselessly the subjects of His present interest and intercession.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Well may the question be asked. From the depths of our evil to the very throne of God He has loved us. He loved us even when we were in our sins, and shall He not love us now that He has cleansed us from our sins? He loved us in our distance; shall He not love us now that He has brought us nigh? Shall our difficulties and trials, our weaknesses and needs,

lessen His love or cause it to cease altogether? Far be the thought. These things call for and are occasion for fresh expressions of the love.

Such love cannot be altered. Such love cannot cease. He knew all that we were. He knows all that we are. Knowing all, He loved us perfectly. Knowing all, He loves us perfectly. No enemy can tell Him aught con-

cerning us of which He is not aware. Because He is love He loves us. He loved us at our worst, and He will love us until His love has made us all that His love can make us in glory with Himself. And there we shall be fit objects for His love to rest on with infinite complacency for ever.

OCCUPATION WITH GOOD.

J. Houston

IT is an evil world in which we live, and never was there a day in history when this was more in evidence. Gathering clouds on the horizon, actual tumults, wars, with all the train of suffering and death these bring, well indicate that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," and that the inevitable judgment of God will fall upon it. And what else can we expect since Christ is rejected? To Him the rulers of the world said: "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." The Son of God was refused; Barabbas, the thief, was chosen. Thus the world sealed its own doom. Evil and only evil, has followed the fatal choice. And since God must judge evil, His judgment is ready to fall; only He is merciful and longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should be saved. Hence His retarded judgment.

But it is also an evil day in the Church's history. What troubles, difficulties, trials, divisions, strife and impurity we see within the walls of that which was intended to be separate from evil, as a sanctified vessel for testimony! The Church as a professing body is increasing in evil, and so far as its witness goes, it

will be eventually spewed out of Christ's mouth. Yes, Christ must disown it, for it is becoming more and more a spurious thing (Rev. 3: 14-22). He stands outside and knocks. If any man hear His voice, and open the door, He will come in and sup with him, and he with Him. Here is the thought of fellowship with Christ in an evil day, when all, as to outward witness, is lost in the Church. "If any man" is an expression which clearly indicates Christ now appeals to the individual to open to Him, that He may come in to sup. The idea of supping is that of fellowship. Oh, to have fellowship with Him in this individual way!

It may be contended, however, that we are in the evil world, and cannot, consequently, escape the evil that is in it. It may further be alleged that we form part of the Church, such as it is in its ruin, and cannot possibly avoid the evil in it. While this is true in an **outward** way, it is not true in that **inward** way of secret joy and peaceful fellowship—supping with Christ. Here we have complete deliverance from evil and constant occupation with good.

Often it has been said that the

secret of peace and power in the Christian's life consists in being always and only occupied with good. Yes, just simply being occupied with good! Joy, divine joy, will fill the soul when good is before the mind. Peace, Christ's own peace, will be our constant portion, even when all without is in unrest. We sup with Christ; have the mind occupied with all the good in Him; rest in all that He is and has of ineffable bliss for our soul.

The Epistles, addressed to individuals, have special reference to this occupation with good as the only antidote to the evil prevailing. Those to Timothy, that to Titus, that to "the elect lady" and that to Gaius,

are examples. All these individuals are exhorted to go on with what is good. The ruin of all outward witness was not to deter them from their good work, whether it be in heralding the gospel, or in caring for Christ's sheep. It is briefly comprehended in this one word: "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 11). We go on with what is good, even though evil be around us. We overcome evil with good. So that up to the very end we have this good for our own souls in Christ, supping with Him, and we have the opportunity of showing it in service to others.

O send me forth, my Saviour,
O send me for Thy glory:
 Let not myself,
 My carnal self,
 Self-seeking self,
Come 'twixt me and Thy glory.

O magnify, O magnify
Thy blessed Name, my Saviour,
Lift high the banner of Thy cross,
And in its folds
 Conceal Thy standard bearer.

"They saw no man save Jesus only."

Him alone, in whom is centred
 All the Father's love:
He alone, who now exalted,
 Fills the heavens above.
Him alone, whose Name excelleth,
 All to Him shall bow,
He alone, the peerless Saviour
 Crowned with glory now.

He alone! No room for rivals
 Where He reigns supreme,
He alone! From earth to heaven
 He the heart doth win.
He alone, God's blessed Treasure,
 Given in grace so free.
He alone! Is "Jesus only"
 All in all to thee?

THE OLD TESTAMENT. No. 2.

R. McCallum

THE central person in the book of EXODUS is Moses, and the central chapter in the book is the twelfth, a magnificent chapter which tells how God intervened in a way no human mind would ever have devised. Not by man or man's force could there be deliverance; but by blood God righteously delivered His people. On that night of nights thousands of lambs must have been slain, but the chapter always speaks of "a" lamb, never more than one, the reason being that God had before His eye the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world, the one perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice, Christ our Passover who in due course would be slain for us.

The lamb without spot, without blemish, was to be held up from the tenth day until the fourteenth; it lived in their dwellings and the men of Israel were not permitted to slay it just as and when they pleased, but altogether as one man at the God-appointed hour, "between the two evenings," for the Jews reckon two evenings—when the sun passed the zenith the first evening commenced; when the sun dipped below the horizon the second evening had set in—between midday and six o'clock, or about three o'clock in the afternoon the men of Israel raised the knife and slew the lamb; and at that same hour Christ, the Lamb of God died.

The blood put in a basin was to be sprinkled by the men of Israel on the lintel and two side-posts, but not on the threshold to be trodden under foot, and the very disposition of the blood-marks is full of significance to the child of God. The blood shed

was the ground of deliverance, for by blood and by power God led them out through walls of crystal by a dry path across the Red Sea, for He had said, "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an heritage: I am the Lord." He made a way through the waters of the Red Sea that they might be led into the land of promise and God closed those walls of crystal not merely to drown the Egyptians but that He might shut out His people from Egypt. And so He led them into the wilderness.

At the end of Exodus the Tabernacle of God is in the midst of the people, but before God can dwell with them, and accept the service of sinful men, He required that there shall be a way of approach acceptable to Himself. The effect of sin was threefold upon man—it brought in guilt; it brought in condemnation, and it resulted in separation. All these things have been done away for us by the death of Christ, and we can say, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect; it is God that justifieth"; we can say, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" There is no

separation—guilt has been removed by the imputation of righteousness; condemnation has been done away by the forgiveness of God through faith in Christ; and separation, the distance between God and man, has been removed through acceptance in Christ the Beloved.

The Book of LEVITICUS foreshadows the way of right access into the presence of God. It sets forth suitable sacrifices, and priestly mediation. This is the book of the Priesthood, the book of sacrifice, and the book of worship. The central chapter is the 16th, which deals with the Day of Atonement, and there is probably no more important chapter in the Old Testament for our understanding. It was the sacrifices that made it possible for a holy God to continue with a sinful and disobedient nation. When we read of "atonement" in the Old Testament Scriptures we must disabuse our minds of the theological concept of reconciliation — at-one-ment or atonement. Atonement in the Old Testament Scriptures always means COVERING. Those Old Testament sacrifices could never take away sin, but they covered the sinner for the time being, and on the basis of that one perfect all-sufficient sacrifice that was to be offered in God's time by Christ, God was able to "declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3: 25). There were five sacrifices mentioned in the Book of Leviticus, all setting forth various aspects of the one sacrifice of Christ.

Just as the Gospels give four aspects of Christ in His life and death, so these sacrifices in the Book of Leviticus view that death from

one point or another and, according to our apprehension. There was the BURNT OFFERING which went up wholly to God; there was the MEAT or MEAL OFFERING which was bloodless, which was not expiatory, and doubtless spoke of the perfection of the life of Christ as well as His death; there was the PEACE OFFERING in which part of the flesh went to the Priest and part was offered up to God, and part went back to the offerer; there was the SIN OFFERING which was burnt wholly without the camp because it was an offering for sin; and there was the TRESPASS OFFERING. The last two were obligatory. When the trespass was against God then sacrifice preceded restitution and reparation; when the trespass was against man, restitution or reparation preceded sacrifice. The first three were sweet-smelling sacrifices, that is to say, they were viewed as pleasing to God, but the Sin Offering spoke of God's judgment of sin. When the offerer brought his sin offering, he identified himself with it by laying his hands upon the head of the animal; he thereby confessed that his own life was forfeited but availed himself in faith of God's gracious provision. He confessed his sins upon its head, and recognized in its death the judgment that was due to himself, borne by another.

The differences between those sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ were that they could never take away sin. Christ gave Himself voluntarily and offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit without spot to God. They were but shadows, expediencies until Christ should come who should make a

full atonement for sin. We see in Leviticus that worship is the key—I may say that chapters 1 to 16 show us the way of approach to God by way of sacrifice, and the remainder of the book shows us suitable walk before God in sanctification and separation of life.

But God's people are not merely worshippers. We are delivered from the bondage of the world and after that we are led out to worship God (I trust everyone of us knows something about worship in spirit and in truth for the Father seeketh such to worship Him), but we don't find our rest here; we are pilgrims travelling home to the realms above, though meantime finding our lot cast in a wilderness scene. That is brought before us in the Book of NUMBERS, which is the story of pilgrimage and the story of God's provision for pilgrimage in a desert scene. I don't know that I can say much about it. Moses is the central figure in Exodus; Aaron is the central figure in Leviticus; two men stand out prominently as men of faith in the Book of Numbers, Joshua and Caleb. You remember how God led His people from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea on the verge of Canaan, and when they came to Kadesh Barnea, instead of going on

in faith, they sent forward twelve men to explore the land. They explored it for 40 days and at the end of that time returned with an evil report. The land was indeed a pleasant land flowing with milk and honey, but the men were giants and they were before them as mere grasshoppers.

The people of Israel listened to the details given by the spies, their hearts failed them for fear, and they refused to go on in the spirit of faith and courage as exhorted by Joshua and Caleb, with the result that instead of entering into their heritage then, they were destined to wander in the wilderness for forty years, and at the end of which they were brought back again to the very spot where they had failed. Disobedience always brings in backsliding, and when a child of God backslides his history as a child of God for the time being ends, and only recommences when he comes back in the spirit of repentance and faith to the place of disobedience and failure. And then they crossed over Jordan and Joshua was their leader to the Land of Promise. Before going over, however, God gave them His law for the land, as recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy.

" Let him deny himself "

Denial of self is not self-control. It more resembles to ignore than control. It means to turn the back upon, to shut the eyes to, to treat as non-existent. "I will deny him": I will say I know him not. "He cannot deny Himself," He cannot ignore His own hand in His own written promise. "Let him deny himself": let him ignore self; let him say to self, I know thee not, thou art nothing to me.

JOY AND HOPE (1 Peter 1: 1-15).

R. McCallum

THE people who received Peter's letter were living under the shadow of Nero's madness—that grim persecution that had swept the city was extending to the provinces; and what does Peter set before them? He speaks of suffering in every chapter, but he does not call them to mourn and weep, much less to resentment and resistance, but to joy and hope. Whenever the Apostles spoke of the grace of God they burst forth into a doxology. This is Peter's:—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." It is a Te Deum, if you like; a song of praise to God at the unveiling of His grace to man, the abundant mercy that has been brought to man in Christ Jesus. It is well for us to raise our hearts in praise and thanksgiving to God for these great things in days of darkness and trial.

When the shadow of mortality falls heavy across your heart and when the withered leaves of earthly hopes have been strewn across your pathway, how blessed to know you have a hope that nothing can touch, a living hope. All that we receive in the gospel is living, it is throbbing with life. We partake of the living Bread: we have drunk of the living Water: we have come to the living God and He has given us a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The cemeteries of the world are not merely the burial places of men's bodies, but the burial places of men's hopes. Every hope finally

comes to that end if it is an earth-bound hope. But here is a living hope connected with a living Christ, the exalted One. Those two disciples on the way to Emmaus were sad at heart, and they said, "We hoped." The past tense was the gravestone of their hopes—they thought their hopes had perished in the death of Christ. "We hoped it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." They had to learn, as we must, that His grave has become for all of us the birthplace of hope. We look not now upon death as a terror: for us the power of death has been broken; Christ has triumphed over death and the grave, and in resurrection power has come forth from among the dead, and He has associated us with Himself in His great victory, so that we can say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." We have a sure and certain hope beyond the disaster that sin and death have brought in.

Then we have been begotten to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away. That is a fine thing to have in these days. Possibly I come into contact with people more than most who have been bombed-out of their homes. They have lost all their earthly goods. We have clothed them and done everything we could for their comfort. I have seen how every earthly thing may take to itself wings overnight; they may all perish in an hour. But the Christians have in Christ an inheritance incorrupt-

ible, beyond the touch of death, undefiled, beyond the taint and corruption of sin, and that fadeth not away. It is reserved in heaven for us, kept for us as we are kept for it, through faith by the power of God unto salvation that is just ready to be revealed. That will be the consummation of every hope.

We are saved and we are being saved, but we are looking for salvation. That salvation will be final and ultimate when body, soul and spirit we shall be with Christ, changed by His power into His own likeness. The Apostle says for the encouragement of our souls and for the grasp of our faith, Even now it is on the point of being revealed —it is "ready to be revealed." But we rejoice in it even now even though, if need be, for a season we are in manifold pressures and temptations. The trials we are called upon to pass through by the will of God are all meant for our good and His glory. We are tested that we may be attested. He tests us that our faith might be strengthened, that our witness might go out into the world. The trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes should be found unto honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. He is the One we love. We have not seen Him yet with these eyes of sight, but we have seen Him by faith—not having seen Him yet we love Him.

"'Tis Jesus Whom absent we love,
Whom not having seen we adore."

Whom not having seen ye love. In whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable. I don't think anyone was such a master of vocabulary as the Apostle Paul, yet he had to call some things "unspeakable."

The unspeakable gift of God, Jesus Christ. Love that passes all understanding. And I imagine Peter had a very wide vocabulary, yet he says of this joy, "it is unspeakable and full of glory." "Receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls." Have you noticed the verbs? Loving, believing, rejoicing, receiving. Yes, with the shadow of affliction and persecution hanging heavily over them they were to be marked by rejoicing, not merely believing the promises of God in Christ, not merely counting His word faithful, but "On whom believing ye rejoice." It is repose in a Person. Yes, we repose upon His work. We may be very sure His word will not fail. But if we know Him in days of strain our repose will be in Himself, and reposing in Him we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable, receiving even now the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

That is beautiful, is it not? But that doctrine has connected with it a duty, for revelation has associated with it responsibility, and in the light of all that he has said, he now says, In the light of all these things you are to gird up the loins of your mind, be vigilant, be sober, don't let your affections stray and catch in every thorn bush. We are not going through the world like machines without taking an interest in events and in the world's needs, but at the same time we are to be vigilant, marked by true separation, marked by nonconformity to the ways of the world, and seeking to do the will of God; looking out for opportunities, and our opportunities are opportunities to serve the Lord and men. And we are called to holiness, a command and perhaps a promise.

THE THREEFOLD CORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

J. Stoddart

III—The Glory of Christ in Provision, Pre-eminence, and Purpose

“THE Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” In these striking words did the Lord Jesus bestow His own imprimatur on an Old Testament story that is not only exquisite in its charm, but rich in its spiritual meaning. The glory that was Solomon’s is nowhere more beautifully portrayed than in the details of 1 Kings 10. There are three easily discerned divisions into which this chapter falls, another “threefold cord that is not easily broken,” in the glories that foreshadowed a “greater than Solomon.”

In the first of these verses, the Queen of the South, moved by reports which she had heard in her own land, takes her long and possibly arduous journey to Solomon, freighted not only with her great gifts but also with her great problems. Rich presents marked her appreciation of his greatness, but not less so did her “hard questions.” In her regal affluence she apparently lacked nothing of worldly wealth, pomp and circumstance, but could these relieve her troubled mind or provide for her anxious soul? Nay! A queen of distinction though she be, hard questions remained with her unanswered, until she heard of one whose fame concerned the Name of the Lord. Surely there lay the provision for every difficulty, the sure settlement of every problem. “And

Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the King, which he told her not.”

No stretch of imagination is required to see, in this first part of the story, a type of Him, whose wisdom, love and glory answer all our hard questions. These hard questions, every one, are raised in the Epistle to the Romans, where we start our journey of faith to Christ, the “greater than Solomon,” and all are divinely settled in Him. “What advantage then hath the Jew?” “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?” “How shall God judge the world?” “Where is boasting then?” “Shall we continue in sin that grace might abound?” “Who is he that condemneth?” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” These, and many more besides, are hard questions indeed, but the answer to each is presented in Christ, His work, His glory, the perfect provision of God for every need.

Distinct progress can be seen in the next four verses of our chapter, the second phase of this lovely story. Relieved of all her doubts and questions, the Queen of Sheba views Solomon’s greatness in relation to his surroundings and circumstances. All his wisdom was not reflected merely in answering her queries, but she saw its greater expanse in “the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up to the house

of the Lord." A vast range of things fills her gaze, all attendant upon and ancillary to the wisdom and prosperity of the King. These served not simply as a background of his glory, but as prerequisite for its display. Little wonder then that we read, "there was no more spirit in her," a remark that does not suggest she was dumbfounded, but rather that such heights of splendour transcended her powers of appreciation.

Is there for us a counterpart of this progress in the appreciation of "the greater than Solomon"? Yes, indeed, for the grand fundamental truth of Romans, the righteous settlement of every outstanding question, prepares our hearts for the wider expanse of Colossians. In this Epistle we are viewed as "reconciled" and "risen with Christ," and thus freed in spirit to observe the vast range of created things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, all created by Him, and for Him. How all this surpasses our puny powers of appreciation, but we adore Him whose glory and wisdom it all reflects. Solomon was David's firstborn, but of great David's greater Son, God said, "I will make Him My Firstborn higher than the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89: 27). Thus in Colossians the Incarnate Son is called "the Firstborn of all creation" and hailed in resurrection as "the Firstborn from the dead," "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence"; pre-eminence in the vast sphere of creation and in the wide realm of reconciliation, and, blessed be His Name, in our affections as risen with Him. May a deeper sense of Christ's greatness

and glory possess our hearts until, like the Queen of Sheba, we say of the greater than Solomon, "the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."

The closing scene of this delightful drama, in verses 8 to 13, presents the acme of the Queen's ever-growing appreciation of Solomon. The King, she observes, is surrounded by happy men and happy servants. To them every word from their great head upon the throne brings gladness and instruction, and their close association with him would necessarily make them like him. What a favour was conferred on those thus chosen to stand before him! But this wonderful order of things now leads the thoughts of the Queen even beyond Solomon and his happy men to God Himself, by whose Sovereign choice the King was set upon the throne of Israel. Jehovah delighted in Solomon and loved Israel over whom he reigned. She grasps the purpose of God, and with this she bursts into worship, "Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee!" It is at this juncture, let us notice, that the Queen of the South presents her incomparable treasures to the King.

Surely this magnificent climax more than suggests to our hearts how we may reach the highest thoughts connected with the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the purpose of God in Him. From Romans and Colossians the Spirit of God would lead our growing appreciation of His greatness into the truth of Ephesians. Here we find the "happy men" of the New Testament, "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be

holy and without blame before Him in love." They have redemption through His blood and to them God "makes known the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth: even in Him." Here we find, too, the expression that at once resembles and excels that of the Queen of Sheba, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heav-

enly places in Christ." Here is the wealth of heaven made ours that its precious substance might be presented in worship and praise and adoration to God the blessed Source of all!

The Old Testament story we have considered, reveals yet another "threefold cord that is not easily broken," for it binds together in beautiful relationship the three cardinal epistles of New Testament doctrine, and shows how our souls may grow in the intelligent appreciation of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Inviting Believers to the Lord's Supper.

It is the Lord's will and desire that those who owe their eternal blessing to His death should remember Him in His death for them. His is a love, tender and true, that would not be forgotten, and so He has said in instituting His Supper, "This do in remembrance of Me." Surely it is right that we should tell those who have not realized it, that this is His desire for them. The Apostle Paul received a special word from Him for His church, and he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give this message in 1 Corinthians 11. It is part of the counsels of God and faithful stewards of His word will declare the whole counsel of God. If the Lord's desire that all His own should partake of His Supper were left out of the ministry of His servants that ministry would not be complete.

To press all and sundry without regard to their spiritual condition to take part in the Lord's Supper would of course be wrong, and would show that those who did it had failed to realize the sacred and solemn character of the feast. Unless the heart is right the Supper cannot be taken except in a formal way, and could only tend to harden conscience and heart. "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat" means something.

Nothing can appeal to the heart like the Lord's Supper. In it He tells us afresh and His love that passeth knowledge, and yet there is a sacredness and solemnity about it that subdues the spirits of all who understand it. The Lord is the Host, and His saints are the guests at this feast of love. He invites His guests and welcomes them when they respond to His invitation. But He invites them through the ministry of His servants, both publicly and privately.

THAT BLESSED HOPE.

J. T. Mawson

THE coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ is a familiar subject, but its importance cannot be overstressed. The danger is that it may become a mere item in our creed rather than a living blessed hope that stirs our souls to labour for Him, and to purify ourselves, even as He is pure (1 John 3: 3). The scoffer asks, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3: 4); and the evil servant says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming" (Matthew 24: 28). Yet the Scripture says, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10: 37). We must live in the faith of the Word or we shall surely drift into the spirit of the world. The "little while" may seem long, but we know the reason of the delay. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3: 9). We know that "when once the Master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door," multitudes who have rejected or neglected God's great salvation will stand outside that closed door and knock for admittance, but it will be in vain. Now the door is open and the Lord still waits in patience.

This is the time of "the patience of Jesus Christ," but it will surely come to an end. We rely upon His faithful word. In ancient times all the prophets spoke of His coming. The first prophet that ever prophesied said, "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude

14). Faith and hope waited more than two thousand years for the fulfilment of that word, but the due time came at last, and He came, but not to judge the ungodly but to save them. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He came to die and to be raised again from the dead and to return to heaven, but He said He would come again, and He will. It is our immediate hope.

It is remarkable that the first message that came from heaven when He entered there as the Victor over death was, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 11); and His last word out of heaven to His Church on earth is, "Surely I come quickly." We will not, we cannot, cast any doubt upon His word; we say in response to it, "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus."

That we might not be ignorant as to the portion of those who have fallen asleep, and that we might have clear understanding as to the manner of His coming, the Lord gave a special revelation to His Apostle Paul, and he wrote that revelation to the young church at Thessalonica in these words: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord . . . the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

(1 Thess. 4: 15, 17). That is the hope of the Church, it is a "blessed hope," for so the Scripture calls it; and it is sure and certain. The shout of the Lord will bring our earthly pilgrimage to a close; it will complete our salvation; for while we can say, as to our souls we are saved by grace, yet we wait for the salvation of our bodies. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Here is a glorious passage: "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body (body of humiliation) 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" (Phil. 3: 20, 21).

That shout of the Lord will be a wonderful event for us who believe; it will emancipate us from all that humbles us here; we shall be delivered from sorrow and sin, from sickness and pain, from mortality and decay. We shall see our great Redeemer face to face, and we shall be like Him. No words can tell what it will mean to us, but what will it mean to Him? His shout will be a shout of victory which will assemble all who are His to meet Him in the air, but there will be another note in it. For nearly two thousand years He has waited for His Church—His Bride, for this is indeed the time of His patience, but at that moment the waiting time will be over, and His shout will be a shout of joy as He receives His Bride to Himself. Then He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

And notice, it is "in the air" that His ransomed myriads are to

meet Him. Now the devil is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2: 2). The air is the seat of his government from which he rules the darkness of this world. And it is there where Satan's power is that the Lord will meet His own, and nothing could demonstrate His power over Satan better than that. If King George sent a message to his troops in the Middle East saying he would meet them in Berlin, we should say the Nazi power would have to be beaten before that could be possible. So we conclude and know that our Lord is Master of the powers of darkness since we are to meet Him in the very seat of their power, and that all their malignity and hatred of Him and those that are His will be utterly powerless to prevent Him receiving His own to Himself, that where He is there they may be also.

Thus is described the first stage of His second coming; His coming FOR His saints; He must come for them if He is to come WITH them. When He comes with them every eye shall see Him. He will come in great power and glory and the unsaved kindreds of the earth "shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1: 7). He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords to tread the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God (Rev. 19). He shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1: 7-9). He will judge the world in righteousness, and in view of that

" God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent " (Acts 17: 30, 31).

" Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent

that ye may be found in Him in peace, without spot and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation " (2 Peter 3: 14).

PRAISE.

INGLIS FLEMING.

Praise we Thee our God and Father,
In Thy love our hearts delight,
In that love Thou now hast made us,
Meet to dwell in heavenly light.

None had seen Thee, none had known Thee,
But Thy Son came forth in love;
All Thy majesty maintaining,
All Thy faithfulness to prove.

His alone the cross of judgment,
His alone the wrath to bear,
His alone the night of darkness,
None with Him that woe could share.

Now in resurrection glory,
He Thy name to us makes known;
In the midst of His assembly,
Leads the praises of His own.

Gladly we have heard His message,
Gladly join we in the praise,
Gladly swell the song triumphant,
First fruits of eternal lays.

Ours Thy Home of love celestial,
When our race on earth is run,
By Thy purpose chosen for us,
By His sorrows for us won.

Praise we Thee our God and Father,
Praise Lord Jesus Christ be Thine,
By the Spirit now we worship,
Glorying in love divine.

Christ for us is all our righteousness before holy God.
Christ in us is all our strength in an unholy world.

FOUR DIVINE PRINCIPLES.

A. J. Pollock

IT was once remarked that among others there are four divine principles set forth in the Word of God:

DOCTRINE, EXPERIENCE, PRACTICE, DISCIPLINE.

It was pointed out that to emphasize doctrine alone, you would make **antinomians**; to emphasize experience alone, you would make **fanatics**; to emphasize practice alone, you would make **pharisees**; whilst to emphasize all three—doctrine, experience, practice—and neglect discipline, is like a man who plants a vineyard without a hedge, thereby exposing it to the depredations of every wild boar of the forest.

DOCTRINE

To have the head full of doctrine without its having a corresponding effect upon the heart and life is terrible, and works only havoc. To be a soulless gramophone, reeling out glib, correct doctrine, and for our utterances not to be the communications of the heart is disastrous in Christian life.

That there is such a condition possible is seen by the Bible question, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6: 1). Evidently the Apostle Paul was combating a real error. Hear his vehement reply, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Again, we get the question, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid" (Rom. 6: 15).

That state of mind will certainly produce antinomians—that is those,

who disgrace the free grace of God by careless lives, who say, Once saved, saved for ever; we can do what we like without imperilling our salvation. The word, antinomianism, comes from two Greek words: *anti*, against; *nomos*, a law.

On the other hand the Apostle Paul could say, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life" (2 Tim. 3: 10). The early converts to Christianity "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship" (Acts 2: 42). Doctrine and practice went together.

EXPERIENCE

There are some, who swing to the other extreme, who say, It does not matter in the least what a man believes, his conduct is everything. But this never works. Whatever a man may say to the contrary, he is governed by what he believes. If his beliefs are wrong his conduct is wrong. Those, who take the attitude we have pointed out, get very self-centred, become a law to themselves—a very dangerous thing—and fancy themselves as being wonderful persons, get hold of strange ideas, and often become dangerous fanatics. Bent upon experience, divorced from sound doctrine, they become a prey to strange and foolish ideas. How true is the Scripture order: "doctrine and manner of life," "apostles' doctrine and fellowship."

PRACTICE

If over-emphasis is made upon practice, and doctrines and teaching of Scripture are not given as forming the practice, you get men, as it were, seeking to make bricks with-

out straw, who are like engines without motive power, or ships without a rudder. The person, who lacks the motive power and body of teaching, is like a camera without a sensitized plate.

There must be occupation with that which is above and beyond all human experience. In short, a Christian must have Christ before him to succeed in Christian practice. But if he is left to produce a high level of Christian living without the knowledge of and heart occupation with Christ, and the teaching of Scripture, he will try to cover up his defects and pose as something he is not in heart; in short he will become a pharisee. Do we not all pose as being better and holier than we are?

DISCIPLINE

If a Christian fails to discipline himself, that is, to walk in self-judgment before God; or if a Chris-

tian assembly fails in disciplining its members, where discipline is needed, it leaves the door open for evil to enter and get rooted, and extend. We must ever remember that God is a holy God, and those who would walk with Him must be holy.

It is a principle, If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged (1 Cor. 11: 31). In our experience Christians, who are hard on their fellow-Christians, are those who do not practise self-judgment in their own lives; whereas those who are tender and gracious, and yet faithful, are those who truly judge themselves in God's presence.

As to the assembly, 1 Corinthians verse 5 gives us instructions as to discipline. There must be a "within" and a "without"—there must be a hedge to hinder any wild boar of the forest making depredations.

Let us see to it that we seek to balance these four divine principles in our lives and associations.

We are all brethren, having only one Master. But the Master gives grace according to His own will, according to the counsels of God the Father. He who denies brotherly unity denies the sole authority of the Master. He who denies the diversity of services equally denies the authority of the Master who disposes of His servants as He pleases and chooses them according to His wisdom and divine rights.—J. N. D.

" Jesus saith unto him "

Verily I say unto thee—What certitude.
Today—What promptitude.
Shalt thou be with Me—What company,
In Paradise—What repose. (Luke 23.)

Study Christ as your Intercessor. You are on His breastplate. If you could hear Him praying for you in the next room you would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for you. He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole

(Chapter 10)

THREE is no real break where chapter 10 commences in our Bibles. The Lord's answer which commenced in the last verse of chapter 9, continues to the end of verse 5 of chapter 10. He propounded to them the parable of the Shepherd and the fold, and it illustrated the point inasmuch as there were not only "the sheep" but also "His own sheep." These last knew the Shepherd's voice and so recognized Him. The man of the previous chapter was one of "His own sheep."

The religious system instituted through Moses was like a fold. Thereby the Jews were penned up apart from the Gentiles awaiting the coming of the true Messiah. The door of entrance had been prescribed by the voices of the prophets: He must be born of a virgin, at Bethlehem, etc. Impostors had appeared, but lacking these credentials they had sought an entrance in some other way and thereby betrayed themselves. Now the true Shepherd had appeared, and entering by the door, it had been kept open for Him by the providence of God. It had been said, "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psa. 121: 4), and that watchful eye and hand had prevented Herod from closing the door of entrance against Him. God saw to it that He had full access to the sheep.

But now comes what no one had anticipated: He enters the fold not to reform or improve it but to call an election from the mass—"His own sheep"—and lead them out

into something new. Israel had been the elect nation but now it is entirely individual, for He calls His own sheep "by name," establishing personal contact with each of these. Further, He leads them out by first going out Himself: they follow Him because this contact exists and they recognize His voice and trust Him. In the beginning of this Gospel these elect souls were referred to as, "born . . . of God," being, "as many as received Him" (1: 12, 13).

Christ's sheep do not follow strangers, not because they have a wide acquaintance with them and know their voices right well, but because "they know not the voice of strangers." They know the Shepherd's voice well and that suffices. As to all others they simply say, That is not the Shepherd's voice. We have here in parabolic form the same basic fact as John states in his 1st Epistle; when writing to the babes in the family of God he says, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (2: 21). As Paul also says, we are to be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Rom. 16: 19). Let us cultivate this acquaintance with our Lord for it develops a spiritual instinct which preserves against straying feet.

Blind as ever, the Pharisees understood none of these things; but that did not hinder the Lord pursuing His parable somewhat further. He was the door Himself; for all exit from the fold, and all entrance into the new place of blessing to be estab-

lished, must be by Him. That new blessing we generally speak of as Christianity, in contrast with Judaism. Verse 9 begins to enumerate the blessings. Parabolic language is still used, as evidenced by the word "pasture," yet in saying, "if any man enter in," Jesus showed that He was speaking in accord with that great Old Testament chapter which ends, "Ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men" (Ezek. 34: 31).

The initial blessing of Christianity is salvation. It meets us as we enter by Christ the door. Most of the references to salvation in the Old Testament have to do with deliverance from enemies and troubles. The spiritual emancipation which comes to us by the gospel could not be known then since the work on which it rests was not accomplished. Let Hebrews 9: 6-14 and 10: 1-14 be read and inwardly digested, and this fact will be very plain. Only by the death and resurrection of Christ is the door opened into salvation in its fulness.

The words, "shall go in and out," indicate liberty. In Judaism there was no liberty of access to God since "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest"; nor had they permission to go out to the nations and spread any knowledge of God they had. They were enclosed within the fold of the law of Moses and its ordinances, and there they had to stay. As Christians we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," and we may go out as did those early believers who "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8: 4). In both directions we are carried far beyond the privileges of the Jewish fold.

Then, thirdly, we may "find pasture." This may carry our thoughts back to Ezekiel 34, where we find a tremendous indictment of the former shepherds of Israel. These religious leaders fed themselves and not the sheep, and set so bad an example, that the stronger among the sheep oppressed the weaker and had "eaten up the good pasture," and with their feet had trodden down "the residue of your pastures" (verse 18). Consequently for the poor of the flock there was no pasture at all. Jesus, the true Shepherd of Israel, leads His own sheep into an abundance of spiritual food.

In verses 10 and 11 we get the contrast between the thief and the Good Shepherd. These thieves and robbers were men such as those mentioned by Gamaliel, in Acts 5: 36, 37; self-seeking impostors who brought in destruction and death. The true Shepherd brought in life; laying down His own life in order to do so. If He had not come and died, there would have been no life at all for sinful men; having done so, life is made available, and it is bestowed in abundant measure upon His sheep. We live in the light of the abundant revelation of God which has reached us in the Word made flesh, hence we have life abundantly. The life given to saints in all ages may be intrinsically the same, yet its fulness can only be known as God is fully revealed. This is indicated in 1 John 1: 1-4.

Next we have, in verses 12-15, the contrast between the hireling and the Good Shepherd. The hireling is not necessarily evil like the thief; but being a man who works for wages, his interest is primarily

a monetary one. The sheep are of interest to him in so far as they are the means of his livelihood. He does not really care for them to the extent of risking his skin on their behalf. It is far otherwise with the Shepherd, who lays down His life for them and establishes a link of wonderful intimacy. His sheep are men, and hence capable of knowing Him in an intimate way; so much so that His knowledge of them and their knowledge of Him can be compared to the Father's knowledge of Himself and His knowledge of the Father. And we must remember that it is by the knowledge of Him that we come to know the Father. Nothing at all approaching this had been possible in the Jewish fold before the Shepherd came.

The Lord's words in verse 16 add another unexpected development. He was about to find sheep who had been outside that fold. There was to be the calling of an election from among the Gentiles. We see the beginning of this early in the Acts—the Ethiopian in chapter 8; Cornelius and his friends in chapter 10. We have often dwelt upon the "must" which occurs several times in chapter 3: have we ever praised God for the "must" here?—"them

also I MUST bring." Sinners of the Gentiles become the subjects of the Divine work. They hear the Shepherd's voice and are attached to Him. Then, as a result of this two-fold calling—from Jewish fold and from the straying Gentiles—there is to be established one flock, held together under the authority of the one Shepherd. The word in this verse is definitely "flock" and not "fold." Sheep held together by outward restrictions: that was Judaism. Sheep constituted a flock by the personal power and attraction of the Shepherd: that is Christianity.

But for this not only death but resurrection also was needful. The Shepherd truly had to be smitten as the prophet had said, but it is in His risen life that He gathers His flock out of both Jew and Gentile. Jesus proceeded to show that His death was in order to His resurrection. Both are viewed here as His own act. His death was His laying down of His life: His resurrection His taking of it again, though under new conditions. In both He was acting according to the Father's commandment; and furnishing the Father with a fresh motive for His love to the Son.

The true worshipper of the true God cannot live unto himself. The exercise of secret adoration will afford a precious antidote to that distortion of the dear and glorious truths of abundant pardon, of free salvation, of present and full acceptance in Christ Jesus through faith, which would centre and terminate thought and emotion upon our own benefit. It will tend to keep that blessed benefit, for which His Name be praised, always in its relation to the glory of the Giver, and therefore (the sequence is genuine and deep) always in relation to the needs and blessing of others.

He who has seen, and sees God is he who can face men. He who has indeed worshipped is he who is ready to serve.

THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF GOD AND OF CHRIST.

J. N. Darby

I AM not aware that this expression, "the judgment-seat of God" or "the judgment-seat of Christ," is found anywhere else than in Romans 14* and 2 Corinthians 5: in the first of these two passages with a view to prevent individual judgments; in the second with a view to provoke to do good. The subject in itself is one of the most solemn and at the same time most blessed, and this is so much the more as we understand it rightly. I believe that each of our lives will be manifested then before the tribunal, according as the grace of God and His ways with us in connection with our own acts will be known then. We read that "everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14: 12); and the word, in this passage, mentions the tribunal in connection with the exhortation to brethren not to judge one another in respect to days, meats, or any other such thing.

I am disposed to think that the **acts** alone will be subject to manifestation; but all the private acts of our life depend so intimately upon our inward feelings, that it is, in a certain sense, difficult to distinguish the acts from the simple thoughts. The acts manifest the power of the thought or of the feeling. I believe that the whole of our acts will be detailed there, before the judgment-seat, not for us, however, as if we were in the flesh, and thus to our

condemnation, but to make evident to our own eyes the grace that occupied itself with us—regenerate or unregenerate.

In the counsels of God I am elect before the foundation of the world; I think that my own history will be detailed before the judgment-seat, and, parallel with it, the history of the grace and of the mercy of God toward me. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative, not judicial. We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes by His grace we are dead. But then, if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and on the other hand, the ways of God toward us, all ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace, will be perfectly known and understood by us for the first time. The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded and how He preserved you, how your foot slipped and He raised you up again, how you were drawing near danger and shame and how He by His own arm interposed.

I believe this is the Bride making herself ready, and I consider that moment as a wondrous one. There will be no flesh then to be condemned: but the new nature will enter into full knowledge of the care and of the love, which, in true holiness and in righteousness and even in grace, have followed us step by step all through the running of the race. Some parts of our life, till then

* The best editors read in Rom. 14: 10, "the judgment-seat of God."

entirely unexplained, will be fully disclosed and become altogether plain; some tendencies of our nature, that perhaps we do not judge to be so pernicious and deadly as they are, and for the mortification of which we are perhaps now subjected to a discipline that we may not have interpreted aright, will be then perfectly explained; and, what is more, the very falls which now plunge us into such bitter anguish will be seen then to be that which God used to preserve us from something more terrible. I do not think that until then we shall ever have had a full knowledge of the badness of our flesh.

How blessed for us to know that

then it will be not only all over with the flesh in the counsel of God, but that the flesh will no longer be attached to us! On the other side, I doubt not, the manifestation of God's grace toward us individually will be so magnificent that even the sense of the perversity of the flesh that we had, if it could possibly enter there, would be excluded by the greatness of the sense of divine goodness. Why do we not deny and mortify the flesh when we think of that hour? The Lord grant that we may do so more and more to the glory of His grace. This great subject of the judgment-seat brings the soul to a very full knowledge of our individual standing.

CHRIST . . . BECAME POOR.

J. W. S.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8: 9).

WE have in this lovely little verse one of the many incidental proofs, in which the Scriptures abound, of the deity of our Lord Jesus. It contains no formal statement of that fundamental truth, for that is clearly not the object of the passage, still it does declare in it the words, "**though He was rich**," a very distinct allusion to the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Time was when He was not rich; and, may we not ask when was that?

Let us briefly trace His life when here.

First His birth was evidently in circumstances of poverty. Though born "**King of the Jews**," His birth-

place was a manger, and the appointed offering made by His parents on the occasion of His being presented to the Lord, was a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons—a small offering indeed and indicative of anything but wealth on their part.

Again, when engaged in His public service, He said to the scribe who volunteered his devotedness, "**The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head**" (Matt. 8: 20). Such was the whole path of Jesus here below. Could we say He was rich here? Never! When asked for tribute money He instructed Peter to catch

a fish and find in its mouth the exact amount required for Himself and Peter (Matt. 17: 27). That is, He had not the money in hand. Again, when pursuing what is called His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He bade His disciples go before Him into a certain village, where they should find an ass tied. This they were to bring to Him; and, should the owner question their conduct, they were to say simply that the Lord had need of him. No bargain was to be struck, no money offered as hire. The Creator, and such He was, though in circumstances of poverty in His own creation, had the prior claim, and the owner yielded thereto, allowing the disciples to fulfil their mission. Yet what a contradiction—the Creator in poverty!

Finally when death had taken place, His body was laid in Joseph's tomb. "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." God had pre-arranged this new tomb for the body of our blessed Lord, just as He had inclined the heart of the owner of the ass to surrender that animal on His demand.

Now each of these incidents goes to show the constant poverty of Jesus, nor can one instance be found of His having handled money that belonged, as it were, to Himself. Judas carries the bag.

If then, He was poor during the entire period of His gracious sojourn below, the question arises, When was He rich? Clearly before He

came here. Then He must have pre-existed His incarnation? Certainly. Therefore Jesus was God, rich and glorious, and became man, poor, humble and sinless! Yea, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth." And, notice, His self-impoverishment was, "**that ye . . . might be rich.**"

Ah! there is the charm for us, in His mighty stoop of self-surrender. He had our eternal wealth before His heart in His deep impoverishment. The point of His utmost poverty when alone in absolute solitude, bearing God's judgment against our sin during those hours of impenetrable darkness — that point procured our everlasting blessing. He was made sin for us . . . that we might become the righteousness of God in Him — blessed Saviour! And now the eye can turn to the glory whither He has gone, freighted with wondrous spoil, and crowned with honour, deserved and welcome. Nor is there a voice in those righteous courts which does not acknowledge His worthiness to receive, in the fullest way, all the dignities which He refused on earth. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," resounds the heavenly chorus, "to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5: 12). Yes, sevenfold honours crown His brow, and everlasting praises celebrate His fame.

The Scriptures are charged throughout with occasions and aids for the exercise of worship, just because their centre is God; their profound theme is His glory; they bless man, not by praising man but by revealing to him God in Christ.

“A BANNER FOR THEM THAT FEAR HIM.”

J. T. Mawson

Read Psalm 60

DAVID had his ups and downs as most of us have, but they are strange words that he uses at the opening of this 60th Psalm:—“ O God, Thou hast cast us off.” Is that true? Does God not cast off those who are His? Not one of us who have believed could say that. Cast down we may be, and often are, and good for us too, for “ God comforteth those that are cast down ” (2 Cor. 7: 6), but cast off, never; God cannot deny Himself. He cannot be false to His word. There are wonderful words in the Old Testament which assure us that that could never be. They are meant in the first place for Israel, but we may appropriate them. Take this:—“ Hearken unto Me, O house of Jacob, Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you ” (Isaiah 46). And again:—“ Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands ” (Isa. 49). But the New Testament makes assurance more assured, for there we are in our own sphere, and we read, “ He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me ” (Hebrews 13); and most wonderful of all, “ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or

peril, or sword? . . . 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). It is as clear as can be that we shall never be cast off.

But David continues his complaint. He says, “ Thou hast scattered us.” The two things would go together—to be cast off by God would be to be scattered one from another. But God has not cast off His flock, yet it is certainly a scattered flock today. Why? It is not God who has done this. The Lord Himself said, “ The wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.” Whereas He laid down His life to gather them together in one, that there might be one flock and one Shepherd (John 10). “ I know,” said Paul, “ that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them ” (Acts 20). His prophetic words have been fulfilled, and God’s fair flock is a divided and scattered flock, and the shame of it is ours. The scattering of the flock is the devil’s work, but he would never have gained an entrance into it if the flock had hearkened to the voice of the Shepherd. It is our carnality and self-will that has made us dull of hearing and has

given the devil his chance. "Now I beseech you," wrote the Apostle, "by the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1). Have we listened to that beseeching? No, alas! we have not, we have been disobedient. And so the charge that follows is just and true. "Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3). It would be well for us to face up to such solemn words as these and see how we stand, for those who make the loudest boast of walking in the truth are often the most sectarian in spirit and practice. It is fleshly pretension to talk of being seated in the heavens in Christ if we are sunken down in Corinthian discord and carnality, and are indifferent to the commandments of the Lord which Paul was inspired to write (1 Cor. 14: 37).

But David did not only lament a scattered nation, but a shaking earth also; he looked around, and wherever he looked there was trouble; said he, "Thou hast made the earth to tremble, Thou hast broken it . . . it shaketh." And that certainly describes the state of the nations today. David was bewildered. He had looked for peace and the kingdom of God on earth, and lo! war, and disaster upon disaster, and in his bewilderment he complained, "Thou hast made us drink the wine of astonishment." In these days many are drinking from that same

cup—they are asking, Why? It is a question in their hearts continually, if not on their lips. Is God responsible for the broken, shaking earth? Can its miseries and groanings be laid at His door? Nay, as the church cannot blame God for its scattering, neither can the world blame Him for its shaking. It is "man's inhumanity to man that makes countless thousands mourn." Men reap what they sow; if they prefer the devil's way to God's they will get the devil's malice instead of God's mercy. Disobedience of God's law lies behind the world's wars. It has been so from the beginning. Genesis 3 records the first disobedience and defiance of the Divine will, and Genesis 4 describes the first destruction of human life, a man murdered by his own mother's son. The one follows the other as night follows day. It is cause and effect.

And yet we must be careful here lest we give the impression that God is an indifferent spectator of the ways of men, or powerless to intervene. He is God and over all: His throne must ever be universal and supreme. "He ruleth by His power for ever; His eyes behold the nations, let not the rebellious exalt themselves" (Ps. 66: 7). But this is the acceptable time, the day of grace and salvation, and "God is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God finds no pleasure in the miseries of men, their groanings make no music in His ears, but when one sinner repents there is joy in heaven. But He will have the last word in the affairs of men; He has said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay"; and when He does intervene He will fin-

ish the work (i.e., He will settle the account) and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth” (Romans 9: 28).

What then? With a scattered flock and a shaking earth, shall we abandon hope? Is the throne of God shaken, are His purposes scattered? Turn again to David. From the verge of despair he looked upward and away from the scattered flock and shaking earth and encircling gloom; and his distress was changed to delight, his sighs gave place to song, for he saw a banner unfurled and flying free and fair above him. “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of truth, that Thy beloved may be delivered.” That banner leads a victorious host. It was first lifted up when Israel fought with Amalek in the desert and broke his power with the edge of the sword. Then Moses raised his altar to the Lord and called it Jehovah-nissi—the Lord my banner.

The banner of the Lord cannot suffer defeat: it is held aloft by the undiminished power of the Holy Ghost. Hear how Paul describes it in his farewell letter to his son Timothy. “Be thou not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord.” The testimony of the Lord is our banner today. Upon this banner I see quartered a manger cradle, a cross of shame, an empty tomb and a throne of glory. It is all Christ. Christ come down to manhood in great humility: Christ crucified: Christ triumphant over death; Christ crowned with glory and honour, and most surely coming again as King of kings and Lord of lords. Christ is the truth, and the “banner is displayed because of the truth, that

His beloved may be delivered.”

Things could scarcely be worse than Paul describes them in this farewell letter, yet he is a poor soldier of Jesus Christ who has not felt the thrill of triumph that runs through every page of it. Paul’s “nevertheless” and “notwithstanding” rebuke all defeatism, and the whole letter is a trumpet call to “everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord.” The banner of the Lord is not a sectarian banner: there are such all over the field of conflict—filthy rags—but this is the Royal Standard, and every “good soldier of Jesus Christ” rallies to it.

David’s cry to God was, “Save with Thy right hand and hear me,” and God will answer that cry, not only for Israel and the nations but for us also. Christ is the Man of God’s right hand (Ps. 80: 17). He is the “arm of the Lord,” “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1), and we, for His sake, are the “beloved of God.” He can deliver and He will. We need not fear; no power of evil can prevail against the will of God. The scattered flock is one flock and shall be gathered together in one as surely as Jesus died with this in view. It will be at “our gathering together unto Him” (2 Thess. 2: 1). It will be at His coming when “the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4).

He will put the world right also for He shall judge it in righteousness (Acts 7: 11) and “the work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (Is. 39). “In

His day shall the righteous flourish : and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth " (Ps. 72). David's hope was in God, and so is ours, and in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. He has said, " Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

David's doubts and fears were all dispelled and confidence and joy filled his soul, for he remembered that " God hath spoken in His holiness " (verse 6), and what He hath spoken He will most surely perform. He had promised the land to Israel, and though they had failed to possess it owing to their lack of faith in Him, He would and will bring them into it, and the very foes that had kept them out of their possessions—Moab, Edom and Philistia—would be compelled to witness and add to their triumph. But " God hath promised some better thing for us "; ours is a heavenly inheritance, " the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." " It is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His

Spirit." And they have been revealed to us for our present triumph and joy.

But David asks, " Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not Thou, O God?" And his own answer is, " Vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do valiantly : for He it is that shall tread down our enemies." Like Israel of old, so we in our day have strong foes who would keep us from enjoying our God-given blessings. " We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places " (Eph. 6: 12), and we may well ask, " Who is sufficient for these things?" Our answer is, " Our sufficiency is of God." The world, the flesh and the devil are subtle and mighty foes, but, " my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," and " ye shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us." And thus the banner that He has given to them that fear Him shall lead us on to final and complete victory.

" I will fear no evil "

If you would be refreshed for the struggles of life, and be without fear in the presence of the greatest foe, and on the darkest day, you must lie down in green pastures and be led by still waters. Courage and endurance in our outward life is the result of what is secret and inward. So verses 1 and 2 of Psalm 23 describe what the Lord is to us and can do for us in secret. He takes charge of us, satisfies our hearts, gives to us quietness of spirit in the knowledge of Himself, imparts His own peace to us and then leads us forth in the paths of righteousness, to be more than conquerors.

MY DOCTRINE:

My doctrine! What a name! " My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass " (Deut. 32: 2).

Jesus said, " My doctrine is not Mine but His that sent Me. If any one will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." How much is contained in these brief words. See John 7: 16, 17.

The Apostle could tell Timothy, " But thou hast fully known my doctrine " (2 Tim. 3: 10). Wisdom told her children, " I give you good doctrine " (Prov. 4: 1). It is well to be nourished up in the words of good doctrine " (1 Tim. 4: 6).

These are the times when the hollow professor " will not endure sound doctrine " (2 Tim. 4: 3). Now we should cleave to the Word of God itself; outside of this, nothing is sound. O for grace and purpose still to speak " the things that become sound doctrine " (Titus 2: 1).

As the years go on, and you are spared to be here, be sure and give especial " attention to reading, and to doctrine " (1 Tim. 4: 13). " Take heed to yourself, and unto the **doctrine**" (1 Tim. 4: 16). Watch " that the Name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed " (1 Tim. 6: 1).

The law has no terror for any that are righteous; it is not made for them; i.e., its terror-striking influences are not for the holy but for the classes named in 1 Timothy 1: 9, 10. Everything " contrary to sound doctrine " (verse 10). It is always good to them who use it lawfully (verse 8). " Sound doctrine " ever bringeth health to the bones and marrow and fatness to the soul (Isaiah 58: 10-12).

Be sure you shun the doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4: 1) and every strange doctrine (Heb. 13: 9) and never forget your surroundings.

Men, " all about," are refusing sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4: 5). Get your soul " nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine " (1 Tim. 4: 6). **Wisdom's teaching—doctrine—is absolutely good** (Prov. 4: 2).

" The Name above every name."

Oh, precious name! my tower of strength,
My resting place, through all the length
And toil of life's rough way:
When vexed with cares, oppressed with woes,
Still, still in Thee I find repose,
On Thee my soul I stay.

Thou art the burden of heaven's song,
The theme of all the heavenly throng
Enthroned in realms of light;
To Thee each golden harp is strung,
Thy praise by each sweet voice is sung,
With ever new delight.

"THE GLORY OF THE LORD."

A. J. Pollock

THIS is a phrase which often occurs in the Bible. It is prominent in the prophecy of Ezekiel, where it occurs some sixteen times. What is the glory of the Lord? It is as undefinable in all its fulness as God Himself, who cannot be compassed by the human mind. The glory of the Lord is what God **is**. If we could understand what God **is**, we could fully understand the glory of the Lord.

In Ezekiel we have a wonderful symbolic picture of the glory of the Lord. It begins by a whirlwind coming out of the north, a great cloud, a fire unfolding itself and the colour of amber. Out of this came four living creatures, each one with four faces and four wings.

These living creatures are also called cherubs. We find them, actual angelic beings, employed when man sinned in the garden of Eden to guard against re-entrance to Paradise lost. We find them in the last book of the Bible, translated "four beasts," but more rightly described as "living creatures" (see N.T.).

It will help us in our study if we grasp clearly that these in Ezekiel and Revelation symbolize the attributes of God, and that as seen in a Man, even our Lord Jesus Christ—a Man, blessed be His holy Name, but likewise "God manifest in the flesh." This will be clear as we proceed. We cannot comment on all details, but seize on a few salient points.

These four living creatures had four wings, emblematical of extreme rapidity in service, the number four setting forth its universal nature. Four is the number of the universe.

Four quarters of the earth embraces the whole earth. Four winds of heaven, every wind that blows. Four is the number of the elements—earth, air, fire, water. Four are the seasons of the year—spring, summer, autumn, winter. Not only had the living creatures wings, but they had wheels. This accentuates the idea of swiftness, mobility, rapidity; wings to lift to heaven, wheels for ministry on earth.

They had four faces—the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, of an eagle. We see this same symbolism in Revelation 4. There we have four living creatures like a lion, a calf, a face as a man, and a flying eagle. These remind us of the four Gospels. There we have the life of lives delineated, the life of **THE MAN**, who was able to reveal God, His compassion, His mercy, His love, His patience, His holiness, His righteousness.

"The face of a man." Is not this set forth in the beautiful Gospel according to Luke? There we get the genealogical ascent of our Lord, right up to Adam, yet His virgin birth, His being begotten by the Holy Ghost, is guarded when we read, "And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years old, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph" (Luke 3: 23). How beautiful is the description of His mission. The preaching of the gospel to the poor; the healing of the broken-hearted, the preaching of deliverance to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, the setting at liberty the bruised. Is not this like what God said to Moses, that He would be gracious to whom He would be

gracious, and shew mercy to whom He would shew mercy. Here we see all this coming out in a blessed Man, yet One who was "God manifest in flesh." The whole Gospel of Luke is an illustration of this.

"The face of a lion." Does this not remind us of the Gospel of Matthew? There He is presented as the King of Israel. The expression, "the kingdom of heaven," occurs in this Gospel about thirty times, and is the only Gospel where the expression is found.

We turn to Revelation 5 and behold the opening of the seven-sealed book of judgment. The Apostle John, in vision, weeps much when no one was found worthy to open the book. He is bidden by an elder not to weep. He is told "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5: 5). We are left in no doubt as to who this is. John turns and beholds "a Lamb as it had been slain." This links up with Matthew's Gospel.

"The face of an ox." This reminds us of the Gospel according to Mark. In the east the ox is the great servant of man, patient, enduring, ploughing his fields, drawing his heavy burdens. This symbolism, homely as it is, points to the patient enduring service of our Lord as depicted in this Gospel. All is divinely in keeping with this. In the Gospel according to Mark there is no genealogy, no account of the birth of our Lord; John the Baptist briefly announces His advent, then comes His baptism, His temptation in the wilderness, all in the space of thirteen verses. Then the Gospel widens out in one stream of gracious activity on the part of our Lord, preaching,

healing the sick, performing miracles of mercy.

And yet though the Lord is presented as the Servant of Jehovah, the very first verse of the Gospel guards the glory of His person, when we read, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, THE SON OF GOD."

"The face of an eagle." Does not this remind us of the Gospel according to John? As in Mark, there is no genealogy, but for a very different reason. In Matthew the genealogy is necessary to establish His claim to be THE King of Israel. In derision they put the inscription on His cross, "The King of the Jews." In Luke the genealogy is given to establish that our Lord was truly a Man, though ever the "true God and eternal Life." In Mark there is no genealogy, for His blessed service for God and man is the theme. In John there is no genealogy, because He is introduced as the eternal Word. The Word was God, in the beginning with God, and all things made by Him (John 1: 1-3). There is no genealogy given, nor could there be of Him, who is uncreated, the eternal, the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, the dweller in the Father's bosom from eternity to eternity. In the Gospel of John we find ourselves in the beginning which never had a beginning.

We gather up these four symbolisms and we see them all worked out in the blessed ministry of our Lord down here, and setting forth God in His attributes, His grace, His compassion, His mercy, yea, His judgments, His righteousness, His holiness.

No wonder in another prophecy we see the seraphims, the living

creatures, as they beheld the glory of the Lord crying one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6: 3). Why this thrice-repeated adoration? Is it not to the triune God—Father, Son and Spirit—to be so revealed when the blessed MAN was seen in this world, revealing God in all His fulness? It is well said that the New Testament is enfolded in the Old, and the Old Testament is unfolded in the New.

All this leads up to a most wonderful verse in the prophecy—"And above the firmament (expanse) that was over their (the living creatures) heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of A MAN above upon it" (Ezekiel 1: 26).

Is it not remarkable that in the description of the glory of the Lord there should be seen on the very throne of Deity the likeness of A MAN? But how does A MAN get there? Man is a denizen of earth. Angels are denizens of heaven; but we do not find an angel or an archangel upon the throne. Why the appearance of A MAN?

The next verse in symbolic language explains this. "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." No wonder the prophet says, "And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. That should be your attitude and mine, beloved reader."

What is the meaning of "the bow in the cloud in a day of rain"? We need to turn to the day when Noah

came out of the ark. God put the rainbow in the cloud as a token—"I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Gen. 9: 15). On what ground can God make a covenant with man? How is He able to draw near to man and bless him?

There were two covenants made with men. The Law was the first in order, and all it could do was to shut man's mouth and bring in all the world guilty before God, for none could keep the Law in its entirety. There was, thank God, a second covenant. Under it Christ was "the Mediator of the new testament (covenant), that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9: 15). The rain speaks of judgment. Did it not rain forty days and forty nights in Noah's day till all outside the shelter of the ark perished? The rainbow, the sun shining on the water in the heavens, breaking its drops into their prismatic colours, into glorious iridescence, shining in a wonderful arc across the sky, was a sign of God's gracious covenant with man.

Further, in the tabernacle we have the cherubim made of pure gold, standing on each side of the mercy seat, gazing inward and downward; cherubim, the messengers of God's righteous judgement. And what meets their gaze? The mercy seat, the slab of pure gold resting on the ark of the covenant, telling of righteousness that must be satisfied. And what stains that pure gold? Blood,

the blood of the sin-offering, sprinkled by the High Priest on the day of Atonement. Blessed be God for the Antitype to all this. God's way of blessing for man is through a MAN, but through His sacrificial death. Thus we get the answer to the bow in the cloud in the day of rain.

Now we come to a remarkable part of Ezekiel's prophecy. In chapter 8 we have delineated the awful backsliding of Israel. First Ezekiel is shewn “the image of jealousy”—“the great abomination of the house of Israel,” but he was to see “greater abominations.” He then saw abominable idols of the house of Israel portrayed on the wall with every form of creeping things and abominable beasts. He beheld seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel occupied in this devilish work of sacrilege and profanity, as if there were no God. When the elders of the nation backslide in this awful way, what must be the condition of the rest of the nation? When a tree begins to wither at its top branch it is indeed a bad sign. Are we not reminded that it was the ancients, the elders, the high priests, the rulers of Israel that cried out with one accord of our Lord, “Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him,” committing the greatest crime this poor earth has ever seen. No wonder the heavens were shrouded in deep darkness at noon tide.

All this brings in a timely lesson. If God is pleased to shew His glory, that glorious presentation of Himself, the continuance of its enjoyment is dependent upon man answering to it in conduct.

What is the result of all this evil seen in the favoured nation? We

find the glory of the Lord reluctantly leaving the temple, where at first, at the consecration of Solomon's temple, “the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house” (2 Chron. 7: 2). Alas! His people's sins are here seen driving it away. Sin and holiness are incompatible. We read that the glory of the Lord stood over the threshold of the house; later it stood over the cherubim, as if they should be the bearers of it away (chap. 10: 18), and finally “the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city” (chap. 11: 23).

The glory went **reluctantly**, but in holiness it had to be withdrawn. Have we any counterpart of this today? We assuredly have, to our shame. Laodicea, the last of the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2 and 3, and descriptive of the last phase of Christendom, was very self-satisfied. Hear her boast. “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3: 17). What was her condition? The eyes of Him who walked among the seven golden candlesticks discerned her true condition, “Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked.” What a devastating rebuke to an assembly so profoundly self-complacent! Then we read the Lord's words, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” What a rebuke to a collective company! Self-complacency **inside**—the Lord **outside**! Yet how encouraging to any who would answer His call to open the door.

When the glory left the land it was last seen on the mountain on the east side of the city. That was the Mount of Olives. The glory left **there**. Will it ever be seen again? Yes, thank God. The glory will return, for God is God, and His promise to Abraham stands sure.

It all depends on our Lord. After His resurrection and His forty days on earth "He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1: 3), ascended the Mount of Olives, and in view of His disciples "He was parted from them and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24: 51). Two men in white apparel told the wondering disciples the cheering news, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 11).

When will He come? We know that for His heavenly saints, His church, He will come into the air, and call us to be for ever with Himself in the Father's house. Then He will open the book of judgment—and the seals, the trumpets and vials will take their course upon this ungodly earth. Then through the great tribulation prophesied by our Lord,

His earthly people, Israel, will be brought to repentance and will look upon Him whom they have pierced, the spirit of grace and supplication will be poured out upon them, and then He will come to reign upon the earth.

Where will His blessed feet touch this earth? At the same spot from which He left the earth. So we read the glowing prophecy of Zechariah, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (chap. 14: 4).

In Ezekiel we read how the New Covenant shall be publicly established with Israel, how the temple will be rebuilt, and then we find the glory of the Lord returning to its home on earth in all its fulness as of old. "And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court: and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house" (chap. 43: 4, 5). Hallelujah! "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14). Hallelujah!

From a Prisoners of War Camp in Germany

Each day seems to reveal some fresh experience of the infinite care and goodness of God, even in the minutest details of daily life.

This is proving a great opportunity to learn and to testify of the love which passeth knowledge.

We are seeking to present a clear testimony to the Lord and His saving power here.

"God is our refuge."

How wonderfully God works, and how wonderful instead of finding merely a prison camp to have found a life of freedom and glorious liberty!

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 10: 18—11: 54)

THE Lord's words, recorded in verse 18, are thoroughly in keeping with the character of this Gospel. As recorded in the other Gospels, He spoke again and again to His disciples of how He should be delivered by the chief priests and rulers to the Gentiles, that they should put Him to death; yet here He asserts that no man should take His life from Him, since both death and resurrection would be His own acts. Men did to Him that, which for any mere man, made death inevitable; yet in His case nothing would have had any effect, if He had not been pleased to lay down His life. His Deity is emphasized, but also the true Humanity which He assumed in subjection to the will of God, for all was in keeping with the Father's commandment. Life was in Him, and it was "the light of men" (1: 4), even while He was here; but now He is to take up His life in resurrection, and thus He was to become the very life of His own in the power of the Spirit, as indicated in chapter 20, verse 22.

By these parables the Lord had furnished the Jews with a condensed summary of the great changes that were impending as the result of His coming as the true Shepherd into the midst of Israel. The Divine programme was opened out to them, but God's purposes so cut across the grain of their self-sufficient thoughts that His words sounded to many like the words of a madman or worse. Others, impressed by the miracle on the blind man, could not accept this extreme opinion. As the succeeding verses show, they took the place of

"honest doubters," yet wished to insinuate that His ambiguity lay at the root of their vacillation. The trouble lay, however, not in **His words** but in **their minds**. It was thus with their forefathers when the law was given and they "could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished" (2 Cor. 3: 13); that is, they never saw God's purpose in it all. Now religious pride was lying as a veil on the minds of these Jews and they could not perceive "the end" of the Lord's words. In just the same way does "the god of this age" impose a veil on the minds of the unbelieving to-day; no matter how able and acute they may be in the ordinary matters of the world.

Their demand was, "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus at once asserted that He had told them plainly, and that His works equally with His words had borne plain witness to Him. Then He told them plainly that their unbelief had put the veil over their eyes. The evidence was there plainly enough, but they could not see it; and what lay behind that fact was that though of Israel nationally they were not the true Israel (see Rom. 9: 6): they were not "My sheep," though sheep within the Jewish fold. They were spiritually dead and hence unresponsive. Thus Jesus told them **plainly** not only the truth about Himself but **about themselves**.

Having put a sentence of condemnation upon them, He added words of the greatest comfort and assurance for the benefit of His own sheep. On their side they hear His voice and

follow Him. On His side He knows them and gives them eternal life. This ensures that they shall never perish as under God's judgment, nor can any created power seize them out of the Shepherd's hand. This assurance is reinforced by the perfect oneness subsisting between the Son and the Father. The Son had taken the subject place on earth and the Father remained "greater than all" in heaven, but this did not militate against their oneness. Being in the hand of the Son involved being in the hand of the Father, and the purpose of the Godhead in securing the sheep is guaranteed by both the Son and the Father. The same glorious fact confronts us in that great passage, Romans 8: 29-39.

These words moved the Jews to murderous intentions. They did not understand their drift, but they did see that in saying, "I and the Father are one," He was claiming equality with God. It might have been slightly less offensive had He put the Father first by saying, "The Father and I"; but no, it was "I and the Father." This was intolerable to them, for there was no mistaking the drift of such words as these. To them it was atrocious blasphemy—a man making himself God. We accept His words in the spirit of worship, for we know He was truly God, yet had made Himself Man. We reverse the terms of their accusation and find in it soul-saving truth.

In His reply Jesus referred to His own words, "I am the Son of God," in such a way as to identify them with their accusation of making Himself God. He did not defend His claim by one of His own emphatic assertions but by an argument based on their Scripture. Those

acknowledged as "gods" in Psalm 82: 6, were authorities "unto whom the word of God came." He who had been set apart and sent into the world by the Father was the Word Himself—"the Word . . . made flesh." How vast the difference! It was not blasphemy but sober truth when He said, "I am the Son of God." Moreover His works bore witness to His claim, as being unmistakably the works of God. They plainly set forth the fact that the Father was in Him, livingly declared and revealed; and He was in the Father, as to essential life and nature. Once let that be known and believed, and there is no difficulty in receiving Him as the Son of God; for both statements set forth the same foundation fact, though in different words.

But the moment was not yet come for their murderous hatred to take effect, and in His retirement to the place of John's baptism beyond Jordan the faith of a number was made manifest. John's witness was recalled and the truth of his words acknowledged. John was the last prophet of the old dispensation, and amidst its ruins miracles were not in season. They were in season, and in full measure, directly the Christ the Son of God appeared. Still John bore a true and faithful and unswerving witness to Christ, which was better than miracles. We too are at the end time of a dispensation, so let us not crave for miracles but emulate John in faithfulness of testimony.

The two verses which open chapter 11 indicate that this Gospel was written when the other Gospels were well known. In naming Bethany as the town of Martha and Mary, it is assumed that the readers will be

more familiar with the women than the village. Again, in verse 2, Mary is identified by her action in anointing the Lord, though John does not tell us about this till the next chapter is reached: he evidently knew he could safely identify her thus, since the story was so widely known.

The brief message sent by the sisters indicates very strikingly the intimacy into which the Lord introduced His friends in the days of His flesh. It was a **reverential** intimacy, in which He ever held the supreme place, for they did not address Him, with undue familiarity as Jesus, but as "Lord." Yet they could with all confidence speak of their brother as "he whom Thou lovest." He had made the Bethany household quite conscious of **His love**, so that they could count upon it with confidence. That their confidence was not misplaced is confirmed by the comment of the Evangelist in verse 5. Jesus did indeed love them. He loved each individually; and Martha, whom we might consider, He had least cause to love, is placed first on the list. Lazarus, whom most evidently He loved, as shown by this chapter, is placed last. Mary, whom we might have placed first, is not even mentioned by name; she is just "her sister." Let us learn that the love of Christ is based upon a foundation lying far deeper than the varying characteristics of saints. Proceeding from what He is in Himself, it is a wonderfully impartial thing.

In spite of it, however, the sister's appeal did not meet with an immediate response. There was a deliberate delay, which gave time for the sickness to terminate in death; and death have time to produce corruption. Why was this? Here

we have answered for all time this question which so constantly arises in the hearts of saints. Death was not the real end of this incident, but the manifestation of the glory of God and the glorifying of the Son of God. It was for the good of the disciples, as verse 15 shows: it was also to be turned into a great blessing to the sorrowing sisters, as indicated by the Lord's words recorded in verse 40. Hence what seemed so strange and inexplicable worked out for glory to God and good for men. There was a response of the highest kind in the apparent lack of response on the part of the Lord.

When the Lord did turn His steps again towards Judæa His disciples feared, for they were like men walking in the dark, and they had no light in themselves. But He, on the other hand, was like one walking in the day, for He was in the light—not indeed of this world, but of that other world where the Father's will and way is everything. Hence He never stumbled, and now He went up to Bethany to do the will of God. The disciples followed Him thinking of death, as Thomas indicated; but He went up into scenes of death in the power of resurrection.

The action of the two sisters, when Jesus drew near, was characteristic. Martha, the woman of action, went out to meet Him. Mary, the woman of meditation and sympathy, still sat in the house awaiting His call. Both, however, greeted Him with the same words when they saw Him. Martha had genuine faith. She believed in His power as Intercessor with God, and in the power of God to be exerted in resurrection at the last day. Doubtless she was impetuous, but her impetuosity called forth one of the greatest pronounce-

ments on record. Of old Jehovah had called Himself "I AM." Now the Word has been made flesh, and He too is "I AM," but He fills it out in detail. Here we have, "I AM the resurrection and the life." Since the point here is what He is in relation to men, resurrection comes first. Death lies upon Adam and his race, hence life for men can only be in the power of resurrection.

The fact itself is twofold, and there follows a twofold application to the believer. If he have died he shall yet certainly live, for his faith reposes in One who is the resurrection, and who consequently quickens with life beyond death. But then Jesus is also the life, and His quickening power reaches men so that they "live by the faith of the Son of God"—or, as the Lord puts it, "liveth and believeth in Me"—then such shall never die; that is, shall never taste death in its full and proper form. The earthly house of this tabernacle may be dissolved, but death is not for us; it is rather a falling asleep. The whole utterance was somewhat enigmatical in form, and wholly beyond any light that had hitherto been granted to men. He was not as yet revealing truth as to His coming again, to which He does allude when the opening of chapter 14 is reached, and which is expanded for us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. But though not the primary interpretation of His words, we can see, when once the truth of His coming is revealed, a striking secondary application of them. At His coming for His saints there will be in fact the great public demonstration of the truth of His words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

When the Lord challenged Martha

as to her belief she at once showed that it was all an enigma to her. Probably she viewed resurrection at the last day as being a restoration to life in this world, in common with the mass of the Jews. So in replying she fell back, very wisely, upon what she did believe with certitude—that He was the Christ the Son of God who had been announced as coming into the world. She had already arrived at the faith to which this Gospel conducts us, and so possessed "life in His name." But, mentally out of her depth as to other matters, she proceeded to call her sister secretly to go to the Master.

With Mary a special bond of sympathy existed. We do not read of Martha falling at the feet of Jesus, nor of her tears. The sorrow of death lay on Mary's spirit very heavily, as indeed it lay upon His. Though He was on His way to lift the weight of it for a season in this particular case, He felt its weight in a measure infinitely deep, moving Him to groaning in spirit and even to the shedding of tears. He wept, not for Lazarus, for He knew that in a few minutes He would recall him to life, but in sympathy with the sisters and as feeling in His spirit the desolation of death brought in by sin. The word used here is the one for the shedding of silent tears, not the word for vocal lamentations, which is used in Luke 19: 41. But those silent tears of Jesus have moved the hearts of sorrowing saints for nearly two thousand years.

Death had drawn forth a groan in the spirit of Jesus, and again (verse 38) we find the grave doing the same. But now He was about to bring the power of His word into action and display. Verse 39 begins, "Jesus said." There are five strik-

ing couplets in this chapter which would serve to summarize the whole story. They occur in verses 4, 5, 17, 35, 39—"Jesus heard," "Jesus loved," "Jesus came," "Jesus wept," "Jesus said." The sorrowing saint of today has to wait for the fifth to be verified in that "shout" which will raise the dead and change the living, and catch up all to be with Him. The other four are valid and efficacious for us at all times.

At the word of the Lord men could roll the stone from the mouth of the cave. This they did in spite of Martha's rather officious remonstrance, but their power stopped at that point. The display of the glory of God, which Martha was to see if she believed, was His work alone. Quickening and resurrection are wholly His work, though men may be used to remove obstructions. Yet the power that brought Lazarus back to life was only exercised in dependence on the Father. Full testimony was rendered in the presence of the crowd to the fact that here was the Son of God in power, and also to the fact that He was here on the Father's behalf and in full dependence upon Him.

He uttered but three words and the mighty sign came to pass. Death and corruption disappeared and Lazarus, still bound in grave-clothes, came forth. Now again human instrumentality came into play and Lazarus was freed from his bonds; just as today the servants of God may so preach the word as to remove spiritual obstructions and release souls from bondage, while the life-giving work remains altogether in the hands of the Son of God. In this great sign, the sixth that John puts on record, the glory of God had

been manifested, since the giving of life is His glorious prerogative. Brutish man can kill all too easily: only God can "**kill and make alive**" (see 1 Sam. 2: 6; 2 Kings 5: 7). In it, too, the Son of God had been glorified, for His oneness with the Father in the wielding of this power had been displayed.

Taking place so near to Jerusalem this sign had a deep effect. It moved many to faith, and it stirred the chief priests and Pharisees to a fiercer resolve to slay Him. They had to admit that He had done many signs, yet they only considered the effect these things might have on their own place in the presence of the Romans. God was not at all in their thoughts. The council they held gave occasion for the prophecy of Caiaphas.

God can lay hold on a false prophet like Balaam and force him to utter words of truth. But here was a man who, save for being high priest that year, had no pretensions to anything of the kind; a man who prophesied without knowing that he was prophesying. As far as he was concerned his words were sarcastic, filled with the spirit of cynical, heartless, cold-blooded murder; yet they were used by the Holy Spirit to convey the fact that Jesus was about to die for Israel, in a sense of which they knew nothing. Verse 52 gives us a further commentary on his words through the Evangelist. Israel was indeed to be redeemed through His death, but there was a further purpose shortly to come to light. Children of God existed, but as yet without any special bond of union. That bond was to be created as the fruit of His death. More light as to this will reach us in the next chapter.

PRAYER.

Generalities are the death of prayer—particulars its life.

The Christian who would indeed plead for others with spiritual reality and success must be one who in holy truth is watching over his own relations with his Master.

Intercessory prayer is a tender, living testimony to two great and precious facts, which run up into one. It witnesses to the Christian believer's living spiritual union with his brethren in Christ, and indeed with all men as potentially such. And it witnesses to his spiritual union with his Lord in new birth and new life, that immediate conjunction with the Head through which he has union with the members. Oh, for more full, more vivid, more continuous recollection of this holy spiritual solidarity with Him, and with them in Him!

Christians need continually to remember that intercessory prayer must always enter into the very life of the work which they seek to do for others, in and for the Lord. A devoted Sunday school teacher was the means under God of bringing scholar after scholar, with always growing frequency, to the feet of Jesus in living conversion, evidenced by new life of love and consistency. After her death her simple diary was found to contain, among other entries, the three following, with some intervals between:—“ Resolved to pray for each scholar by name ”; “ Resolved to wrestle in prayer for each scholar by name ”; “ Resolved to wrestle for each by name, and to expect an answer.”

Paul's End.

“ In all history there is not a more startling illustration of the irony of human life than the scene of Paul at the bar of Nero. On the judgment-seat, clad in the imperial purple, sat a man who, in a bad world had attained the eminence of being the very worst and meanest being in it—a man stained with every crime, a man whose whole being was so steeped in every nameable and unnameable vice, that body and soul of him were, as some said at the time, nothing but a compound of mud and blood; and in the prisoner's dock stood the best man the world possessed, his hair whitened with labours for the good of men and the glory of God. The trial ended: Paul was condemned, and delivered to the executioner. He was led out of the city, with a crowd of the lowest rabble at his heels. The fatal spot was reached; he knelt beside the block; the headsman's axe gleamed in the sun and fell; and the head of the apostle of the world rolled down in the dust.” Such is the historian's record.

Was such an end defeat? Hear what he said about it in anticipation:—“ I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing ” (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

LIKE THE ENGRAVINGS OF A SIGNET.

J. T. Mawson

LIKE the engravings of a signet." Three times this phrase occurs in our chapter (Exodus 28), which describes the garments of the High Priest in Israel. Once for the shoulders, once for the breast and once for the brow. The shoulders for strength, the breast for love, and the brow for wisdom. They remind us of "the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1) which has been given to us; but this is not that; it is not here what we can be for the Lord in the world, but what He is for us in heaven. The garments described in our chapter speak to us typically of "things concerning Himself," and especially of the fact that He is our great High Priest who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Moses was not left to devise these garments "for glory and beauty" out of his own imagination: God gave him the most definite instructions as to them, for He had Christ in view, and us; and would shew us pictorially the graces and glories of our great High Priest—they were the shadows of good things to come (Heb. 10); "a shadow of heavenly things." In these instructions God said, "Thou shalt make an ephod (a robe) . . . it shall have two shoulder pieces . . . and thou shalt take two onyx stones and grave on them the names of the children of Israel, six names on one stone and six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the stones with the names of the children of Israel.

Thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold and thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, upon his two shoulders for a memorial" (verses 6 to 12).

The glory that shines in the Hebrew Epistle lights up the type for us. In that Epistle we learn that Christ is the substance of the shadows; that it is He who is the true Priest. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God (2: 17). He is not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (4: 15); and He is such a High Priest as became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and made higher than the heavens (7: 26). But when was He made higher than the heavens? After He had suffered and died for our sins and been raised again from the dead. What He is as our High Priest crowned with glory and honour, has not in view His lowly life on earth, though it was then that He qualified for this great service; nor has it in view His death on the cross, though we should have had no title to this service if He had not died for us; but He exercises His priesthood in "the power of an endless life." It is not what He did, but what He is doing now, in this very hour of our need, in His victorious, resurrection life in the glory of God. Paul puts it in this order in Romans 8:—"It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"; and Hebrews 7: 35 tells us

the same blessed truth—"He ever liveth to make intercession for us." It is in heaven itself that He appears in the presence of God for us (9:24). Indeed, if He were not in heaven He could not be our High Priest, for the Scripture says, "If He were on earth He should not be a Priest" (8: 4).

"And thou shalt take two onyx stones and grave on them the names of the children of Israel." The Hebrew word translated 'onyx' signifies "a flashing forth in splendour" (Soltau). It was a flesh-coloured gem called by Job "the precious onyx" (ch. 28). Two of this precious gem had to be taken and the names of Israel's tribes deeply cut into them, "like the engravings of a signet"—unmistakable and indelible. They were to be set or fixed in ouches of gold and put in the shoulders of the ephod, and Aaron had to bear the names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. That was the shadow—but what is the substance? With reverence we say that the names of the ransomed people of God are for ever engraved in the very flesh of the Lord Jesus. He uses the figure Himself in regard to Israel. "Behold," He says, "I have graven thee on the palms of My hands" (Isaiah 49). And on the evening of the resurrection day when He appeared in the midst of His disciples He shewed to them His hands, His side and His feet. For their sakes and for ours He had endured those wounds that they beheld in His sacred, incorruptible body; they were mute yet eloquent witnesses to the power that had brought Him from the dead, as they were also of the love that led Him to die.

The engraved onyx stones were for the shoulders of the High Priest—the place of burden-bearing power; the figure is familiar and forcible. In the Lord's own parable, the Shepherd laid the sheep that was lost upon his shoulders when He had found it. He Himself is the Shepherd, both good and great; and He bears His own upon the shoulders of His power from the moment that He finds them until He places them beyond the reach of every foe and fear and danger and distress, at home in the glory of God. He does it as their great High Priest. As the merciful and faithful High Priest He is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. 2: 18); because He hath an unchangeable Priesthood, He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him (Heb. 7:25). He sympathizes with them and succours and saves them when they are beset with sorrow and testings and ready to faint in the pilgrim way; and He fulfils even now to them His promise made to Israel—"Even to hoar hairs I will carry you; I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46: 4).

In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament the ephod is called the "shoulder piece," for a great part of the priest's work was to bear the burden of the people of God before Him, but He was to have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way also, and this called for patient love. Hence coupled to the shoulders by rings and chains of gold was the breast-plate; these two were never to be separated. The breast-plate was made of twelve precious stones upon which the names of the tribes

of Israel were engraved, "like the engravings of a signet"; one name on each stone, but all bound in one by being set in pure gold—symbol of Divine faithfulness and glory. The meaning of the type is clear; the saints of God are borne upon the heart of the great High Priest as well as upheld by His power; His unchanging love is behind His undiminished and patient strength. The ephod made the breast-plate and the shoulder pieces one. His is not an impotent love, or a loveless power; His power is the servant of His love, and both have no measure or end.

Every name on the breast-plate had its own stone, but not one was larger or brighter than another. Each had a distinctive glory but all had an equal place on the heart of the High Priest. Each name was deeply engraved there, "like the engravings of a signet," and set to shine with an equal brilliance in the light of the sanctuary. The figure is an affecting one, but how wonderful is the reality. While the whole pilgrim band is borne onward and upward by the infallible power of Jesus, our great High Priest, He has a heart interest in each individual in the band. Not one of them should doubt this. It should not have to be said to any one of them what God had to say to Israel—"Why sayest thou O Jacob and speakest O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord." No name in the breast-plate was hidden from the Lord, and not one was obscure amongst them. Each saint of God has an infinite preciousness to Jesus; each one is loved by the same love that passeth knowledge. He calleth His own sheep by name; each one has a personal link with Him and He considers each one for

his blessing; He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: My strength is made perfect in weakness." What solace this gives in sorrow, what triumph in tribulation, what confidence in conflict!

But power and love without wisdom might be weakly indulgent and lead to disaster. There must be divine wisdom also to give perfection to the present service of our great High Priest. Does He possess this wisdom? Yes, for He is the wisdom of God, and He has been made wisdom to us. The garments of Aaron were not complete without the plate of pure gold bound with a lace of blue upon his mitre. Upon this golden plate was engraved, "like the engravings of a signet," HOLINESS TO THE LORD. In shining prominence this indelible inscription had always to appear upon Aaron's brow in the presence of God. He would have been no true priest without it. God must be first, and all the activities of our Lord Jesus as our High Priest must be for the glory of God, and we could not be truly blessed apart from this. We remember His words to the Father:—"For their sakes I sanctify Myself that they may be sanctified through the truth." He has set Himself apart that His people might be practically maintained as a holy priesthood unto God.

From the time that He made Himself of no reputation and took on Him the form of a servant He has been "Holiness unto the Lord." This was involved in His words spoken in eternity and recorded in the volume of God's eternal book, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." But now risen from the

dead, it is for us that He is " Holiness unto the Lord." As such He represents us, for He has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9). The golden plate was upon Aaron's brow that He might " bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts." That was the shadow, and not the very image of the things, for the sacrifices that Aaron offered could never take away sins. " But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and the Holy Ghost bears witness that their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more (10: 12-17). " He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren " (2: 11). The golden plate was to be always upon Aaron's forehead that the people might be accepted before the Lord. The reality of that shadow for us is " to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved " (Eph. 1). In full assurance of faith and with hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience we draw near to offer our worship to God.

Yet it is indeed true that we are often ignorant and indolent in our approach to God, and our prayers and praises are mean and imperfect, but He is there for us on this behalf,

and He adds His sweet perfume to our poor words so that they reach the ears of God in His own perfection. But we believe there is more than that. He is the Leader of our praises, and if we are to join intelligently in any measure in the praises that He leads, and worship God in spirit and in truth, we must be instructed by Him, and this He has undertaken to do. He has said, " I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto Thee." One of the old prophets said, " The priest's lips should keep knowledge; they should seek the law at His mouth, for He is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts " (Mal. 2: 7). And this word is true in its fullest meaning in our great High Priest, a merciful and faithful High Priest; for of Him we read, " By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant instruct many in righteousness " (Is. 53: 11; N.T.).

How wise are His ways with us and with what perfect balance He pursues His service. He is indeed most merciful to us in our weaknesses, but ever faithful to God—He will not compromise His glory one iota. " Having made purgation for our sins, and having obtained eternal redemption for us by His death, we are being saved by His life " (Rom. 5: 10); and in His life wisdom and love and power combine to bring us through every trial and test to the glory of God, whither He, our Forerunner, has entered for us.

From a prisoners of war camp in Germany

" The Lord is very gracious to us here, overruling circumstances very evidently, and drawing us together to Him in a spirit of love and oneness. Sundays are eagerly looked forward to, when we can get together to praise Him and witness for Him."

WHERE MEN WENT OFF THE LINE.

MEN got wrong when they threw off theocracy, when they chose to go their own way instead of God's.

Democracy, nor any other human "ocracy," can put them on the lines again. There is but one rule that can touch all time, and hold beneficent dominion over all forces and ministries, and that is the rule of God, undisputed, longed for, lovingly accepted, loyally obeyed. But men don't love the will of God; it irks them, and various theories have been propounded to account for this.

But is it any comfort to us to hear that we have grown up from a plasm almost imperceptible to the microscope itself, and have struggled thus far in a process of development, evolution, and therefore we are not to be judged as if we had been guilty personally or ancestrally of an original apostasy and of wilful sin?

It might be a comforting doctrine if—— Ah, that's where it is, conscience won't let a man be comforted by it. He says, whatever others accept, I cannot accept that explanation, I have known the right and yet pursued the wrong. I have put the good from me and chosen the bad. I felt, I knew, that God had claims on me, and I ignored them; I knew that I ought to be upright, true and kind in my relations to others, but I was selfish and hard. I have seen things that I could do and I did not do—nay, I purposely neglected them; nay, I thrust them behind me, and said, I will have my own way, I will play the God to myself. I have sinned.

So this balsam, that by an elaborate evolution I may yet attain to

perfection, does not heal the wound; the proposition may amuse me in my hours of leisure, and enlarge the margin with which my speculation takes its walks in the infinite darkness of the unknown, but when I come to think of it all, and the light shines on conscience and heart, then I feel that the philosophy daubs the wall with untempered mortar, and cries "**P**eace, peace, when there is no peace."

But what does the Bible say? "**G**od made man upright, but man sought out many inventions." "**A**ll we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." "**T**here is none righteous, no, not one." This is not a comfortable doctrine. It probes the wound, it lays bare the corruption. It shows where men went wrong, and still choose and love the wrong rather than the right. There is no music in this doctrine, but it is true. It rolls back to the beginning, it reveals the departure, and states the case as only God could state it.

We may long to contradict it, and choose the false theory of our amazing evolution from next to nothing instead of it, but it is God's pronouncement, and what can man do but be silent when God has spoken?

What then? To bow the head in confession of the truth is to be blessed by the true God; to cry, "**G**od be merciful to me a sinner," is to go down to one's house justified. It is here that a man resumes right relations with God, and lives and rejoices in the grace of God, and comes once and for all into His kingdom.

THINGS THAT ABIDE.

J. Houston

TH E apostle John survived all the other apostles. He lived to a great age, and cared for the Church as a loving father, and that when apostasy had already begun. He speaks of antichrists, as existing in his day, and in his Epistles he shows that many were turning away from the faith, and, on this account, it was necessary to give guidance to the faithful, that they might have, at all times, a stable foundation for their faith.

It may be briefly said that John gives us **the things that abide**. Upon these our faith can rest unshaken, even in this advanced day of evil, when apostasy is far worse than it could possibly have been in the first century. We are on the very eve of the Lord's return, and we are waiting in earnest expectation to see Him. Our hope shall be realized then, when we are with Him, where He is in glory. But, till then, we need the things that abide for our present support and comfort.

Three things that abide are brought prominently before us in John's First Epistle. They are as follows:—That which was from the beginning; the Spirit's unction; and the Father's love. We shall look at them briefly.

It will be seen that he begins this Epistle with the words, "That which was from the beginning," and they give his great theme throughout. These words refer to Christ's incarnation, and all that took place when He was manifested in flesh. It is the revelation of God in Christ. It embraces all that is comprehended in the word christianity, considered

in its purest and loftiest sense. John is careful not to separate anything from the Person of Christ, and speaks of Him as "That which was from the beginning." Everything of good was in Him; apart from Him nothing is good, nothing is right.

Now we have this on which to rest, and that in the midst of an infidel world which cares nothing for truth. Truth is not only **in Him** (Ephes. 5: 21), but **He** is the truth (John 14: 6). He embodies the truth in His Person. In Him we get all the truth about God, for He is the revelation of God; in Him we have fulness of grace, for He was full of grace and truth (John 1: 14). Truth alone would not meet our need, for it would reveal what we were, without making us what we should be. But grace makes us what we should be, even perfect in Him, and this suits our case. This, then, is what was from the beginning, and it remains, whatever be the condition of the Church. And we can see how needful it was for John to exhort:—"Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 2: 24).

No less insistent is John, that we should know another thing that abides, namely, the unction of the Spirit. He says, "the anointing (unction) which ye have received of Him abideth in you" (1 John 2:24). This unction teaches us all things, "and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John 2: 27). In

another part, he speaks of the Spirit as "the Spirit of Truth" (John 14: 17). This would be in contrast to the spirit of error in the world, Satan's lie, by which the multitudes are seduced. God's children have the Spirit of truth, the unction from the Father, by which they are taught all things. What a safeguard against prevailing evil! The multitudes follow Satan's lie, are seduced, and on the way to perdition; God's children follow Christ, are safe, and on their way to glory. The truth was revealed in Christ, and is communicated to us, and made good in us, by the Spirit. The Spirit is always with us, and in us (John 14: 16). Never, under any circumstance, is

the Spirit taken from us; He dwells with us, as a company, and He dwells in us, as individuals, **for ever**. Here again we have security in a wicked world!

Lastly, we have the Father's love. This never changes. It is a love of relationship; it is the **Father's** love. Freely bestowed upon us, because of the relationship we have with the Father, it is our portion for evermore! We have it now, in this world; we shall have it for all eternity, in heaven. This is the sweetest of all, the Father's love. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" (1 John 3: 1). We do well to enjoy it now; it is our portion from the Father.

THINGS.

A. M. Chambers

"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 18).

Things—

Earthly things,
They are but strings
To tie me here.
They bind my spirit's wings
Which else might soar
Unto her proper sphere.
Then shall I fear
The loss of any worldly store?
When worldly stocks grow low,
(Or if in one fell blow
They disappear),
Then I may come to know
The soul's true freedom, heavenly liberty;
I may have eyes to see
Celestial treasure
Which without measure
God hath prepared for me.
There far beyond the power of man to mar
Shines my fair heritage; no blast of war,
No blight of time can dim its radiancy.
This is the vision that my soul may see—
Unseen, eternal things;—if these be mine
What temporal loss could cause me to repine?

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE WAR. A. J. Pollock

THREE is no doubt that many Christians throughout the British Empire and America are earnestly praying for victory to attend the Allied cause, and that many Christians in Germany and Italy are likewise equally earnestly praying for victory to attend their efforts. It is clear these prayers for exact opposite answers cannot both be realized. It follows that God must so teach His people, whether in Germany, Italy, or the British Empire and America, that prayer may indeed be answered in such a way as to satisfy all. This may be a long and humbling process.

The writer would like to put on record a few thoughts gathered from Scripture that are helpful and cheering at this time.

We read:—"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2: 1-4).

Here we have plain instructions, whether one is a British Christian or a German Christian. We are told whom to pray for—for "all men" and for "kings and all that are in authority." "All men" includes men of the British Empire, men of Germany, and of Italy, men everywhere—white, yellow, black. The matter is urgent for the first character of the prayer to be offered is that of "supplication," that is of intense prayer, then we have prayer,

then "intercessions," that is praying on behalf of others, and finally "giving of thanks." This last we can surely do at all times for an all-wise and loving God will surely give the best answer. Answers are sometimes given, sometimes delayed, sometimes modified, sometimes denied, but whatever is the result, it is God's answer and is best.

The answer in this case is "a quiet, a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." May not God in answer to the supplications and intercessions of His people give an answer and cause kings and dictators to allow Christians to live in quietness and peace? Have we faith for this?

How often have we prayed that God will open the prison doors of the German pastors, who are held in durance vile because they will not bow the knee to the neo-paganism Hitler is seeking to impose on that unhappy country. God opened Peter's prison of old, delivering him but a few hours before the time fixed for his martyrdom, and we have the same God today. One day these prison doors will assuredly be opened.

Another Scripture that is very forcible and cheering at this time is Genesis 18, where we read of Abraham's intercession for Sodom. There was no doubt of Sodom's wickedness. It was a veritable plague-spot on God's fair earth—a pestilential offence to decent humanity. And yet if fifty righteous persons—a paltry number compared with the city—should be found in it, it should be spared for their sake. Abraham,

emboldened, reduced the number to forty-five, to forty, to thirty, to twenty. Abraham had bravely said to the Lord, " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? "—words for which we have all been devoutly thankful, words that give us peace of mind as to God's governmental dealings in this sad world.

Greatly daring at length Abraham interceded, " Oh! let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went on His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned to his place " (Gen. 18: 32, 33).

One would have imagined ten should have been found righteous in that city seething with sin. Evidently Lot had at least four daughters, for he had two unmarried daughters and at least two married daughters for he had sons-in-law. Lot, wife, four daughters, two sons-in-law at least, count eight souls. Were they all righteous? The sons-in-law mocked at Lot's warnings and perished in the city with their wives. It is a sad scene to contemplate.

It has been an unspeakable comfort in these days of stress to remember that if only ten righteous should be found in Sodom the city should be spared, and to think of the volume of prayer that is reaching the ear and heart of our heavenly Father from hundreds of thousands of His children all over the world, He will hear and answer.

When the children of Israel were carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, what attitude had they

to adopt towards the land of their captivity? We read:—" Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace " (Jer. 29: 7).

It is true that Christians in this land are not captives to a foreign power. But a new element has come into our lives, making us strangers and pilgrims even in our native land. We have been saved by the grace of God out of a world that crucified and rejected our Lord. Our true home is in Heaven, in the Father's house. Meanwhile we are in a world of unrest and sorrow, a world that " lieth in wickedness " (1 John 5: 19). " Our conversation (literally **citizenship**) is in Heaven; from which we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ " (Phil. 3: 20).

What a comfort it is that we can pray for peace, and are encouraged to do so.

Finally we may well ask ourselves the question and seek to answer it honestly, Is the British nation so God-fearing and righteous that we can ask God to give the Allied cause the victory. Alas! it is true that not five per cent. ever darken the doors of a so-called place of worship. That even in the small minority professing to be Christian a large portion is merely nominal. Many clergymen and ministers are modernists and in too many cases deny the very fundamentals of the Christian faith. Christianity is indeed at a low ebb.

In the face of all this we can get solid comfort in reading Deuteronomy 9. God gave the children of Israel to understand that He did not

give them the possession of the promised land, and victory over their foes, because of their righteousness, but rather because of the wickedness of those up till then possessing the land. He tells them in language which could not be clearer, "Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness: for thou art a stiffnecked people" (Deut. 9: 6).

Are we any better? Are we righteous? Are we not stiffnecked?

We may not hope for victory on the ground of our righteousness. But when we think of the wickedness of the aggressors, their defiance of God, their refusal of the Bible and of Christian teaching, their imprisoning of hundreds of German pastors because they will not surrender the gospel of the grace of God, the unspeakable torture of the Jewish race, their concentration camps, their devilish and unspeakable torturing

of all who stand in the slightest way of their wickedness, we can only believe that God, who witnesses all this, will rebuke their wickedness and cause them to be brought to naught.

When we think of this on the one hand, and the prayers of the Lord's people, including those of our German and Italian brothers and sisters in Christ, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5: 16), we are encouraged to believe that God will give peace in our time.

It can only be a partial peace for it will not be founded on the personal reign of our Lord, and amidst it all we, Christians, may hear the long-looked-for summoning shout of our Lord, gathering His people whether dead or living in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to Himself for ever. What a prospect! Lord, haste that day. Amen.

Confessing Christ.

There was a schoolmaster in my parish. He had been teaching the new German Bible, Hitler's book, "Mein Kampf." Concluding his lesson, he said, "It is a shame to make German youth believe in that fellow with the Jewish nose, called 'Jesus'." One boy of thirteen got up and said, while his class listened breathlessly, "I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Redeemer." The teacher, a Nazi, struck this young Protestant confessor in his face and called him a traitor.

There was another lad of eighteen, a trained engineer. His heart was devoted to his Lord. His skill and character had gained him a three years' scholarship at a technical academy. As a boy of eighteen, he had to be a member of the "Hitler Youth," and as such he had to attend a parade where he was asked, in front of 3,000 Hitler boys and girls, either to renounce his loyalty to "that Jewish Messiah" or to give up his scholarship. Fearlessly he confessed, "I believe in Jesus Christ." He lost his scholarship and his job. "Whosoever confesseth Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven."

—By a German Pastor, "World Dominion."

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL.

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 11: 55—12: 36)

FOR the third time in this Gospel a Passover feast is mentioned. In Leviticus 23, it is spoken of as one of the "feasts of the Lord," but in John's Gospel it is always a feast of the Jews, in keeping with the fact that Jesus is regarded as refused by His people from the outset, and consequently they and their feasts are disowned by God. The religious leaders were now about to crown their infamy by using the Passover as an occasion for encompassing the death of the Son of God. Their guilt was not lessened by the fact that God overruled their action to the fulfilling of the type, and that thereby "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, so that all recorded between verse 1 of chapter 12 and verse 25 of chapter 20 falls into a brief period of seven or eight days—surely the most wonderful week in the world's history. In the home at Bethany dwelt the three who were **objects of His love** and who loved Him in return. A suitable opportunity had now arrived for them to testify of this. Behind them lay the death of Lazarus and His calling to life by the voice of the Son of God. Just ahead lay the death and resurrection of the Son of God Himself.

At the close of Luke 10 we see this household marked by some measure of disorder and complaint; **but here**, after the display of the Lord's resurrection power, all is found in order and harmonious. The simple proceedings of that evening centred in Christ. He was the honoured Object

of each and all, for, "they made HIM a supper." We may indeed see a parable in this. When Christ is the supreme Object and His resurrection power is known, everything falls into its right place.

Martha was hostess and served Him. Lazarus had his part with Him at the supper table. Mary expressed her heart's devotion to Him by expending upon Him her costly ointment. Thus we see how the knowledge of Him and of His resurrection power led to service, to communion, and to worship. All was happily in order, and just because it was the voice of hostile criticism was heard, centred upon Mary's action. It originated with Judas Iscariot, though the other disciples echoed his words, as Matthew's Gospel shows.

The world is incapable of appreciating true worship, and in spite of his fair exterior Judas was wholly of the world. Ruled by covetousness Judas had become a thief; and not only a thief but a hypocrite, masking his self-seeking by the profession of care for the poor. He posed as an eminently practical man, fully alive to the value of solid, material benefits for the poor, whilst Mary was in his view squandering valuable substance, moved by silly sentiment. The world is exactly of that opinion today. The religion which suits its tastes is one which lays all the emphasis upon material and earthly benefits for mankind. And today, as much as then, carnally minded believers are very prone to be in agreement with the world and echo its opinions.

In saying, "Let her alone," Jesus silenced the hostile criticism. The three words may well be written upon our memories. True worship lies between the soul of the believer and the Lord, and no other may interfere. In Romans 14 the believer is viewed as a servant and the spirit of that chapter again is "Let him alone." Further, the Lord knew how to interpret her action. He gave, no doubt, a fuller explanation of it than Mary herself could have offered; though she knew the hatred of the leaders and intuitively perceived His death approaching. It is significant too that Mary of Bethany did not join the other women in visiting His grave with the spices they had prepared.

Of Mary we may say that what she did, was done "for Jesus' sake only." With Judas it was "the poor," and even with the other disciples, it was "Jesus and the poor." With many of the Jews who flocked to Bethany at this time it was "Jesus and Lazarus," for they were curious to see a man who had been raised from the dead. The Bethany household had concentrated upon Jesus their true affection. In contrast therewith the chief priests concentrated upon Him the deadliest hatred, which so blinded them that they contemplated slaying Lazarus, the witness to His power. They were most religious but most unscrupulous. They forgot the warning of Psalm 82: 1-5.

The next day Jesus presented Himself to Jerusalem as Israel's King, just as Zechariah the prophet had said. No mere Sovereign of earth could afford to formally present himself to his capital city in such humble fashion; but to Him who was the Word made flesh all

such glory, as was possible then, would have been loss, not gain. This occasion is recorded in each of the four Gospels, but John records two special details. First, there is the contrast between the disciples and their Master, who ever knew exactly what He would do (see 6: 6). They took part without any understanding of what they were doing. The significance of it all only dawned upon them when they had received the Holy Spirit, consequent upon the glorification of Jesus. Second, there is the fact that the measure of popular enthusiasm manifested had been stirred by the raising of Lazarus, wherein His glory as the Son of God had been displayed.

We are next permitted to see the effect of all this in three directions. The Pharisees were bitterly mortified, attributing to the demonstration of the people a depth of conviction which was non-existent. But among certain Greeks who had come up to the feast there was a spirit of enquiry and their desire to see Jesus was the pledge of a day when "the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising" (Isa. 60: 3). And indeed now was the moment when He should have been received and acclaimed by His own people. The hour had struck when as the Son of Man He should have been glorified. As regards the Lord Himself, He knew well that as the rejected One nothing but death lay before Him—the death which would be the foundation of all the glory in days to come. Of that death therefore He proceeded to speak.

In verse 24 we find another of His great statements introduced with special emphasis. The life that abides and blossoms forth into much

fruit is only reached through death. If fruit for God is to be ingathered—fruit which will be of the same order as Himself—He must die. Emmanuel was here, the Word made flesh, and His intrinsic worth and beauty is beyond all words; but only through death will He “be fruitful and multiply,” so that a multitude of others “after His kind” may be found to the glory of God. This was what filled His thoughts while others were still thinking of earthly glory.

Fruit for God, then, is the first result of His death which He mentioned. The second was the new order of life on earth, which thereby would be entailed upon His disciples. He was about to lay down His life in this world, all perfect as it was. Life in this world is for us wholly marred by sin, and under judgment. If we love it we shall only lose it. Seeing it in its true light we learn to hate it, and thereby we keep life—the only life worth having—unto life eternal. This is for us an hard saying, but of extreme importance, as we may glean from the fact that Jesus uttered words of similar import on three other occasions, and these four sayings are recorded six times in the four Gospels. No other saying of our Lord is repeated for us like this. It is not too much to say that our spiritual stature and prosperity are determined by the measure in which this saying leaves its impress on our hearts and lives.

Verse 26 springs naturally out of verse 25. We can only really serve the Lord as we follow Him, and we only really follow Him as our attitude to life is the same as His. He did not love His life in this world when as the grain of wheat He fell into the ground and died. The

Apostle Paul entered into the spirit of this, as we can see by such scriptures as 2 Corinthians 4: 10-18 and Galatians 2: 20; 6: 14. And as a servant of Christ he greatly surpasses us all. The servant's reward is to be with His Master, and to be honoured of the Father.

On another occasion Jesus had said that every servant when perfected is to be “AS his Master” (Luke 6: 40). Here we find he is to be WITH his Master. And there is yet something more. “If any man serve Me”—who is this ME? The humbled and rejected Son of God! Who serves Him in the hour of His unpopularity and rejection? Such are honoured of the Father, and the honours will be publicly theirs when the day of the great review arrives. The highest honours of the world are but tinsel compared with this.

John's Gospel makes no mention of the sorrows of Gethsemane, but we are permitted to see here how the weight of His approaching death lay upon His soul. His Deity did not mitigate His trouble; it rather gave Him an infinite capacity to feel it. He could not desire the hour that drew near: His perfect knowledge and infinite holiness caused Him of necessity to shrink from it, yet to be saved from it was not His prayer, but rather that the Father's name should be glorified in it. This desire was so perfect, so wholly delightful to the Father that a voice was heard from heaven. The other Gospels have told us how the Father's voice was heard at His baptism and His transfiguration. These were more private occasions, and there seems to have been no difficulty in understanding what was said. Here in view of His death the voice was

more public and intended for the ears of the people; yet they did not receive it and explained the sound they heard either as the voice of an angel or a peal of thunder. God spoke to men audibly and directly, yet they made nothing of it! In man's fallen condition it would ever be thus.

The Father's response was that His name had already been glorified in the whole pathway of Jesus down here, and more particularly in the raising of Lazarus; and He would glorify it again in the death and resurrection of His Son. This then is another great result of the dying of the single "corn of wheat." There is the production of much fruit: there is the possibility of a new kind of life and service for the disciple: there is the glorifying of the Father's name. And there is yet more, for verse 31 brings both the world and its prince into view.

At the cross was the judgment of this world. Our language has appropriated both the Greek words used here. There came to pass the crisis of this cosmos at the cross. Cosmos signifies an ordered scene in contrast with chaos, but alas! this cosmos has fallen under the leadership of the devil. Now the death of Christ exposed the world in its true character, thus bringing it under righteous condemnation. It also broke the power and legally dispossessed the usurper, who had become its prince. It appeared to be his greatest triumph: it was really his utter defeat.

This wonderful unfolding of the results of His death came from the lips of the Lord, and characteristic-ally He placed last its result as regards Himself. In mentioning this He signified crucifixion as the man-

ner of His death. Now this was the Roman way of executing the death sentence; but seeing that all the animosity against Him was in the breast of the Jew, it signified that He would die a death of utmost shame, repudiated by both Jew and Gentile. He was lifted up from the earth in order that He might be contemptuously dismissed—the extinguisher dropped, so to speak, upon His cause and His Name. And the result to be attained is precisely the opposite. He who once was crucified is to be the universal and everlasting Object of attraction! All who are drawn into God's mighty circle of blessing will be drawn by Him and to Him. Here we have in germinal form what is more fully expounded in Ephesians 1: 9-14. Far from extinguishing His glory, the cross becomes the foundation upon which it rests, the basis for its most perfect display; as is so movingly witnessed by Revelation 5: 5-14.

The opening words of Jesus spoke of the Son of Man being glorified, and the closing words of His being lifted up. The Jews knew that the Messiah was to abide when He came, and the title "Son of Man" was not unknown to them for it is found in the Old Testament. The Son of Man who was to receive the kingdom according to Daniel 7, they knew, but who was this Son of Man who was to suffer? They had overlooked the Son of Man made a little lower than the angels, according to Psalm 8. This humbled Son of Man was the light of men. Except they believed in the light and became children of light, utter darkness would come upon them and they would be lost. With this warning Jesus withdrew Himself from them.

SINS REMEMBERED NO MORE.

J. T. M.

I HAD a Christian friend, a wholesale provision merchant; one Sunday night he had been to a stirring gospel meeting in which sinners had been saved. He woke up the next morning and went to his business with the joy of the gospel in his heart.

He had not been sitting in his office very long when a woman was shown in. She was one of his customers who owed him a considerable sum of money. He had allowed the bill to run on, and continued to supply her with goods because she had told him she was just about to realize on some property; and he had believed her, but she had deceived him all the time.

She had come that morning to tell the truth—she had nothing to pay. She was really a bankrupt, and she cast herself upon his mercy. He had a Christian cashier who had also been to the gospel meeting the night before, and the woman was asked to retire into the outer office while my friend and his cashier discussed the matter between them. Then she was called back, and the cashier put his hand into his pocket and took out his bunch of keys, unlocked the safe, took out the cash-box, and counted out from it the full amount of the bill, and pushed the money across the desk to the master. He counted the money, put it into his pocket, then he stamped the bill and wrote across it "Amount received in full," and dated it and signed it and handed the receipted bill to the poor bankrupt storekeeper.

It was some minutes before she realized what it meant; she looked at the receipted bill, and then at her erstwhile creditor and then the tears burst from her eyes and rolled down

her cheeks as she thanked him. She was free, she was at peace with him, and she went out of the office clear of that debt; the bill was never sent to her again; it was remembered against her no more. But, the amount came out of his own cash-box. Exactly; but it was the amount due and he accepted it, and she was clear.

How every illustration fails in the presence of the fact that out of the glory of God came God's beloved Son, and for us He went into death to pay the mighty price which God has accepted, the price that only could clear us righteously before a righteous God. The amount has been received in full, God has accepted it and set His seal upon it, by raising His Son, even Jesus, from the dead, and we who believe are justified, we are free, and the bill never can be sent in to us again.

That is the meaning of that blessed statement of Scripture, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." There is then no condemnation when it is a question of our sins. Have you got as far as that? If you have you have peace with God. The One who paid the mighty price and did the great work is raised again from the dead, an evidence that God is satisfied with that which He did, and since He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, we have peace with God through Him.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The song begins in the heart and bursts from the lips when that point is reached and our feet are set on the march to victory.

MODERATION.

Moule

" Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

The word moderation, in this verse, is not quite self-explanatory. The word here rendered moderation in our Bible is connected by derivation and usage with ideas, not of control, but of yielding. "Forbearance," "gentleness" are the alternative renderings of the Revised Version, and both suggest the thought of giving way. Paul is dealing throughout this passage with certain holy conditions necessary to an experience of "the peace of God keeping the heart and thoughts in Christ Jesus." Standing fast in the Lord, harmony and mutual helpfulness in the Lord, rejoicing in the Lord, and prayerful and thankful communion with the Lord, are among these conditions. And with them, in the midst of them, appears this also:—"Let your yieldingness be known unto all men: the Lord is near." This connection with the deep peace of God throws a glory over the word and the precept. The yieldingness which is here enjoined is nothing akin to weakness, indolence, or indifference. It is a positive grace of the Spirit; it flows from the fulness of Jesus Christ.

What is it? We shall find the answer partly by remembering how, from another point of view, the gospel enjoins, and knows how to impart, the most resolute unyieldingness. If anything can work the great miracle of making a weak character strong, it is the gospel. . . . It can make the regenerate will say "No" to self on a hundred points where never anything but "Yes" was heard before. Nothing in the moral world is so immovable as the will of a living Christian sustained by the power of God the Holy Spirit on some clear case of principle.

Yieldingness, in our passage, is in fact **selflessness**. It is meekness, not weakness; the attitude of a man out of whom the Lord has cast the evil spirit of self. It is the discovery and practice of the blessed secret how to put Jesus Christ upon the throne of life, and let that divine fact within work upon the life without. It is the grace which manifests itself in a calm, bright, willing superiority of thought and purpose to considerations of self's comfort, credit, influence. It is the noble, the blessed readiness to rejoice, for instance, in the success of others in the field of Christian work as simply and naturally as in our own. It is the aim, not to get a reputation, but to walk and please God; not to secure the applause of others, but to compass their good and blessing; not to vindicate our opinion, but only and purely our Lord's word and truth; not to be first, but where He would put us—second, or third, or hundredth, if it is His will; not to get our rights for our sake, but to be loyal to His claims, and attentive for His sake, with scrupulous and kindly attention to the rights and wants of others. It is grace, passive in form, if I may borrow a phrase of grammar, but active in meaning. It is holy charity at her work of suffering long and being kind; envying not, vaunting not herself, seeking not her own, being not easily provoked, not reckoning up the evil, rejoicing with the truth, bearing, believing, hoping, enduring all things, in the path of the will of God, the path of service of His Son.

THE SEA AND THE SANCTUARY

David Ross

Thy Way, O God, is in the Sanctuary
(Ps. 77: 13).

Thy Way is in the Sea (Ps. 77: 19).

THE first of these utterances is surely easier for us to believe than the second. Everything in the Sanctuary utters His glory and speaks of the light in which God dwells and which no man can approach. How often on the other hand have we shared the desperate feelings of the disciples as they rowed against the waves and winds of a contrary sea and knew that "Jesus was not come unto them."

The sea often spells shipwreck and calamity. When the Psalmist is picturing the greatest conceivable **disaster** which might befall us, he speaks of the earth being removed, the mountains being carried into the midst of the sea, the waters roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. Yet knowing that God's way is in the sea, he has the assurance that the city of God cannot be moved, because God is in the midst of her (Ps. 46). No power or combination of powers can undermine His Kingdom, no gates of hell prevail against His church, His people.

Again, the sea speaks to us of unfathomable **depths**, which have engulfed men and ships innumerable, and even cities and islands. But God has promised that He will bring again His people from the depths of the sea (Ps. 68: 22). Again and again has His earthly people seemed about to be swallowed up when God has intervened, as at the Red Sea, and it has been Israel's enemies, Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, Babylon, and

Rome who have sunk as lead in the mighty waters. And this God shall save His chosen out of even deeper depths and bring them in and plant them in the mountain of their inheritance. And not only shall the dead in their graves hear the voice of the Son of God, but even the sea now so full of the victims of man's cruelty and nature's violence shall, at the Divine command, yield up the dead that are in it.

What a vivid picture of human **despair** is painted for us in the sea scene of Psalm 107:23—"They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end (literally, their wisdom is swallowed up). Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Ps. 107: 26-30). The cry of the storm-tossed disciples on the Sea of Galilee brought forth the reply, "It is I, be not afraid"; and as He whose way had been literally "on the sea," entered into the ship, there was a great calm and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Again the sea speaks of **distance** and separation. In Psalm 139 in which the God-consciousness, which is characteristic of the whole Psalter, finds its fullest expression and in which the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God are so strikingly and beautifully made

known, we read, " Though I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me." Of the expedition which Sir John Franklin led to the uttermost parts of the sea in search of the North-West Passage, all that was found by the rescue party was a heap of bones and some Bibles in one of which these comforting words were marked and underlined. To the opposite ends of the sea sailed Sir Ernest Shackleton. When his ship was wrecked and he had to cross in an open boat the storm-swept, uncharted seas of the Antarctic, he comforted himself and his comrades with these very same words. Thank God, we too may know in these days of war and separation that the love of God, whose way is in the sea, has been revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord and that from it neither height nor depth, neither time nor space, neither sea nor land, can separate His people.

And what shall we say to " the distress of nations," present and future, " with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after the things which are coming on the earth "? Again the answer is that His way is in the sea. " Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise Thou stillest them " (Ps. 89: 9). In Apocalyptic language the sea probably denotes the chaotic and unsettled condition of the nations from which emerge the beast-like tyrannies, present, past and future, but to all these God in His own good time and purpose says, as to the physical sea, " Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and

here shall thy proud waves be stayed." His way is in the Sea.

But His way is also in the Sanctuary, and if we follow Him there, we shall surely find the answer for which the Psalmist prayed. " Send thee **Help** from the Sanctuary " (Ps. 20: 2). This help has been laid upon one who is mighty, even the strong Son of God who came forth from the sanctuary, from Godhead's fullest glory, forth from the Father and His strong arm has brought us eternal salvation.

How intense and ardent is the desire expressed in the Psalms for the presence of the Lord. The soul longs, yea even faints for the courts of Jehovah, heart and flesh cry out for the living God. And this is not merely to obtain security and salvation, but to behold the beauty of the Lord. " My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see Thy **power and glory**, so as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary " (Ps. 63: 1 and 2). Man's chief end truly is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever, and there is no joy or glory comparable with that which comes to the soul which knows the rapture of the Sanctuary where God is known. " Honour and majesty are before Him; **strength and beauty** are in His sanctuary " (Ps. 96: 6).

In Psalm 73 we find the writer baffled and perplexed by the age-long and ever-recurring problem of the seeming prosperity of the wicked and the apparent defeat of the godly. All his efforts to understand and explain this were futile; it was too painful for him until he " went into the sanctuary of God: then under-

stood I their end." Only in the secrets of God's presence can we find true understanding of the ways of God to men and enter into the soul-calming, peace-giving knowledge of the purposes of the Eternal. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

It has been said, "The Book of Psalms contains the whole music of the heart of man, swept by the hand of his Maker, the lyrical burst of his tenderness, the moan of his penitence, the pathos of his sorrow, the triumph of his victory, the despair of his defeat, the firmness of his confidence, the rapture of his assured hope" (Prothero). As the book draws to a close, the note of assurance grows stronger and stronger with its ever repeated Hallelujahs, until it ends with the burst of Psalm 150:—"Praise ye the Lord. Praise

God in His **Sanctuary**. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

Then as we turn to the final pages of the inspired Book of God, we see unrolling before our vision "the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of Hallelujahs and harping symphonies" (Milton). "And I saw a heaven and a new earth and there was **no more Sea** . . . and I saw **no Sanctuary** (Temple) thercin for the Lord God and the Lamb are the **Sanctuary** of it." No Sea, no Sanctuary (in particular), for then everything will be **All Sanctuary**.

"God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
The unveiled mystery."

Our Landing

AFTER the return of the Prime Minister recently from his momentous and important tour to Russia, Egypt, and other places, the pilot who had flown the Premier 15,000 miles, was asked by a newspaper reporter what he considered was the most thrilling moment of the whole trip. In a quiet voice he replied, "**When we landed!**" Soaring above and far eclipsing all the exciting adventures of that journey was the surpassing joy of arriving home!

To those of us who are far advanced in years the anticipation of our own "landing" in the glory becomes an increasing pleasure. Although "goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our

E. R. M.

life," yet the best is yet to be. We know that "the end" of our lives will be better than "the beginning" (Eccles. 7: 8), for the beloved Lord will Himself be there to greet us when we land, and who can picture the joy of first gazing on His blessed face and hearing His much-loved voice?

"Oh! the blessed joy of meeting
All the desert past;
Oh! the wondrous words of greeting
He will speak at last."

Once there, we shall "go no more out." Precious fact! Yes, better far than any joy we have hitherto known will be our "landing" up yonder. He, so glad to have us in His home, for He will set us in the presence of His glory with "exceeding joy."

WITNESS. LEADER. COMMANDER.

F. B. Hole

AFFAIRS on the earth, whether in war or in peace, have their ebb and flow. If we are overmuch occupied with them our spirits and feelings will be subject to a corresponding ebb and flow: we shall alternate between depression and elation. To be securely anchored in peace of heart our minds must be stayed upon the Lord; and the knowledge of His fulness, expressed in all the characters He wears and the capacities He fills, is a great help to this.

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus were in the depths of depression. With them it was no ordinary ebb in the tide: events had the appearance of a tidal wave of disaster. Yet the exposition by the risen Christ of the "things concerning Himself" in "all the Scriptures" made their hearts to burn within them. We too may be disciples whose hearts are all aflame if we contemplate Him steadily and often in the same way.

We may safely assume that the great Messianic passage, Isaiah 52: 13-55: 13, had a prominent place amongst those to which the Lord directed the thoughts of the two disciples. In it, we start with a prediction of the coming exaltation of the once humbled Servant of Jehovah; passing to consider Him in His rejection when His soul was made an offering for sin. We discover that His shame and suffering instead of annihilating all prospect of His glory are the secure foundation on which for ever His glory shall rest. This is emphasized in the last verse of chapter 53: "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great . . .

because He hath poured out His soul unto death." Then in chapter 54 we read of the consequent restoration and blessing of Israel, when that hitherto barren nation shall burst into song. In chapter 55 follows a call to "every one that thirsteth," which must bring in the Gentiles. From the Old Testament viewpoint the blessing of Israel comes before that of the Gentiles, but in actual historical fact the cry to the Gentiles, which results in the calling out of an election from their midst, has preceded the national blessing of Israel.

In the coming day, of course, there will be an exhaustive fulfilment of chapter 55, in the millennial blessing of the Gentile nations in connection with Israel. Yet there is a present-day fulfilment of this chapter. Verse 5, for instance, foreshadows the announcement which the Lord made in Matthew 21: 43. So also "the sure mercies of David" (ver. 3) is quoted by Paul, in Acts 13: 34, as referring to Christ risen from the dead. Such mercies are now available to all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

This makes perfectly clear the bearing of verse 4, which may now occupy our thoughts for a few moments. In this verse the word for "people" is in the plural. Speaking of the once humbled Servant, who made atonement in His death, who is now risen and dispensing the "sure mercies of David," the prophet says, in Jehovah's name, "Behold I have given Him for a Witness to the peoples, a Leader and Commander to the peoples." In these characters He will fully be dis-

played in the coming age; we anticipate the spiritual blessing of that age, for we know Him thus today.

As the Witness to the peoples He stands absolutely alone. He only is the Declarer of God, being the only begotten Son, who abides "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1: 18). He is "the faithful Witness," and again, "the faithful and true Witness" (Rev. 1: 5; 3: 14). Hence in Him we really know God as He is. There is much need to continually remind ourselves of this, since the men of the world always have the tendency to judge of God by what they find in the world. Thus they utterly misjudge Him, and formulate their complaints against Him; and we may often be tempted to make the same mistake in principle, complaining of His ways in permitting this or that to come upon us. If, however, we turn our eyes upon Jesus, **and keep them there**, we shall be dwelling in the light of the knowledge of God. In Jesus the light of His countenance has been lifted up upon us, and thus we have peace.

If He stands alone as Witness, we can discern a contrast when we consider Him as Leader and Commander. Here others are necessarily in view—those whom He leads and commands. As Leader He goes before us, marks out the path and shows the way. As Commander He issues directions and instructs us in all that is the will of God. We need both: we find both in Him, for God has made that same Jesus, whom men crucified, "both Lord and Christ." As Lord He stands on God's behalf, administering and instructing, which answers to "Commander." As Christ He takes His

place as the risen and anointed Head of all redeemed creation, and Head of His church in particular. This is a fuller expansion of that which is set forth in "Leader."

His own words when on earth were, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12: 32). This is a clearer statement of the fact stated in verse 5 of Isaiah 55. We Gentiles who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," have been called by Him, and are a kind of firstfruits of the nations that shall run unto Him, because Jehovah.

As Leader, then, He puts Himself at the head of His saints, and He is their great Representative before God: as Commander, He speaks with all Divine authority in making known to us the will of God. Others are in view, as we have noted, yet in both these capacities He is solitary and singular. The offices are exclusively His. To no other do we owe allegiance. By no other can the authoritative word be spoken.

The commandments He issues are not legal enactments, on the keeping of which our standing before God depends, as was the case in the law of Moses. But nevertheless they are **commandments**. No Apostle speaks more of them than does the Apostle John, both in his Gospel, recording the Lord's words, and then again in his Epistle. The Apostle Paul asserts that even detailed instructions as to what is becoming in the assemblies of saints, are the commandments of the Lord (see 1 Cor. 14: 37). "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5: 3).

SOME NIGHT THOUGHTS.

J. T. Mawson

IT is a remarkable fact that not one of the four writers of the Gospels should have recorded all the words of our Lord as He hung upon the Cross. We should have thought that of all the words He uttered in the ears of men, these would have been the most eagerly recorded. It is more than possible that neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke were present, but they would often talk together of the scenes and be eager to record them. What is more remarkable is that John was present—so far as we know the only one of the disciples to be there—and he records but three, and these not the most important, we should think; which shews us plainly that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit had as much to say with what they left out as with what they recorded. Matthew and Mark record but one of the sayings which we might well call the central one of the seven; Luke and John record three each—but every one is in keeping with the character of the Gospel they were inspired to write.

Luke is especially the Gospel of Grace. The one thing above all others that the enemies of the Lord complained of, as recorded in it, was His interest in publicans and sinners. "Why do ye eat with publicans and sinners?" they ask in chapter 5. "He is the friend of publicans and sinners," they jeer in chapter 7. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them," they complain in chapter 15, and "He is gone to be guest with a man who is a sinner," was His crowning crime in chapter 19.

We see from the beginning to the end that they hated Him for this, so

when we come to the Cross we are not surprised to find that His utterances recorded there are in keeping with this. The first of the three is His great answer to men's hatred and cruelty—"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." There could have been no grace at all for men but for this prayer. If this prayer had been imprecatory instead of what it was, there would have been nothing but judgment for men; but as His first recorded words in this Gospel were, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" so His first recorded words on the Cross must be in keeping with that declaration. His Father's business was the salvation of men.

The next words are His answer to the cry of the malefactor's heart, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." What an answer! "Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

If His first words were His prayer for blessing upon mankind as such, His second words indicate how individual and personal the blessing is. Not in the mass does He see and save men but as individual souls having sins and needs. The last of the sayings recorded is:—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." It is not difficult to see how consistent this is with this Gospel.

What infinite grace flows in these words that he records—that a polluted and wretched sinner, washed from all his pollutions, should enter Paradise in company with the One who had filled the Father's heart

with delight! This exceeds every conception of ours, but it was not the end—God had something beyond even that for us. It would have satisfied us, but not Him; so we have the group of words in the Gospel of John. “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother . . . and the disciple . . . whom He loved. He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother!” There were no two people on earth who loved Him more than His mother and John. It would not have been in place to speak of their love in presence of His; but nevertheless it was a fact that their love to Him had brought them there that day—their response to His love to them. “Woman,” said He, “behold thy son!” and to John, “Behold thy mother.” That most surely meant “You love Me—love one another.” From that day forward they dwelt together in love and unity. It was the Lord’s great purpose that those whom He loved should love one another thus—it is the great triumph of Divine Grace. The Lord never said, “Love Me”; it were impossible to do otherwise if we know His love to us; but “we love because He first loved us”; and because we are so selfish and often think that words can take the place of deeds, He has commanded us to love one another. His death was the revelation of His love to Mary and to John, to you and to me. Those outstretched arms embrace the whole family of God and He says, Behold My mother and My brethren! Behold thy son! Behold thy mother! Thus by that cross are the saints of God gathered together in one—one flock, one family.

Now the Lord speaks of His physical sufferings; His strength was dried up like a potsherd, and His tongue clave to His jaws. Then broke forth His cry, “I thirst.” Did not ten thousand times ten thousand angels break through the host of His foes and refresh Him with purer water than that of Bethlehem’s spring? No, there was no answer to that cry from heaven. And what of men? Will they relent? For surely His thirst then was more than the physical thirst—He thirsted for a love responsive to His own; but He had to cry, “They gave Me gall for My meat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.” No, there was no succour from men for Him, their answer to the deepest need of His heart was vinegar—the sourlest thing that earth can produce. The challenge comes to each one of us—What shall be our answer to His thirst? Shall we pour out to Him the sweet wine of undivided hearts, hearts that have been won by His great love? The world still gives Him vinegar. Let us hasten to His feet and give Him the rich pure wine of our love. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments”—and we pour forth our love to Him as we love one another.

Now the last cry that John records is, “It is finished.” All His sufferings were over, but there was more than that in the words. He had accomplished the great work to secure for God what He desired—even worshippers. But these worshippers were to worship the Father; He was to be known in this family character so that He could say, “Thou shalt call Me My Father and shalt not turn away from Me” (Jer. 3: 19). He had accomplished that

work which enabled Him to say in resurrection, " Go unto My brethren and say unto them I ascend unto My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." Thus we group the sayings given by John together, and learn that they unfold for us a circle of Divine love in which we have our part.

To Matthew and Mark it was given to record the cry of a forsaken

One. Deep and mysterious it was; no mortal mind can understand it or mortal words explain it. It is the central cry of the seven; rightly so, for on its deep mysterious meaning there depends not only our salvation but the glory of God and the purposes of His love. Jesus our Saviour who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

John 13.

We often speak of the care that we should exercise so that there might be no breach in our communion with the Lord, but think of the care that He exercises. He girded Himself to wash His disciples' feet that they might have part with Him, and He is still girded for this service. How great His love must be! It is an affecting thought that all day long Christ's thought is, I desire that there should be no break between your soul and Me. It is not that He tells me to make it **my** business, but that He will make it **His** business. He does it by the ministry of the word to our souls, detaching us and cleansing us from everything that would bring in a shade of distance between Him and us. So that we can trace this work—this feet washing—up to the very heart of Christ; and surely nothing should affect our hearts like that. Do we live in the sense of His thought that there should be no break between Him and us? He makes those helpers with Him whose feet are washed.

The Grace of God.

Grace originates in the heart of the person who confers it. My want can never be the measure of the grace of God, though His grace covers all my want. Grace is the display of what God is to me and must ever be greater than my need. So it is written:—" Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

If Adam in the Garden had known the grace of God, he would not have hidden from God. He would have run to Him and confessed his sin and asked Him to clothe him, and had he done that he would not have been spurned, for grace does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Hard is the heart that ne'er has felt
The love of God to sinful men;
Which has not learned with love to melt
Pondering salvation's wondrous plan.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 12: 37—13: 30)

A SUMMARY of the situation up to this point is furnished by the Evangelist in verses 37-43. Jesus had done many signs before them, yet they did not believe on Him. The fact was this: their eyes were blinded. The blinding of the eyes of men is the work of the god of this age, as we learn from 2 Corinthians 4: 4. Yet there are times when God specially permits it to take place in governmental retribution, and so it can be attributed to Him. Such was the case here; such it had been in the days of Isaiah; and such it was again some 35 years later, when the testimony to the glorified Christ was refused (see Acts 28: 25-27). The unbelieving generation persists, and will still be found when the final judgment falls at the end of the age.

In Isaiah 6 the prophet records how he saw the King, **Jehovah** of Hosts. John tells us, however, that Isaiah "saw His glory and spake of Him"; evidently referring to **Jesus**. Again, verse 40 of our chapter is recorded in Isaiah 6 as "the voice of the Lord." In Acts 28 Paul quotes it as that which was said by the **Holy Ghost**. This casts a helpful light on the unity of the Divine Persons. We may not divide, though we may distinguish.

The effect of this blinding was that "they could not believe." Their minds were so befogged that faith had become a moral impossibility. No matter how brightly the light shone before them, they had no eyes to perceive it. There were, however, some—and these among the chief rulers—who were not completely

blinded in this way. Their minds were open to evidence, and the signs displayed wrought intellectual conviction in them. Now intellectual conviction, though an essential ingredient of living faith, is non-living, if by itself alone. It does not fructify in works but it is "as the body without spirit" (Jas. 2: 26). Living faith conducts the soul to God through Christ. This was unknown by these rulers for had they experienced it they would not have loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. The same test applies today. He who really believes in his heart that God has raised Christ from the dead, will not fail to confess Him with the mouth as Lord. If men do not confess, they do not really believe.

In verses 44-50 we get the Lord's own summing up of the situation as He brought to a close His testimony to the world. In chapters 3-7 the prominent thought is life, and Jesus is seen as the Life-giver. From chapter 8 to this point light has been a great theme, and Jesus is seen as the Light-bearer. Chapter 8: 12 gives the Lord's opening pronouncement as to this, and verse 46 of our chapter the closing word. We only emerge from the darkness as we come into the light of Christ. But the light that shone in Him was the full revelation of God so that he who comes into His light believes on, and sees, Him that sent Him. Being the Word made flesh He was not less than the Father whom He revealed, yet He had come into the place of subjection in order to make Him known and carry out His every commandment.

At that moment the Father's commandment was not judgment but life everlasting, hence He had hidden Himself from His adversaries instead of breaking them by His power. Still judgment will come in due season; the Judge is appointed, and on the basis of the revelation He had brought will they be judged. The Lord now addressed Himself to the work immediately before Him, to " save the world," and to bring in " life everlasting." So He still continued to speak after the Father's commandment and also, as He declared in chapter 14: 41, to do His commandment, which involved the cross as the necessary basis of both salvation and life. The immediate thing before Him was the gathering together of His disciples for the last time, that He might fully communicate to them the present purposes of the Father's love.

Chapter 13 therefore begins with a description of the spirit in which Jesus gathered His disciples together for the last Passover Supper. The other Gospels have told us all we need to know as to the surrounding circumstances; here we are made aware of the atmosphere of Divine love which graced the occasion. He was in the full knowledge of His approaching death, which is viewed as a departure out of the judged " cosmos " to the Father whilst He leaves behind in the " cosmos " a few who are recognized as " His own." He had spoken of these in chapter 10 as " His own sheep," indicating that He would lay down His life for them; now we discover how His love had been set upon them. He loved " unto the end," which as regards this world was death; but since death itself is but the door into

life eternal for them, the love abides to eternity.

Verses 2 and 3, as well as verse 1, uncover to our eyes things which otherwise were only known to God. Who could adequately read the love that filled the heart of Christ? Who could discern the hatred and craft of the devil which led him at that moment to inject the fatal thought of treachery into the heart of Judas? And who else was privy to that which filled the mind of Jesus in that sacred hour? We are permitted to know, however. As He faced the death by which He would depart to the Father, nothing was hidden from His eyes. He knew that He had come from God in order that He might carry to perfection both the revelation of God and the redemption of men. He knew that He was going to God in risen life as the firstfruits of a great harvest of blessing, the Head of a new creation. And He knew that though He was going forth to submit Himself to the hands of evil men, the Father had in reality given all things into His hands of perfect administration. Everything lies at His disposal, and the prediction of Isaiah, " The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand," shall surely be fulfilled.

In the full consciousness of all this He took the humble place of service in the midst of His gathered disciples. The pleasure of Jehovah is to prosper in the hand of " the Servant of Jehovah." In the coming day of glory He will cause that pleasure to prosper throughout a wide universe of blessing, but on the eve of His suffering He caused it to prosper by using His hands to wash the disciples' feet. In this He was

the Servant of the Lord as much as He will be in the coming day; and both forms of service are alike wonderful. He was serving God in serving them.

Peter's impetuous remonstrance was overruled to make plain the significance of all this. The marvellous humility of it was very obvious to him, and it prompted his remonstrance. He was plainly told, however, that he did not know the real meaning of the Lord's action when the Spirit was come; and we should understand too. What then was its significance? The words of Jesus, recorded in verse 8, provide us with the key. He spoke of "part with Me," and if we are to have the happiness of sharing with Him, He must render to us the service symbolized by feet-washing. By our feet we come into contact with the earth, and the dust and defilement which this involves must be removed from us.

The Lord's words in verse 10 throw further light on the matter. He used two words for **wash**, the first of which means to wash all over, or bathe. He saith, therefore, that he who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, thus alluding very evidently to the twofold washing of the priests—the bathing when they were consecrated (Lev. 8: 6), which was once for all, and the subsequent frequent washings of hands and feet whenever the sanctuary was entered (Exod. 30: 19). This once-for-all bathing is ours when we are born again. We are then born of water and the Spirit; and so, after reminding the Corinthians of the evils in which once they had been sunk, Paul could write to them, "But ye are washed," even

though they were still mainly of a carnal mind. So here, the Lord said to the disciples, "Ye are clean," adding, "but not all"—with Judas in mind. In spite of all his profession no new birth had ever reached Judas.

This symbolic action of the Lord, together with His explanatory words, was the suited prelude to the marvellous chapters that follow. His communications to the disciples in chapters 14-16, so to speak, introduced them into the sanctuary, while in chapter 17 we see Him going alone into the Holiest of all. When His death was accomplished and, having gone up on high, the Holy Ghost was given, we find that boldness to enter the Holiest is the common privilege of believers. But whether it was the disciples then, or ourselves today, this cleansing from the defilements of earth is needed, in addition to the new birth, if there is to be the enjoyment of part with Him in the sanctuary of God's presence.

This gracious service is still rendered to us by the Lord Himself just as we need it. It is part of His work as our High Priest and Advocate on high. Yet He is our Lord and Master, and therefore an Example to us that we should follow His steps in this. The Word is the great cleansing agent, as Psalm 119: 9 has told us. It requires, we believe, more divinely given skill to use it as cleansing water than as a shining light or a cutting sword. If we acquire this skill and exercise it in our intercourse with saints we shall be happy indeed. It is easier to gain knowledge about this thing than to DO it, as verse 17 indicates. Doing it, we should be restored and refreshed.

In keeping with this is the exhortation of Galatians 6: 1, yet spiritual "feet-washing" would deal with defilements which, though touching the heart and mind, have not as yet led to being " overtaken in a fault." If we knew better how to DO this thing we should often be instrumental in preserving one another from being overtaken and suffering a fall.

The moment had now come for Judas to be exposed in his true character. At the close of chapter 6 we find words of the Lord recorded which show that He thoroughly knew him from the outset. In His choice of the disciples He acted with Divine foreknowledge, and Judas was the man to fulfil the prediction of Psalm 41: 9. Nevertheless he had been commissioned and sent by the Lord as much as the others and those who received him and them had received his Master, and God Himself, from whom the Lord had come. The personal unworthiness of the servant did not vitiate this great principle.

Yet the terrible fall of Judas was a real grief to the heart of the Lord, which was not lessened by His divine foreknowledge, which enabled Him to see the end from the beginning. The Lord's emphatic pronouncement that one of the chosen twelve was about to reveal himself as a traitor also carried trouble into the minds of the disciples, and verse 23 bears witness to the fact that no suspicion of Judas was lurking in their minds. He appeared perfectly sincere to their eyes, so much so that the common purse had been entrusted to

him. The craft of Satanic camouflage is well-nigh perfect. Has there ever been a more striking illustration of what is stated in 2 Corinthians 11: 13-15?

"Who is it?"; that was the delicate question, and only one disciple was at that moment qualified to ask it. The bodily position of "the disciple whom Jesus loved" was an index of the state of his mind. Peter felt this and prompted the enquiry. The answer was given in a symbolic fashion. It was a mark of distinction for a guest to receive a dipped morsel from the host. But the honoured disciple was to prove the traitor.

We can discern three steps in his fall. First there was the unjudged covetousness which led him to become even a thief (12: 6). Then came the action of Satan, putting it into his mind to recoup himself in part (13: 2), since the three hundred pence which the ointment represented had not come into his hands; and he finally settled for ten per cent. of this sum. Lastly Satan entered into him. The master spirit of evil took personal control, that there might be no slip in the arrangements that should encompass the Lord's death.

The Lord accepted the situation and bade him act quickly. It seems that even Satan could not freely move in the matter without Divine permission; but that granted, under the imperative control of Satan, Judas rose and left.

He went out into the night, in more senses than one.

SOME OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS—No. 3.

R. McCallum

IN the book of Deuteronomy the words "remember" and "obedience" occur some eighteen times. Obedience is emphatically enjoined on the people of God. There is set before them the way of blessing by walking pleasing to God, and the way of cursing if they depart from God's commandments. There is no book probably in which the commandments and statutes of God come more prominently before the reader, and this is the book in which the Lord found His armoury when Satan approached Him in the wilderness to tempt Him.

When Joshua led Israel into the land, Miriam, Aaron and Moses were all dead. Prophecy in Miriam, Priesthood in Aaron, and the Law in Moses couldn't take them into the Land of Promise, but Joshua, a type of Christ, led them in. He was a man of courage and of confidence. The Ark of the Lord preceded the people, and when the soles of the feet of the priests touched the overflowing waters of Jordan they receded and the people passed through. Twelve stones were set up in the bed of Jordan and twelve stones set up on the other side of Jordan, doubtless speaking of death and resurrection with Christ. It was by that which prefigured the death of Christ that they were led out from bondage; it was by that which prefigured the death of Christ they were led into their possessions, and the story of Joshua is the story of how God's people were called upon to possess their possessions. The Land of Promise was greater than the land of possession, because they had to

go in the energy of faith, and every piece of ground they put their feet upon God had promised would be theirs. They only truly possessed that which they made their own, and it is ever so in the things of God; we only possess in truth that which we appropriate in faith and make ours.

They got a great victory at Jericho, but defeat at Ai because of disobedience. Then they went from victory to victory although they never really entered into the fulness of their victories because of their terrible failure to obey God's commands.

One of the moral difficulties of the Old Testament is how it was possible that God should call upon His earthly people to exterminate the Canaanites, but probably if we knew a little more of their manner of living, we would appreciate the demand of God better. Let me say this, that it is still recognized as an essential part of Medicine to excise a part of the body if necessary—amputation is at times necessary for the salvation of the body as a whole. A good and kindly surgeon may find it in the interests of the patient to remove a limb, and it is so when we view God's way with Canaan; immersed in the grossest idolatry and immorality, and given over wholly to spiritualism, God foresaw that for the blessing of mankind in general and for the good of Abraham's seed in particular, it was essential that the Canaanite should be exterminated. It was a necessity that they should be cut off, and by failing to carry out God's command Israel

suffered, especially in the times of the Judges.

The Book of Joshua ends with his death, and the Book of Judges, which covers a long period in the history of Israel, tells of their miserable failure. Men forsook the commandments of God, and at the end of the period we find that every man was a law unto himself. The time was a time of anarchy, although in the mercy of God there were judges raised up periodically. In the Book of Judges the unity of the nation is destroyed. There were 15 judges raised up from Othniel to Samuel to give deliverance from their enemies. God raised up judges delivering them from their enemies. He raised up Samson, a powerful figure, the Hercules of the Old Testament, and yet a morally weak man who couldn't govern himself, and I think as feeble folks we can take a great amount of courage from this. God's work has never been done by the Hercules; but by ordinary people in the energy of faith. You needn't sit down and do nothing because you are not an intellectual giant or because you lack the strength of a Samson. Samson failed miserably, although he was a deliverer of Israel.

Between Judges and Samuel, which tells of the setting up of the Kingdom, we have that beautiful little book of Ruth which tells of a Gentile bride called out to be married to one who was a kinsman redeemer. There are only four chapters—the first tells of Ruth deciding; the second of Ruth gleaning; the third tells of her resting, and the fourth tells of Ruth rewarded. And Ruth, this Gentile bride, a type of the Church called into association

with Christ the Kinsman Redeemer, has a privileged place in the genealogy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is truly blessed among women.

First Samuel is a very special book. In its opening pages it tells of the failure of the Priesthood, of the terrible acts of the sons of Eli, and therefore the setting aside of the Priesthood. It tells of the failure of Samuel, although in old age he challenged all Israel to find fault or flaw in him, and probably there was none, yet his sons were unfit to succeed him, and because of the failure of the Priesthood God gave Israel the desire of their hearts, a king, that they might be like other people. The man of their choice was a magnificent specimen to look at, but he was a complete failure from God's point of view; indeed he was an apostate king. Saul, who started off well, finished badly, even consulting the Witch of Endor instead of going to God. We see the kingdom transferred to the hands of the man of God's choice, David; for although David was a failure in some respects and has caused the name of God to be blasphemed amongst the nations, nevertheless he was a man after God's own heart. He was anointed three times—in Bethlehem in private; subsequently in Hebron over Judah, and then over the whole nation. First Samuel is taken up with the reign of Saul: 2nd Samuel is largely taken up with the life of David.

The first 11 chapters of 1st Kings are taken up with the reign of Solomon, great David's son, and we see David, the man of battle, who had it in his heart to build a house for

the Lord, not permitted to do so because he was a man who had shed blood. Solomon his son, setting forth Christ in His Messianic character as the One who will bring in peace for the nation, was permitted to set up the house of God at Jerusalem. But immediately after the 11th chapter of the 1st Book of Kings you find the nation divided. It could hardly have been otherwise. Solomon in all his glory had spent money most extravagantly — the House of God, his own palace, his harem of wives, his many concubines, his public works, had used up all the nation's revenue, and the people were ground under a cruel bondage at that time, from which they sought to be relieved in the days of his successor Rehoboam.

But Rehoboam, guided by the ill advice of young men, answered the desire of his people, saying, "That which ye suffered under my father can be compared to my little finger, but that which you are going to suffer under me shall be thicker than my father's loins; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The result was that the kingdom was divided, the ten tribes having their centre at Shechem and setting up a golden calf at Dan and Bethel so that they might not go down to Jerusalem to worship, and later going in for the grossest idolatry. It is during this period that God raised up in the northern nations those two champions of God who were also workers of miracles, Elijah and Elisha, to minister to the northern nation and to recall them to God; but very soon we see God permitting the people to be taken away into captivity by the Syrians, and their

history ends there. Some two and a half centuries later Judah was also carried away into captivity in Babylon. Now that takes us up to the end of the Book of Kings.

The two Books of Chronicles cover pretty much the same ground, but from a different point of view. While the Book of Kings treats things from a political point of view, the Book of Chronicles looks at things from the Divine point of view. It regards the people as under the rule of God it is ecclesiastical history that is recorded rather than political. The temple of God is right at the core of these books; first David's preparation for it, and then Solomon's dedication of it and the glory of the Lord coming to dwell upon it.

In Ezra and Nehemiah you have the story of the return of the tribes which were in captivity in Babylon. The priests Zerubbabel and Jeshua rebuild the altar and offer priestly sacrifices. Cyrus had helped with the restoration of the temple that had been destroyed in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. The Holy City and the Temple had been brought to ruin, and God in His wonderful providential way permitted Cyrus, King of Persia, to send these people back to Jerusalem to rebuild. Fifty thousand or so returned at that time, and first of all they set about rebuilding God's House. They did that with a good spirit until they were interrupted as a result of protestations being made by their adversaries, who informed the King of Persia that this work was going on, and that they were a warlike people who were hurtful to kings and capable of creating trouble, and therefore Darius for a time stopped

the work. For a period of twenty years the work of restoring the Temple was dropped until God sent forth His servant Haggai to minister among them, and under the ministry of Haggai the spirit of indifference was cast off, and in the spirit of energy they set out to do that which had been left undone.

Nehemiah was a man of wonderful resource and energy. He was born in captivity, and was the King's cup-bearer. I think you will find four kings mentioned in these books—Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus, and Artaxerxes, and in the days of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, the king's cup-bearer, was allowed to return to rebuild the city. He surveyed the city during the night; he preceded all his work by prayer and fasting; he co-ordinated labour; he divided it suitably; he encouraged the High Priest and women to do service, and carried on the excellent work of rebuilding the city. After he returned to Persia evil broke out again, but he returned and purged the Temple and the city, lock, stock and barrel, and cleansed it all.

Then the Book of Esther is that remarkable little book that doesn't mention the name of God. It tells of how Esther, a Jewish maid, became the wife of Ahásuerus, the Persian king. It tells how Haman plotted for the destruction of God's ancient people in the land of Persia, and it shews poetic retribution—Haman was hanged upon the gallows he had prepared for another. As the result of the energetic and courageous intervention of Esther, who did a thing which we read was not supposed to be done in forcing

her way into the king's presence, making her request for the safety of her people, she succeeded in saving them. To celebrate her successful intervention the Jews today keep the Feast of Purim. The name of God is not mentioned although the hand of God is over all the affairs of time. Divine superintendence is only seen by the eye of faith. It is a blessed thing for everyone of us when we see in every upset of life and every disappointment the permissive will of God, and it is surely heartening to everyone of us in these days of evil and unrest amongst the nations to see that behind everything there is God, and there is none behind Him. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of wrath He restrains.

We don't sit down and see a providence working without it being permissible for us in the spirit of faith to supplicate and, where possible, to seek to work out His purposes, so let us labour on in faith. Esther was not only marked by faith, but she was marked by courage and temerity, and those things were instrumental to the saving of her people. And if God is not mentioned it is because in the providential dealings of God we require the spirit of understanding to see that He is behind everything. I am sure in all those Scriptures, if you have time to go over them, you will see Christ portrayed. That is why Christ, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, shewed in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. May we have the energy of spirit to seek to discern them Him for His Name's sake.

GRACE AND LOVE

J. T. Mawson

WE are comparing the Gospels, chiefly Luke's and John's. Luke was a Gentile and wrote his Gospel for a Gentile. It shows the riches of God's grace overflowing all bounds, and blessing sinners of every sort. In the closing scenes that same grace is active on behalf of the Lord's own frail and failing disciples. Simon Peter is the special object of that grace. He was the vessel chosen of God to write "concerning the true grace of God" in which every Christian stands; and of this he had to write not only as inspired by the Holy Ghost, but out of his own experience. His words were to be infallible words because Holy Ghost-given, but he was to be able to say as he wrote, I know the truth of them in my soul's history. We should give thanks to God for that impulsive disciple and his blunders and failures.

The grace of the Lord to Simon Peter was displayed in three most affecting incidents, which are only related by Luke. First, in the Supper room the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." That was grace before the fall. Then at the time of the great crash when Peter had three times denied that he knew the Lord, before the men that held Jesus and mocked Him had blindfolded His eyes, we read, "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. That was grace to Peter at his worst. Then on the resurrection day, when repentance had done its work in Peter's soul, we read, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon." Put these three things to-

gether—"I have prayed for thee," "The Lord turned and looked on Peter" and "The Lord hath appeared unto Simon"—and we have a story of grace in three chapters which fills our souls with amazement. Truly where sin abounded grace did much more abound. And that grace abounds as full and fresh as ever for you and me.

Foreknowledge is a Divine attribute: Satan does not possess it, but the Lord does; and He knew that Satan was plotting to destroy the faith of Simon Peter, and He knew that the self-confidence of His disciple would make him an easy prey. But the Lord was ahead of Satan and had secured for Peter beforehand that grace which preserved his faith in spite of his great failure. We marvel that Peter was so little affected by the Lord's words. He thought he was equal to any test, he thought he knew himself better than the Lord knew him, and did not believe the warning that that very night he would deny Him thrice. If he had been a wise man and not so full of what Simon was able to do, he would have cast himself at the feet of the Lord and cried, "Preserve me, O Lord, for in Thee do I put my trust." But instead he answered, "Lord, I am ready"—if the devil ever laughs he must have laughed then—"I am ready to go with Thee both to prison and death."

We know the sequel. Peter meant to fight, but the power of the devil was too great for him and he trusted in himself. His self-confidence was his undoing, and would have been his damnation if the Lord had not

been greater than Satan and His grace greater than Peter's sin.

"The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." It was not a look of anger or even of reproach, but of tenderest pity. Would he ever forget it? As he bowed himself in the fierce agony of his repentance that look would be a memory more vivid than the cock crowing; it would be a ray of light in his darkness. Judas had gone out and hanged himself. Should he do the same? No. The devil could not drive him so far; he was preserved through that awful soul-struggle by the Lord's intercession and by that look of infinite grace; his faith did not fail.

We are not told where Simon went when he fled from the high priest's kitchen, but we may imagine his state of mind. He was beaten and battered and broken; Satan's attack had scattered the chaff of his self-confidence but the wheat of his faith remained, but how feeble it must have been. How wonderful was the Lord's way with him. Peter was His first thought on the resurrection morning, and the only one of the disciples to be spoken of by name. When the women arrived at the grave of the Lord they were greeted by a young man in white garments sitting there, an angel from heaven. He was waiting to give them a special message which the Lord had committed to him. "Go your way," said he, "and tell His disciples and Peter." But that belongs to Mark's record and we are considering Luke's, who gives us something more wonderful than the angel's words. Luke tells us of the disciples gathered together in the upper room, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath

appeared unto Simon." They were filled with amazement. "The Lord is risen"—that was joyful news, and yet what it might have meant for them! They were faithless men; they had forsaken Him and fled at the first blast of the storm. Might He not cast them off and choose others who would not fail Him? That would have been their natural thought, but He had appeared unto Simon. Simon who had denied Him thrice, and who had cursed and sworn about it. The man whose sin was the worst was the first to be sought out by the Lord and to receive from Him the assurance of unchanged and unchanging love. "The Lord is risen indeed" declared that He was greater than the greatest foe without; "and hath appeared unto Simon" declared that His grace was more than equal to the greatest failure within. These things were written for our learning. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever."

Now we come to John's Gospel, where we see greater things than these. It is the Gospel of Divine and infinite love. In the earlier part of it we see that love in its sovereign and compassionate out-going; we see it giving, giving, giving. But in the latter part it is the love of relationship, which cannot rest or be satisfied unless it can look with complacency upon the loved objects.

Chapters 13 to 17 open up for us the inner circle of His love, and to us as to the two disciples who followed Him in chapter one the Lord says, "Come and see." It is where He dwells and His love would have us dwell with Him there. We are

told that "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." His love for them could neither falter nor fail, and His loved ones are "His own." Let us grasp this word. It is unqualified. They were His exclusive possession, His peculiar treasure; as a mother might press her child to her heart and say, "My own." He will not admit the right of any other to them except the Father, and to Him He says, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me . . . They are Thine, and all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine" (chapter 17). He tells us also the measure and manner of His love—"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you." (chapter 15). Truly this love of Christ passeth knowledge.

But there is not only the love of our Lord for us in this Divine circle, but the Father's love embraces us also. The Lord has said, "The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me" (chapter 16). And the Father's love must not merely rest upon us, and be a matter of faith with us only, but He said to His Father, "I have declared unto them Thy Name and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them." The Father's love is to be within our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, our known and enjoyed portion; nothing less than this will satisfy our Lord.

"He gives not as the world but shares
All He possesses with His loved co-heirs."

The Father's love is greater and better than all it gives, and it is ours

to share it with His Son, and it is His to share with us.

Ponder this amazing thing—this double embrace of love. As the Father loves the Son, so the Son loves us, and the love of the Father to the Son is the love that abides on us; this is our joy, our place of rest, our dwelling-place for ever.

But it must be noted that for the knowledge and enjoyment of this relationship with the Father and the Son there are necessary conditions. We have the Lord's own word for this. He said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (chapter 14). And again, "If ye keep My commandment ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandment and abide in His love" (chapter 15). Nothing can dissolve the relationship or weaken the love that has set us in it, but we will all admit that it cannot be enjoyed if we are indifferent to the Lord's words or disobedient to His commands. The fuller our knowledge and enjoyment of the blessed relationship the more careful we shall be to disallow everything that might cause a breach in our fellowship with the Father and the Son. But the Lord Himself has and does exercise Himself in this matter also, for it means more to Him than to us.

First in importance is His prayer in chapter 17: there is nothing else like it in the whole of the Scriptures. The intercession for Peter in Luke's Gospel had his failure in view and as far as we know was confined to that; He was there an Advocate for

Peter with the Father. But in John 17 He asks not according to the need of the disciples, He goes exceedingly abundantly above all they could ever ask or think; He asks according to the height and depth of His love for them, and according to the Father's counsel about them. It has been called His High-Priestly prayer. I should not so describe it. His prayer for Peter might well be that, but this is the revelation to us of communion between the Father and the Son; the Son equal with the Father, and yet keeping the place of subjection which He had taken for the Father's glory, and receiving everything from Him and referring all things to Him. The prayer transcends all exposition: we can only meditate upon it and wonder and worship.

The Lord commits those in whom They were mutually interested to the Father's care. How wonderful are His requests. "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those Thou hast given Me." "I pray that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil (of the world)." "Sanctify them through the truth; Thy word is truth." "These things I speak in the world that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." All these requests that He made abide before the Father in all their power and fragrance, and every one of them will be answered according to the Father's love to the Son.

But scarcely of less importance is the feet-washing of chapter 13. The scene is one of the most moving in the Gospel records. We read, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and went to God." Consider the magnitude of

that. The whole range of God's glory in the limitless universe was committed to the hands of Jesus, showing the absolute confidence that the Father reposed in Him. Now mark well what follows. Knowing that, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel where-with He was girded." The first thing of all the things the Father had put into His hands were the feet of His own. His love made it necessary that He should thus serve them.

Peter comes into the picture again. He did not know that the washing of his feet had a spiritual meaning. We know its meaning now. It reveals to us the fact that our Lord, though with the Father out of the world, is girded to serve His own which are in the world, and that He is most careful of their feet. How and where His own walk is a matter of infinite importance to Him. If Peter had heeded the Lord's warning in Luke 22, his feet would have been washed by the word and he would not have trodden the miry road of denying his Lord.

The Lord's words to Peter shed much light on this action of His. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." The object of it was that His disciples might enter with joy into this circle of divine love, the fellowship of the Father and the Son. For this the soil of earth must be washed away. How often when we have sought the presence of the Lord we have found our spirits lethargic and dull, with very little desire for His company and things. This

is the result of the defiling influences of the evil world, and such a condition on our part is intolerable to the Lord, for His love is a sensitive love and feels it when distance has crept in. Then He brings His word in power to our souls, driving away the dulness and reawakening within us responsive love to Him and a desire to have part with Him in His things. This is the washing of our feet, "the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5: 26).

We need the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that LUKE portrays; we cannot do without the intercession, the advocacy, the compassion, the restoring grace. We cannot depend upon ourselves or our faithfulness to our Lord, but we can depend upon Him. We can bring the bur-

den of our weakness and need to Him. He is indispensable to our spiritual well-being, but for ever blessed be His Name, He is all-sufficient. But JOHN shows us that we are indispensable to Him. In speaking to His Father He gives emphasis to the fact that His own are His Father's gift of love to Him. He says, "I am glorified in them" and again, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." He cannot do without us, so precious were we in His sight that He gave Himself for us, and He lives for us to bring us into that circle of love where Father and Son can rejoice over us and rest in Their love.

Even There

A. M. Chambers

PSALM 139: 7-12

If I take the morning's wings
From His guiding Hand to flee,
Till I find myself at length
Lone upon the utmost sea,
Not a beacon anywhere—
Can He lead me even there?

If the night should cover me—
Darkness that enwraps the soul—
Hiding for a little while
Sight of yonder shining goal,
If I falter near despair
Will He hold me even there?

He will hold thee for His hand
Hath not loosed its clasp of thine,
He will lead thee, and to Him
Darkness as the light doth shine;
Doubt not—for His constant care
Shall be with thee—even there!

VICTORY

E. P. Brown

1 Corinthians 15; Romans 8

IT is the fashion nowadays to write and talk about the war. It permeates everything and everywhere, and one fears that thus it is having an influence on our spiritual lives that is truly devastating. We are engaged with things that are seen and temporal rather than with the things that are unseen and eternal.

In the Scriptures mentioned at the head of this short article, we have VICTORY as the dominating thought, and while everywhere we see the "V" or "Victory" sign, no true conception of what this means can be given or gathered. Everyone hopes for victory, and it would in truth be a disaster if victory did not crown the almost super-human efforts that are being made by the Allied Nations to secure it. How barren, however, will that victory really be in many respects, for many decades will be required to build up what has been destroyed, with suffering and misery untold for the present and even coming generations, as former joys and happiness cannot be restored. Think of things as we may—and much wishful thinking does abound—it cannot but be an empty victory for this generation, while we who read the Word of God know, too, how short its duration must be. In view of this, how gladly we turn to consider the victory of which our Scriptures speak, and dwelling upon the theme, we are truly transported from the seen to the unseen, and from the temporal to the eternal.

The first victory is over death, and what a victory indeed! Death is the

last and greatest enemy, so devastating, so implacable and so fearful, but thank God it will be completely wiped out—"swallowed up" are the words used so strikingly, just as the Egyptians pursuing the Children of Israel in a bygone day, were swallowed up by the sea and seen no more. How is this victory achieved? By the unseen power that will cause the corruptible to put on incorruption, the mortal to put on immortality. What is this mighty, unseen power? The God whom we adore, whose word cannot fail, who in His own time will manifest His arm. In the meantime death still holds the field and we cannot help but feel its hold; were it not for the look we can take into the unseen, we might well be discouraged. We can, however, confidently assert in the knowledge that Scripture gives us, that victory is ours.

The second victory is over the grave. Each time a body is lowered into a grave, that which is seen is almost beyond endurance. I stood beside an open grave recently and the dear bereaved one said, "Oh! I cannot bear it!" and all I could say was, "O grave, where is thy victory?" Its victims are millions upon millions and still the fight goes on, but we know there is One who has stormed the citadel and has made a breach, One who could say, "I am the resurrection and the life," and the glorious words He has given us are, "The dead shall be raised." Thus on every grave where a saint of God lies we can inscribe a "V" for victory, looking beyond the seen and temporal to that unseen world where there is no more crying or

sorrow and the grave is for ever abolished.

The third victory is over all our doubts and fears. We are so often depressed as we look around and see how thin are the ranks of faith and how the enemy has disrupted and torn what once seemed so bright and promising. How few conversions there are and how little interest there seems to be in divine things. Christian morale seems to be at a low ebb and the enemy appears to have succeeded in damping much of the enthusiasm that once existed; a black-out has set in so that our lights no longer shine out.

This is the seen and temporal side, but the Captain of our salvation addresses us from the unseen world, and those grand words of encouragement fall on our ears:—"Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Our doubts and fears are quelled, and in the knowledge of the victory that is truly ours, we can abound in the work of the Lord. Let us take down the black-out blinds, unfurl our banners, and in the Name of the Lord, go forth with the pre-

cious seed that soon the harvest may be complete.

The fourth victory is over our circumstances. What a catalogue of untoward things are brought together in Romans 8 and how formidable are all these enemies of our peace and happiness. We wonder so often whether our God does really care and whether His love is what we thought it was, so that our faith is well-nigh shaken with the struggle against circumstances that weigh our spirits down. Then through the gloom comes that lovely voice from the unseen:—"I have loved you with an everlasting love"; "As the Father has loved Me, even so have I loved you." Nothing can separate us from such love, and with a shout of victory we exclaim, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." We were victims of circumstances, but now victors through His love. Over all we can write our "V" for victory and give Him all the praise, saying truly:

His be the Victor's Name
Who fought the fight alone;
Triumphant Saints no honour claim,
His victory was their own.

Press On

Let us press on—
However dark the road may be,
Beyond it all the light we see
Of an eternity with Thee,
God's glorious Son.

Let us press on—
Forgetting what behind us lies
And reaching forth towards the prize
Beyond the tears, beyond the sighs,
So let us run.

E. W. T.

Let us press on—
Learning yet more of all His grace
While here on earth we run the race,
Until beholding His loved face:
The prize is won.

THE RAIN FILLETH THE POOLS

A. J. Pollock

PSALM 84 is composed of three parts, the word, **Selah**, indicating the break between the sections. The first part deals with the sanctuary; the second with the wilderness; the third with the protecting power of God. As saints we have to do with all these. The sanctuary comes first, as indeed it is highest. Without a **heart** knowledge of the sanctuary, there is no right estimation of things down here as bearing the wilderness character.

That the experience of the Psalmist was a matter of heart knowledge is plainly seen. He begins, "How amiable [well-beloved] are Thy Tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." That is clearly a matter of heart experience. It is possible for a saint to have an intellectual knowledge of these things, to be able to unfold the teaching of the Word of God on the subject in a masterly fashion, and yet never to have entered experimentally in the sanctuary, that is, the very presence of God. A simple believer on the other hand, with no ability to express in words what he enjoys, may be, as the Scotch phrase it, "far ben," that is, consciously in the Divine presence with all its wonderful subduing and yet uplifting effect upon the individual.

See how the Psalmist proceeds. His soul longs, even to fainting in his overpowering desires, for the courts of the Lord. His heart and his flesh cry out for the living God. And shall that experience be that only of a very favoured few, saints of great spiritual attainments, of great maturity? Will God stoop in the manifestation of Himself to the

lowly, the feeble and the insignificant?

How beautifully this is answered in the affirmative. It is stated in symbolic language. The sparrow, the **most worthless** of birds, five sold for two farthings, yet not one sparrow falling to the ground without the Father's knowledge, can find a house there. The swallow, the **most restless** of birds, can make a nest there, a resting-place, a place for her young, even at the altars of the Lord of hosts.

"Blessed," the word meaning happy in a superlative sense, "are they that dwell in Thy house, they will be still praising Thee." No saint can be consciously in God's presence without praise marking him. What shall Heaven be but **one** stream of endless praise? What a day will that be when

**"From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's
furthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the
countless host
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
ALLELUIA."**

And that song will never, never, never die down. May this not be the meaning of the voices of the six-winged seraphim of the prophet Isaiah's vision, when they cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6: 3), that in the thrice-repeated ascription, "Holy, holy, holy," there is the implication of the blessed Trinity—**Holy** to the Father, **Holy** to the Son, **Holy** to the Holy Ghost? We think so.

Now we pass to the **Selah** of verse

4. The saint is seen as in the wilderness. And surely this world is a wilderness wide for those who are consciously at home in the sanctuary. In knowing God in the highest sense of the word, the pilgrim is assured that God is his strength, and He will not fail. Our Lord Jesus Christ, exercising an unchangeable priesthood, "is able also to save them to THE UTTERMOST that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7: 25). Again we read of the Psalmist's allusion to the heart. If there is heart-knowledge in the sanctuary, there is a corresponding heart-confidence in God in the "testing circumstances of the wilderness of this life," in whose **heart** are the ways of them," that is, of God's house.

The pilgrim passes through a valley, and makes it a well. Even nature seems to teach us a lesson. Wells of water are not found on the mountain-tops. It is water flowing from the mountain-tops to the valley below that produces a well. The water of a well comes from much higher ground, and it is water, obeying the law of gravitation, that is ever seeking its own level, that leads to the well. A well is water seeking to spring up to its source. So we recall our Lord's own words, "The water that I shall give him shall be IN HIM a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4: 14). The valley is the symbol of trial and tribulation oftentimes. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me" (Psalm 23: 4). "Every valley shall be exalted" (Isa. 40: 4) when the King comes. The writer has been in

a valley so deep and narrow in Switzerland, that no sunshine entered it for nine months of the year. There is no spiritual valley so deep, or so narrow, but what the sunshine of God's love can penetrate every day and all day, but what the water from the mountain-tops can find a way to percolate through all obstacles, and spring up a well with refreshment.

If you were to travel from Mersa Matruh, Egypt, of which we have heard so much lately in connection with the war, and motored southwest across the terrible Libyan Desert a matter of over 250 miles, you would suddenly come across the green of hundreds of thousands of palm trees, waving fields of barley, flocks of sheep and goats, a prominent oasis, a busy town, Siwa by name. Why this change from the arid desert with no power of sustaining life to such a scene of fertility and plenty? It is all because wells of water have forced their waters to the surface, bringing life and refreshment and plenty.

So it is with God's care and goodness. "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (Isa. 35: 6, 7). Such is the imagery of the prophet as he foretells the blessing of a future day when our Lord shall come to this earth. He comes to the hearts of His own now in their sorrow and affliction.

Our Psalm speaks of the saint of God, "who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools." This

latter sentence is well worthy of a little careful thought.

The rain comes down on a given surface. Why is it that some parts get more than the rest? Why is it that water settles on one given spot more than another? It is that the water takes advantage of a **depression**, in which the heavenly refreshment can lodge. That is the meaning of a pool. Has this not got a spiritual application? Into whose heart can God pour lavishly consolation, fresh hope, a new sense of His love, but the heart that is **depressed**? Sorrow has rolled into the family circle. Health may be undermined, the very citadel of life threatened. The pinch of poverty may be terrible. How to make ends meet is a problem which many cannot see how it may be solved.

Over a long experience of visiting the Lord's people I have almost invariably found that the most tried saints were those in the deepest enjoyment of God's love, the most full of praise. "The rain also filleth the pools."

I remember being asked to visit a brother in the Lord, who was brought very low. He had been active in business, a fine preacher of the gospel, a pillar in the assembly with which he was connected. Now in middle life he was lying on a water-bed, paralyzed so badly that he could not even feed himself, the only movement left to him was the power of turning his head an inch or two. Fortunately his speech was not affected. I shrank from the interview. What could I say to a saint in such a case? If I stood by his bedside,

and in robust health, sought to comfort him, would it not sound like empty platitudes to one who was passing through such deep depression? I shrank exceedingly from this visit.

I got, however, the surprise of my life. I did not minister to him. He ministered to me. He was full of the Lord's goodness. I sat spell-bound whilst he spoke of how the rain had filled his pool. I went away refreshed and charmed. Here was a practical example of one who was more than a conqueror through Him who loved him. Welcome depression, if it makes way for the water to fill the pools.

"They go from strength to strength." In nature we go from strength to weakness. "The days of our life are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90: 10). But the knowledge that spiritually we go from strength to strength is happy contemplation for the believer. No grey hairs are found on the head of eternal life. So an aged servant of the Lord declared with joyful emphasis.

We come now to our third section. The Lord God is a sun and shield—light, sunshine and protection, a spiritual "umbrella"—in the day when the enemy attacks. How blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord of hosts. And we saints of this dispensation can go still further, and call Him with deepest reverence, "Our Father, which art in heaven." Can we not trust Him in all circumstances?

RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION, REDEMPTION

R. McCallum

" Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption " (I Cor. I : 30).

THE three thoughts, which I wish to emphasize, centre around the words Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption; or, Justification, Sanctification, and Salvation, all of which we find in Christ—nay, more, in Christ who of God is made these unto us who believe.

Justification. To be justified is much more than to be forgiven. The believer is much more than a pardoned criminal: he is by the imputation of righteousness—the judicial act of God—cleared before God of all guilt. Every charge is for ever removed: the barrier that separated him from a holy God is broken down, and the sinner is reinstated, reconciled, and set in proper relationship to God. Justification, unlike forgiveness, is once and for all and never to be repeated; but on the basis of being justified the believer will come again and again to seek forgiveness; for, “ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ” (I John I : 9).

Justification must not be regarded as dependent upon the personal righteousness of the believer. It refers to position and not to condition: to our standing before God and not to our state: to acceptance and not to attainment. The source of this blessing is grace “ being justified freely by His grace ”—the basis is the death of Christ. The method by

which the blessing becomes ours personally is by faith and the sequel is peace with God, as saith the scripture:—“ Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ ” (Rom. 5 : 1).

Justification is the foundation of holiness and the ground of assurance.

Sanctification. Etymologically the word has reference to being set apart or being made holy, and the use in Scripture is frequently ceremonial. For this reason it is not uncommon to read of vessels and pots—material things—being sanctified or made holy unto the Lord. This clearly means that they have been ceremonially set apart or dedicated to God’s service. It must have been quite possible to find in Jewish homes vessels similar in every detail to those in use in the temple or tabernacle, with this one distinction, that those in service in God’s house had been specifically set apart for such work. These were holy or sanctified; those were secular.

Now it is in the first place in this sense that we are called saints or are said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, and from this point of view it is true that all believers are holy or saints. How could it be otherwise if accepted in Christ Jesus? Even the Corinthian saints marked by schism, puffed up by fleshly pride, and carnal in their ways, are referred to as “ them that

are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." It does not demand much spiritually, however, to realize that there should be a corresponding moral condition in those who are set apart by God as vessels for His use, and therefore it is incumbent upon every believer to seek to produce in his life practical righteousness, to be manifesting a progressive sanctification, by God's grace. If justification is once and for all, and perfect from the beginning, here is something that continues to the end of the pathway, having degrees and constantly permitting of improvement.

It is important to remember that if Christianity is a **dynamic**—and it is—there is the Christian **ethic**, for "we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2: 10), and says the same apostle, "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3: 8).

It should be clear that righteousness as justification is salvation from sin's penalty, while righteousness as sanctification is salvation from its power. The former meets the guilty past; the latter meets the guilty present. The former applies to the sinner who puts his trust in Christ for salvation; the latter refers to one who is already saved and is the logical outcome of the former. The subject of sanctification is dealt with in Romans, chapters 6 to 8, and in the last chapter of that section it is made plain that the enabling power for a holy life is the indwelling Spirit of God.

We have viewed, then, two aspects of the redemptive work of Christ.

(I) **For us**, by the blood of the Cross, by which we have been delivered from judgment and death; and we can say with thanksgiving and joy, "justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (I) **In us**, by regeneration. We have received the very nature of Christ and are indwelt by God's Holy Spirit to counteract the flesh, and as the power for a life of purity. But there is an aspect still future, and it is this that brings to us joy exceeding and a hope full of glory for redemption will yet be **upon us**. Only then will our salvation be completed, and this is doubtless why the apostle puts redemption last in the verse we are considering. Our bodies shall be redeemed by resurrection or transfiguration: redeemed from the bondage of corruption or made immortal and incorruptible.

The dead who sleep in Jesus, are like an army in bivouac, awaiting the great reveille morning, when the trump of God shall sound. At the second trumpet the outposts are, as it were, called in to take their places in the great army of the Lord's Redeemed; while at the last blast, like an army glorious, all move forward to appear at the great review before the judgment-seat of Christ.

The comforting thought in these days of sorrow and travail is that nothing necessarily stands between us and this Promised Land of immortality and conformity to His image and glory, and in view of that day every believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. This seal is the pledge and guarantee of accomplishment for He "shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 13: 31—14: 20)

WITHIN the upper chamber a sense of ease prevailed when Judas had gone out into the night. Relieved of his presence, the Lord at once began His farewell discourse, which shed Divine light on all that was impending. At last He could speak with all freedom, though His disciples as yet had but little apprehension of His meaning. The first two sentences He uttered present us with a marvellous summary. Each sentence furnishes two great facts.

The hour had just struck when the Son of Man should have been glorified in public fashion, as the prophets had said. Instead of that He was on the point of going into death. But—wondrous fact—in that very death He was going to be glorified, inasmuch as every Divine and human excellence, which was intrinsically His, would there be brought into brightest display. Connected with this is the second fact, that God was perfectly glorified in Him. In the first man and in his race God had been utterly misrepresented and dishonoured: in His death the perfect revelation of God was carried to its climax; His character and nature vindicated and displayed.

Then further, in answer to this glorifying of God, there is to be the glorifying of the Son of Man in God Himself. Christ is now hidden in God, as Colossians 3: 3 infers, but He is hidden there as the glorified One. That the Son of Man should be glorified in this way had not been previously revealed. So this fact gives an unexpected turn to events;

as does also the second fact of this verse that this hidden glorification should take place **straightway**. No waiting until the visible kingdom comes for this! But on the fact of this present and hidden glory hangs the shedding forth of the Spirit to indwell believers, and consequently all the privilege and blessing which is properly Christian.

The glorifying of Christ in this heavenly and immediate way involved, however, the severing of existing links upon an earthly basis with His disciples, for at that moment they could not follow Him into His new place. Here for the first time does the Lord address His disciples as “children,” viewing them as those who had been introduced into the family of God, according to verse 12 of chapter 1. It is remarkable how much of John’s first Epistle is based upon the Lord’s words recorded in verse 34. We enter the Divine family by being born of God, and the very life of the family is love, for God is love. The Lord makes it plain that while He is in the hidden glory of heaven, the children, left in the world of darkness and hatred, are to prove their discipleship by manifesting love. **Glory** there, and love here, was the Divine thought. The former is perfect, but, alas! how imperfect the latter!

This approaching separation was a puzzle as well as a grief to the disciples, and Peter voiced their difficulty. His question drew forth the assurance that neither he nor any other could follow Him then, as He passed through death into His risen

glory, yet ultimately he should be there. There was a special meaning in the remark in Peter's case, as we can see by turning to chapter 21:18, 19; yet it surely has an application to all of us. He has made a way through death into resurrection that we all have to tread. Peter, not being content with the Lord's assurance only revealed his own foolish self-confidence. In that solemn hour the self-confident boaster was exposed, just as the traitor had been.

The word of warning was at once followed by a word of exceeding grace. Jesus knew well that these disciples in spite of all their failures did really love Him, and the thought of His departure was a sore grief to them. Hence the words that open chapter 14. It was beginning to dawn upon them that they were to lose His visible presence with them: that was the trouble that burdened their hearts. But then the invisible God had ever been to them real, as an Object of faith. Might not Christ from henceforward be the same? He would indeed be so. As an Object of faith He would be a living, bright reality to countless millions, whereas He could only be an Object of sight to a few in one locality at a time, did He remain as He was. The first item to comfort troubled hearts then is this: Christ, as the risen Victor over death, the Object of simple faith.

And the second item is this: a place prepared and secured in the many abodes in the Father's house on high. Now the disciples were men who had staked all on their belief that they had found the Messiah present on earth in flesh and blood. They had given up such place as

they had possessed on earth and, if He was going to leave them, for what? As they learn here, for a place of nearer relationship, of far greater elevation, abiding eternally beyond the reach of death. What a marvelous exchange! The earthly Temple had been "My Father's house" (see 2: 16); this is now disowned, and the true "Father's house" is found on high, into which He was about to enter. In it there are many abodes, as had been indicated by the many chambers in the earthly type. Their particular place and ours was to be prepared by His entering in. He holds it for us as our Forerunner, as is shown by Hebrews 6: 20.

Of necessity therefore a time must come when the saints enter into their prepared place; so in verse 3 we find, a third item of comfort—His personal coming to receive us unto Himself, that we may be with Him in the Father's house. The disciples must have known from the Old Testament that there was to be a personal coming of Jehovah: for instance, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. 14: 4, 5). But they had not realized that "Jehovah" was "Jesus," and they knew nothing of this coming **in order to receive saints unto Himself**, for it had not been announced. It was as much a new revelation as that saints should have a place **in heaven**, or that the Messiah should be **there** as an Object of faith, instead of being visibly present on the earth.

We may say then that verse 1 gives us in germ that life "by the faith of the Son of God," of which Paul speaks in Galatians 2: 20. Verse 2

gives us in germinal form the truth of the heavenly calling, more fully expounded in Ephesians 1: 3-6 and in Hebrews 2: 9-3: 1. Verse 3 gives us the first intimation of the coming of the Lord for His saints. Their rapture into His presence above is more fully expounded in 1 Thessalonians 4: 14-18. There also, as here, this truth was made known to bring comfort to troubled hearts.

Jesus credited His disciples with knowing both where He was going and the way. Thomas was the disciple of materialistic and therefore of doubtful mind. His objection served to bring forth one of the Lord's greatest pronouncements. He is the way to the Father, the truth about the Father, the life, in the energy of which the Father can be really known. There exists no other avenue of approach than Him. Moreover, being in the fallen life of Adam, we have no capacity to enter into the knowledge of the Father: such knowledge is only possible for those who are in the life of Christ. The more we meditate on these words the more we shall perceive the all-sufficiency of Christ; as also that they yield their tribute to the fact that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him (see Col. 1: 19; 2: 9).

Philip's plaintive request in verse 8 shows that he too desired to have the Father displayed before his eyes in a material way. He was not wrong in this, but only in failing to discern the display that had been made in Christ, who was the Word made flesh. As John says in the opening words of his first Epistle, the Word thereby became **audible, visible and tangible**. The Father therefore had been perfectly shown forth. The

words of Jesus were the Father's words, and His works were done by the Father who dwelt in Him. In verse 17 of our chapter we have an allusion to the fact that the Spirit was with them dwelling in Christ; and here it is the Father who dwells in Him: thus our thoughts are again conducted to Colossians 1: 19.

His words and works corroborated the great claim which the Lord twice makes here. As to essential being and life and nature, He was "in the Father," as also the Father was in Him, in manifestation and display. The disciples should believe this just because His own lips stated it; but if not, they should receive the evidence of His works, which so plainly declared it. And more than this, the day was coming, as stated in verse 12, when similar and even greater works should be done through the disciples, and that because He was going to the Father, which as we have learned in chapter 7, meant the coming of the Spirit. At that day the disciples would discover themselves to be in Christ and Christ would be in them (see verse 20), and this doubtless explains the "greater works." Before His death and resurrection the Lord was "straitened" (Luke 12: 50); but once that was accomplished and the Spirit given, He could freely operate by the Spirit through His disciples. There was no day in the Lord's ministry when 3,000 souls were converted as on the Day of Pentecost; nor did His labours cover the mighty circuit of "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum," as did those of Paul.

In verses 13 and 14 the Lord comforted His disciples with the power

of His name. He indicated thereby that He was going to leave them to serve as His representatives. Their requests, if really in His name, would be certain of fulfilment. He would Himself act on their behalf though absent from them. His object in so doing would be not only the maintenance of His own interests, but that the Father should be glorified. Thus the Father would be glorified in His activities in resurrection and glory, just as He was also in the dark hour of His death.

No doubt this acting and asking in His name had special reference to His apostles, yet it surely applies to us all. We have to remember that we can only rightly use our Master's name in connection with His cause and interests. If we attempt to use it merely for the furtherance of our own personal desires, we are guilty of what our Law Courts call a misfeasance, to which serious penalty is attached. The promise here only applies, of course, where the prayer is genuinely in His name.

Thus far we have had five items of great comfort before us, calculated to assure the sorrowful hearts of His disciples that there was going to be great gain for them, in spite of the fact that they were to lose His presence amongst them. Let us recapitulate them: the fact that He would still be accessible to them as an Object of faith; that there was a place assured to them in the Father's house; that He would come again that they might be with Him in that place; that meanwhile the Father had been fully made known to them in Him; that they were to remain in the world as His representatives, with the authority of His name to give potency to their prayers. We

now pass to a sixth item of equal comfort.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is definitely promised. The Lord only presumed one thing—that they really loved Him, for genuine love always expresses itself in obedience; and love is itself the Divine nature. Just that is taken for granted. And taken for granted, He would pray the Father when He ascended on high, and in response to His request the other Comforter would come. Now "Comforter" means, "One who stands alongside to help." Jesus Himself had been this amongst them on earth, and would yet be it, though absent from them **in heaven**; for "Advocate" (1 John 2: 1) is the same word. The Spirit would be this with us here **on earth**, and once come, He abides with us for ever.

The Comforter is also the Spirit of truth. Truth, together with grace, "came by Jesus Christ" (1: 17), and He is the truth, as we have just seen, presented to us in an objective way. The Spirit of truth is now to come, indwelling the saints, and thus bringing truth into them subjectively. Hence when we come to 2 John 2, we read the truth "dwell-eth in us" by the Spirit, as well as being "with us for ever" in Christ. The world does not share in this. It has not the Divine nature, nor does it walk in obedience; hence it cannot receive the Spirit. It neither sees nor knows Him, occupied as it is with material things.

All this was an assurance to the disciples that they were not to be left "comfortless," or "orphans," but that by the Comforter He would come to them, and thus His presence be a reality to their hearts.

THE WITNESS OF SIMON PETER

J. T. Mawson

WHEN the time came for Simon Peter to write his Epistle the Holy Spirit of God brought to his remembrance what he had seen and heard (John 14: 26) and gave him the thoughts and the very words with which to express them. Like all the rest of Scripture what he wrote was inspired of God (2 Tim. 3: 16), and his words are not those which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth (1 Cor. 2: 13). But what he wrote was what he had witnessed and out of his own experience. He had been one of the Lord's chief companions for more than three years, and had been impressed by the holiness of His life; this comes out in his memorable confession of the Lord, when many of the disciples forsook Him. Then he spoke out that which God had taught him: "We have believed and known that Thou art the Holy One of God" (John 6: 69; New Trans.). That was his confession of and to the Lord and it afterwards became a prominent part of his ministry in public preaching (Acts 2:27) and when he wrote his Epistle.

When writing of our redemption he tells us that it was by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb **without blemish and without spot**. This is the firm foundation of all our blessing, and it has secured glory to God. A holy God could not have accepted a blemished sacrifice, nor would one of lesser worth have availed for us. Only in divine righteousness could the grace that saves reach sinful men.

He knew that the redeemed of the

Lord would need an example and a Leader in whose steps they would follow; and he sets before them no less a One than Christ Himself; but he is careful to state, that He "**did no sin, neither was guile in His mouth.**"

If they were called upon to suffer, Christ Himself had suffered before them, but He suffered as the Just One for sins. That statement cannot be too often quoted, "**Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just One for the unjust** that He might bring us to God."

"Without blemish and without spot"! "**He did no sin, neither was guile in His mouth**"! He was the "**Just One for us the unjust**"! This was Peter's threefold witness to the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The sinless One was a sufferer in this world of sinful men. The Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ (chap. 1: 11), and Peter had been a witness of these sufferings (chap. 5: 1). He suffered for sins; it was for this He came into the world. "**His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree . . . and by His stripes we are healed**" (chap. 2: 24). None can be a partaker of these sufferings; the cross stands alone in its mysterious darkness. No created being can fathom the depths of the woe that pressed from the soul of the suffering Saviour the unanswered cry, "**Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani.**"

But He was there, the Substitute
 For our offences to atone,
 To Him our guilt did God impute
 And there He bore His wrath alone,
 That we, forgiven and set free,
 Redeemed by His most precious blood
 From sin and all iniquity,
 Might find our peace and joy in God.

But He also suffered at the hands of men; He was despised and rejected by them. They reviled Him, but He did not answer in kind; when they caused Him to suffer, He did not threaten them—He wept over them, and prayed for them, and died that they might be saved; and He suffered thus with us in view, that He might leave us an example that we should follow in His steps (chap. 2: 21). It is our privilege to be partakers of these sufferings for His Name's sake (chap. 4: 13).

He tells us we must not be surprised when called upon to suffer, for it is not something strange; Peter would remember the Lord's own words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." We are to expect the suffering, and to rejoice in it, for we are to be made glad with exceeding joy when Christ's glory shall be revealed (chap. 4:13). Surely Peter had those other words of the Lord in his mind as he wrote, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake; rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven." The reproach of Christ is greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

Peter had also observed that it was in subjection to the will of God that the sinless One trod the path of suffering until He could say, "It is

finished." Nothing could turn Him out of the path of God's will. The contradiction of sinners could not do it; the subtlety and the power of the devil could not do it; His friends could not do it, Peter on one occasion, with the boldness of ignorance, had attempted to do it, only to be sternly rebuked, because he savoured not the things of God but of men. He set His face as a flint. Peter never forgot that. He addresses his Epistle to those who had been elected and sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ and he calls them "children of obedience" (chap. 1:14; N. Trans.). He presses God's will upon us, as such; he tells us that it is the will of God that we should be known by well-doing; that it is better by the will of God to suffer for well-doing than for evildoing (chap 2: 15); that our one aim in life is to live for the will of God (chap 4: 2), and if we do suffer according to His will, we can commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator (chap. 4: 19); and in this we should be following in the footsteps of Jesus, who when He suffered, committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously (chap. 2: 13). Submission and not self-assertion is to be a definite feature in our lives. We are to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand (chap. 5: 6); to be subject one to another (chap. 5: 5) and to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake (chap. 2: 13).

The transfiguration of our Lord on the holy mount, had made an indelible impression on the soul of Peter: it was the sure pledge to him of the glory that should follow the sufferings. He had been a witness

of the sufferings of Christ, but he had also been given a glimpse of the glory that should follow. "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty," he says, "when we were with Him in the holy mount"; for "He received from God the Father honour and glory when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (2nd Ep. 1: 17).

The glory is to be revealed. Its revelation is our lively hope to which God, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us; and Peter cheers the suffering saints by reminding them of it. Our faith may be tried, but if so it is going into God's treasury and will be found more precious than gold that perisheth; it will be unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. We look on to that day—that day of manifestation, when everything will be seen and appraised at its true value. Hope must be active as well as faith; we are not to let our lamps grow dim, but to gird up the loins of our mind, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (chap. 1: 13).

Peter had not been docile and subject to his Lord like his friend John, but the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul had not let him go. We can understand his feelings as he wrote, "For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." With what grace the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul had dealt with him when he went astray; he could write, "The Lord is gracious"; he had drunk deeply of that grace. None knew it better than he. With what grace the Lord greeted him

when Andrew introduced him at the first, and at every crisis and turn in his chequered soul-history grace abounded to him, until fully restored to confidence in the presence of his brethren he was recommissioned by the great and chief Shepherd, and could write of "the crown of glory that fadeth not away" that He, the chief Shepherd, will give at His appearing to all who care for His flock.

Peter had suffered for his self-confidence, the root of which was pride of heart, and he desired to save the beloved saints to whom he wrote, and us, from this folly; hence his exhortation, "Be clothed with humility" (chap. 5: 5). The R.V. reads, "Gird yourselves with humility, and serve one another." The New Translation reads, "And all of you bind on humility towards one another." I am sure that Peter had in his memory the unforgettable act of the Lord when on the night on which He was betrayed He rose from the supper-table and laid aside His garments and took a towel and girded Himself and began to wash His disciples' feet. Peter had resented the Lord's taking that place of lowly service to him; he did not understand then that Divine love must serve its objects as long as a need remains; and while the feet-washing was a symbolical act, and while in it there is a depth of meaning only discerned by loving hearts, we must not miss that which lies on the surface. "I have given you an example," said the Lord, "that ye should do as I have done to you." Luke tells us that at that same Supper He said to them, "I am among you as He that serveth." God looks for the reproduction of the features

of His Son in us, and if our hearts are affected by the love of the Lord we shall gladly serve one another with humility of heart. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." And grace from above and humility within are needed for such service.

When Peter wrote, "Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you," did he remember the storm on the sea? when he and his brethren in a panic of fear awoke their sleeping Lord with the faithless cry, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" Surely never again after that experience would he doubt the care of his Lord.

Had he his former inflated thought of himself and the dire result of it in mind as three times over he exhorted his readers to be sober? Three times he had denied the Lord, he had not been sober then and he did not watch unto prayer; hence the devil found him an easy prey, and would have devoured and destroyed him had it not been for the intercession and restoring grace of the Lord. But how sobered he must have been as he thought of his folly and sin, but more so, a hundredfold more so, as he contemplated the sufferings of his sinless Saviour for his fleshly self-confidence and the sins which were the fruit of it. We can only get a right estimate of our sins as we view them in the light of the cross. How deep must have been his feelings as he remembered it all, and wrote, "You who are kept by the power of God" (chap. 1:5; New Trans.); for he had been kept that his faith failed not. The devil as a roaring lion may seek to devour those who belong to Christ, but his

devilish hatred of them will not avail him, nor all his subtlety and strength, for not even he can pluck them out of the Shepherd's hands, and the Father who gave them to Him is greater than all and no one can pluck them out of the Father's hand. Yet with his own experience in mind Peter warns us to be sober, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end" (chap. 1:13). "The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (chap. 4:7). "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" (chap. 5:8).

Three times the Lord had challenged Peter with the searching question, "Lovest thou Me?" and at least three times, four in fact, Peter urges us to love the brethren. "Unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (chap. 1:22). "Love the brotherhood" (chap. 2:17). "Love as brethren, be pitiful" (chap. 3:8). "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves, for love covers a multitude of sins" (chap. 4:8; New Trans.). Peter had learned from the Lord's own words that the way by which all men would know that they were His disciples would be if they had love one for another. He would remember the Lord's resurrection message, "Go unto My brethren," and he did not forget that three times over He had given them a commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

(concluded on page 142)

BECAUSE THOU DIDST IT

A. J. Pollock

A VERY large number of God's dear people are passing through unusual circumstances, and many are puzzled and perplexed why this has happened, and why that has been allowed.

A loved husband, or brother, or son, has been called to play his part in the great war that is raging in every part of the world. Earnest and persistent prayer has been made for the safety of the loved one. One day a War Office telegram arrives, with the sad and heart-breaking news that the loved one has been killed in action. The blow is stunning. God could have prevented the catastrophe. Why was it allowed?

In such similar straits was David when he wrote Psalm 39. He was overwhelmed. If he spoke at all, it would be to call God's love in question. But, as a sheet-anchor in a raging typhoon, he held to his belief in God. He sinned not with his mouth. He said, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because **THOU didst it**" (verse 9). David looked past second causes up to the great First Cause of eternal love. He exclaimed, "**Because THOU didst it.**"

You may never be able to unravel your tangled thoughts on the vicissitudes of life, but if your foundation holds, "**THOU didst it,**" then all is well.

We must not reach God through our circumstances, but rather reach our circumstances through God. We must **begin** with God. God is good, God is love, His every act pure bless-

ing is, did we but know it. We begin with God, and if we truly begin with Him, we can face every wind that blows.

It is something like the Christian farmer, who erected a weathercock on his barn, bearing the words, **God is love.** C. H. Spurgeon in his usual witty way exclaimed, "You have placed an immutable truth on a very mutable pivot." The farmer responded, "The love of God is indeed immutable, and whichever way the wind blows, **God IS love.**"

The wind for you may be the north wind of bitter adversity, and it may carry with it tidings of death, but whichever way the wind blows, **God IS love.** That is our sheet-anchor. That never fails. That is our peace of mind.

We do not always see far enough. The biting famine gripped the land of Canaan. Jacob, aged and infirm, heard there was corn in Egypt, so he sent his sons down to Egypt to buy corn. For long years Jacob had mourned the loss of his son Joseph. He deemed him dead, torn by a wild beast, when his sons brought Joseph's coat of many colours stained with blood. Now a fresh blow fell. The brethren came back from Egypt, but bringing the news that the great lord of Egypt would furnish them with no more corn, unless they proved their bona fides by bringing their youngest brother, Benjamin, with them.

Driven by the remorseless pangs of hunger, Benjamin had to go with his brethren. His father wailed out

in his sorrow, " Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not . . . and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me " (Gen. 42: 36). Were they? Did Jacob see far enough? Do we?

The fact was the famine was to be the very means of restoring Joseph to him, and, not only so, caused Jostph, in his high and exalted position as next to Pharaoh, to

care for his father in the richest part of Egypt till he died.

Yes, you may be dumb with sorrow, not a word may pass your lips in your grief, but oh! what a lightening of your anguish to be able to whisper into the ear of your heavenly Father, " THOU didst it." No second cause in that. We begin with God, reach down to our circumstances, and end with God. Amen. Hallelujah.

THE NEW ORDER

A. M. Chambers

There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:

And He that sat upon the Throne said, " Behold, I make all things new " (Revelation 21: 4, 5).

Pain, sorrow, death, a cry,—
There read earth's history!
And as the centuries roll by,
And man his foul iniquities heaps high,
Is there no hope afar we may descry,
No glimmer of some other destiny
Than through the years
More blood—more tears?

Not force of arms, nor schemes
That flow from any streams
Of human wisdom, or fair dreams
Of philosophic thought, can any gleams
Of a New Day create. Only the beams
Of the True Light
Can end the night.

Only when from the Throne
He speaks,—(to Whom a crown
Of thorns we gave; Who hung alone
Upon a cross we made;)—only when He makes known
His kingly power, and the wide earth doth own
Him Lord of Lords, shall cease the age-long groan,
And the sweet word be true
" Lo, I make all things new."

THE STATE OF ASSEMBLIES

J. G. Bellett

WE easily perceive different measures of attainment, both in knowledge and grace, in the churches of old. The elevation, for instance, of that at Ephesus was much above that at Corinth. At Corinth the apostle had to occupy himself with the corruption of various errors and abuses, and was thus hindered from bringing out to the disciples the strong and rich meat of the word. He kept from them that "hidden wisdom" which he had in store for the "perfect," because they were "carnal . . . babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3: 1). But at Ephesus his course was free; he had not to stop in order to correct abuses and error, but could go on to feed the church with wisdom and knowledge and reveal to them "the mystery" or "hidden wisdom" which he had to keep back from the saint at Corinth. At Corinth the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, had to take care of their own things and show them for correction; but at Ephesus he could do his more blessed work of taking the things of Christ and showing them to them for edification and comfort.

So that in distinguishing the condition of these two churches I might say that the priest was trimming the lamp at Corinth, using the golden snuffers there for correction of evil; while at Ephesus he was feeding the lamp, pouring in fresh oil for the filling and brightening of it with increase of light and grace.

The other churches under the care of Paul occupied, as I judge, certain standings between Corinth and Ephesus; that is they did not call for the same measure of rebuke as

Corinth, nor did they stand so much beyond the necessity of all personal notice as Ephesus. But in the Epistles to them we discern a mixed action of feeding and trimming the lamps. Indeed, I might class the churches in Galatia with that at Corinth for there such error had entered that the apostle had little to do but to correct and rebuke it, and thus, as it might be, restore the minds of the disciples. But whether it be at Rome, Philippi, Colosse, or Thessalonica, we see the apostle applying himself to the evil and the good that was among the saints there; and I would briefly look at each of them.

Thus at Rome he has in view to bind Jewish and Gentile believers together as among the disciples in that city there appears to have been the retaining of their several prejudices which were threatening to divide. A great deal of blessed truth is brought out in the epistle, but the present practical end of it seems to be the union and forbearance of the saints, one towards another.

At Philippi the church was beautiful for much grace, and for grace too that was peculiar to herself. Yet the apostle in his epistle to that church evidently alludes to symptoms of disunion which had appeared among them. But because of the other graces that were there he alludes to this evil with marked tenderness and reserve, often expressing the comfort wherewith he was comforted in them. And this tender style of the apostle, while noticing the evil among the Philippians, should tell us when we see much of the grace of Christ in a brother we should re-

member that when dealing with evil that may be in him also. It is not that the apostle overlooked the evil at Philippi but he remembered the grace that was there; and this imparted a chastened and affectionate tone while addressing himself to the evil.

At Colosse, the apostle feeds the saints with most precious knowledge, with the richest thoughts of Christ and His fulness, but he evidently feared the entrance of Judaizing principles among them, for which fear he gives us clearly to see that he had good reason. The only divine corrective of that evil is the knowledge of the sufficiency of Christ for all the necessities both of the sinner and of the saint.

At Thessalonica the coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus had been especially received through the apostle's ministry, and in the epistles to the church there he feeds them with further light on that great doctrine. But while he does that he has also to correct a certain practical error which was peculiar to them.

Thus we clearly discern different conditions in the grace and knowledge of the different churches. All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and we may bless God that we have His own inspired answer to so many anxieties and questions that might arise in our hearts while walking one with another.

The fact that I have already noticed so clearly shows us this, that the apostle withheld from the Corinthians the revelation of the mystery which he so fully made known to

the Ephesians. And this at once shows how impotent and unwarranted the requisition is that the minds of all the disciples should be found exactly according to one measure and standing before the fellowship of the church can be allowed or administered. Nay, so far from this, I am free to believe that if a member of the church at Ephesus had visited Corinth he would have found them so concerned with questions and strifes, which had never troubled him or his brethren at home, as might have left him in doubt respecting them. And one going from Corinth to Ephesus would have found them occupied with truth which he had never heard of at home, that he might have suspected, in modern language, that they were all in the clouds at Ephesus.

Now I believe we see among the saints at present what thus might have been seen among the churches of old; we have our Ephesian and Corinthian difficulties still. The truths received by some disciples are treated as mere speculation by others, and the condition of some is low and doubtful. The large and blessed mind of God which filled the apostle could, of old, survey them all and provide for them all, and feed them at Ephesus and trim them at Corinth. But we are weak and narrow-hearted; and the only result commonly is to walk in mutual distance and suspicion. Thus we do not understand one another's speech and we are scattered. But better is it to be scattered than to be brought together on terms of any bond short of God's own bond in the Holy Ghost. Whereunto we have already attained, in that let us walk by the same rule, hoping for more. But let

us not force beyond that by any fleshly compacts. The fear of God must not be taught by the commandment of men.

The largeness of the mind of God contains the remedy, but nothing else does. That mind may express itself forth from the whirlwind or by the ministry of an apostle; but however that be, it bears the remedy with it. The Lord, who can with one hand separate the chaff from the wheat, with the other can gather up all the scattered grains that are now strewing His field in a shameful disorder and find room in His garner for them all.

And this comforts while it admonishes. It is not that we are to confound the chaff with the wheat; it is as much of the Spirit of God to say, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema," as to say, "Grace be with all them

that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity." It is as much of the testimony of God to say, "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life," as to say, "He that hath the Son hath life." "If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed."

But still let us know that there are different measures of attainments among the saints and let our personal and individual care be so to walk in light and grace ourselves as not to give occasion either to the enemy to speak reproachfully, or our brethren to speak doubtfully of us; and let us have our hearts and consciences in lively exercise before God with a purpose to follow our light, lead us where it may, in the grace and fear of the Lord. But when these are the springs of the personal movement and course of each of us, we have, though in many things differently minded, the materials for both safe and blessed communion.

The Hawthorn in Winter

The Christian when opposed and thwarted must not retire into the sanctuary of his own heart to enjoy his blessings alone, or he is like the flower that closes its petals on a cold, rough day and refuses to shed its fragrance when everything is out of season. But he should be like the hawthorn tree that in the depth of winter hangs out its scarlet berries for the suffering birds when there is succour for them nowhere else. This tree, which is the admiration of all in the early summer, offers a ready sustenance to the needy when the winter storms sweep. To be like the hawthorn tree you must be proof against the frosts of neglect and the snows of indifference. In a word, instead of retiring into yourself to find in the Lord a comfort denied elsewhere, you must seek for nothing from around, but having the heart satisfied with Christ, be free from self-thoughts, to be a blessing to those who oppose you—be a hawthorn tree in the dreary winter.

Prayer is founded upon the immense privilege of having common interests with God both as to ourselves and as to all that are His, yea, even as to Christ's glory. Wondrous thought! unspeakable grace!

Christ is the foundation on which our blessings are built. It is as being in Him that we enjoy them.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 14: 21—15: 17)

THE Comforter is given as the seal of love and obedience, and in keeping with this the full blessing of His indwelling is only enjoyed as obedience is perfected in us. Verse 15 had indicated that, being the fruit of love, obedience is the proof that the love exists: now we find that the fruit of obedience is a special place in the love of both the Father and the Son, together with a special manifestation of the Son, which must carry with it a special manifestation of the Father, inasmuch as we only know the Father as revealed in the Son. The objective manifestation is perfect, complete and abiding, but the subjective manifestation to each of us individually, in the power of the Comforter, depends on the measure in which we are characterized by obedience and love.

The question of Judas (verse 22) evidently was prompted by the fact that the thoughts of the disciples were wholly concentrated on the public manifestation of the Messiah, as announced in the Old Testament, and they did not as yet grasp the character of the dispensation about to dawn, in which the knowledge of Himself would be by faith in the power of the Spirit. The Lord answered by amplifying His previous words, speaking now of the keeping of His word—not "words," but singular, "word," the truth that He brought viewed as a whole—as the fruit of love. Such loving obedience incites the appreciation and love of the Father, so that both Father and Son make their abode; through the indwelling Spirit doubtless, for these great pronouncements come in the

section of the discourse devoted to the Comforter. Thus His sayings, in which His word is conveyed to us, become the test of our love. They conduct us to the word of the Father who sent Him. If we disregard them our protestations of love toward Him are proved to be vain and insincere.

This leads us to another function of the Comforter: being "the Spirit of truth," He is the Teacher of the disciples. We must not miss the contrast in verses 25 and 26 between "these things" and "all things." When, as the fruit of His word, Jesus should be glorified and the Spirit given, there should be a larger revelation of Divine truth. All things that come within the scope of revelation should be made known and effectually taught to the disciples by the Comforter. Much had been made known to them by Christ, present amongst them in flesh and blood: all should be made known to them in the coming day of the Spirit. Here we find promised as to **revelation** and **teaching** the same expansion by the coming of the Spirit as we found stated in verse 12 as to **works**. In addition the Spirit would bring to their remembrance all the things they had heard through Christ.

We are now in the happy position of seeing how literally and perfectly these things were fulfilled. The four Gospels were written as the fruit of things He said being brought to their remembrance; whilst as the fruit of the further and newer teachings of the Spirit we have the Epistles, ministering the full light of the Christian faith and of the counsels of God.

We had previously noted that the coming of the Comforter furnished the sixth item in the comfort which Jesus was ministering to His disciples. We now find the seventh and last in this chapter; namely, peace. In departing He left peace with them, bequeathed as the result of His atoning work. Further, He gave them that peace which He called peculiarly His own—the peace of perfect confidence in the Father, as the result of knowing Him, and of submission to His will. And all that He gives is out of His own fulness and linking them with Himself, and not according to the poor standards of this world.

Having thus unfolded to the disciples all these great items of encouragement the Lord ended on the same note as He began—"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Exactly the same word comes to us as we face the great difficulties of our day.

But the disciples were to know not only peace, but joy. This indeed they did when the Spirit was given, and even before, as Luke 24: 52 testifies. They were grasping the fact that He was going away and they were to realize that nevertheless He was coming to them by the advent of the Comforter. Yet there was a further thing: He was going to the Father, and into all that would be involved thereby—infinite approbation and glory, in the Father's love. That would be exceeding joy for Him, and loving Him it would be for their joy as well. Have we not known that joy also? Is not the thought of His joy among the deepest of our joys?

The last words of this verse, "My Father is greater than I," have been made into an occasion of stumbling to some. But here we have speaking the Word made flesh, and He speaks in His estate as the lowly Man upon earth. Hence in **position** or **station** the Father was greater than He, whilst as to **being** and **nature** He and the Father were one.

The Lord's words in verse 29 shed great light upon all that is contained in this chapter. The things of which He had been speaking had not yet come to pass, for first there must be accomplished His redemption work. That accomplished, they would come to pass, and He was telling them now so that in the coming days they might **believe**. In saying this the Lord again indicated that our day is one in which faith is all-important. Israel's day had been characterized by things visible and tangible, but all the things of which He had just spoken to them are to be apprehended by faith and not sight. Both the peace and the joy reach our hearts by faith. So presently we find Paul speaking of "all joy and peace in **believing** . . . through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15: 13), and Peter saying, "though now ye see Him not, yet **believing**, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1: 8).

The Lord now indicated that His talks with the disciples were coming to an end. What lay before Him was the full accomplishment of the work that the Father had commanded. But before that end was fully reached Satan, the prince of this world, was again coming, wielding the power of darkness; but he would find no point of attack in Him. Satan

had nothing in Christ because the Father had everything—all His love and obedience. He was meeting not man in a state of innocence, as was Adam in Eden, but Man in absolute holiness and righteousness, and withal the Word who was God. The great Antitype of the Hebrew servant, depicted in Exodus 21: 2-6, was found here saying, "I love the Father," the equivalent of "I love My Master . . . I will not go out free"; just as in John 13: 1 we had the declaration of His love to those typified by the wife and children in Exodus.

It would seem that the words, "Arise, let us go hence," mark their departure from the upper chamber, and that what we have in chapters 15 and 16 was spoken on the way to Gethsemane. The change in position was matched by a change in the themes and in chapter 15 Jesus contemplates His disciples as in the world with corresponding privilege and responsibility rather than as in their new place and state as before the Father, which was the theme in chapter 14. Just as there He gave them His place before the Father so now they are identified with Him in His place before the world. He is the true Vine and they the branches.

In speaking of Himself as the Vine the Lord adopted a figure which in the Old Testament had been applied to Israel, notably in such passages as Psalm 80: 8-18; Isaiah 5: 1-7. In the Psalm the desolation of the vine is declared, but mention is made of "the Branch" and "the Son of Man," that "Thou madest strong for Thyself." In Isaiah the reason for the desolation is made plain. Israel as the vine brought forth nothing but wild and worthless grapes.

There was no fruit for God. Jesus Himself was the Branch made strong for Jehovah, and He now presents Himself as the real Source of all fruit for God on the earth.

He was the Stem, His disciples were the branches, His Father the Husbandman. Each branch that was vitally in Him brought forth fruit. Branches in Him there might be whose connection was not vital, and these bore no fruit. The action of the Husbandman bore in each direction. Where the branch bears fruit He cleanses it that it may bring forth more fruit. Where no fruit is borne He takes the branch away and the ultimate end is destruction, as verse 6 indicates. Of this latter class Judas Iscariot had just been a sad example.

The word in verse 2 is "purgeth," not "pruneth." The Father cleanses the fruitful saint, though such are already clean through the word. The Lord had indicated a double cleansing by His words recorded in 13: 10-14, and we meet with the same thought here. As the branch is cleansed by the action of the Father, obstructions are removed and the life of the Stem flows more freely, the production of more fruit being the result. The surest proof that we are in Christ is that we abide in Christ; and the surest proof that we abide in Christ is that we produce fruit in life and service, the very character and ways of Christ coming out in us. Without Him we can do nothing. Abiding in Him there is much fruit, we are brought into communion with His mind so that we ask with liberty and have our desires granted, the Father is glorified, and our discipleship is proved genuine beyond all question.

It is a great privilege, as well as a great responsibility, to be left on earth to bear fruit; it is even a greater privilege to know ourselves to be the objects of Divine Love. The love of Jesus rested upon these disciples—and upon us also—just as the Father's love rested upon Himself. In the knowledge, the consciousness, the enjoyment of His love we are to abide. This abiding is maintained by obedience to His commandments. Do we not know only too well that the moment we disobey His plainly expressed word our consciences smite us, and we are out of communion with His mind and out of the enjoyment of His love. Walking in obedience, we abide in His love, we enter into His joy and our own joy is full.

Verse 12 is evidently connected with verse 10 in a very intimate way. Jesus spoke of keeping His commandments in a general way, but there was one commandment that He had already signalized in a special way (13: 34), and He returns to it again. Love is to flow between His disciples after the character of His perfect love towards them. Love that springs from the possession of the Divine nature is to circulate amongst the Divine family. The flesh is in each and the diversities amongst us are innumerable; hence the opportunities for clashes and prejudices are endless. It is His commandment that the love of the Divine nature triumph over the antagonisms of our fleshly nature. How have we obeyed this commandment? Our failure here accounts for the small measure in which we abide in His love and have His joy abiding in us. It also means poor discipleship and lack of glory to the Father.

Human love has its limit, as verse 13 states; but the Lord teaches His

disciples to regard each other as friends because they are each and all His friends, as being marked by obedience to His commands. He was indeed going forth to lay down His life for them, but in Him was found a love which far exceeded all that was known among men. His love and not mere human love was to stamp its character on their love, one for the other.

From the first moment of their attachment to Himself the disciples had been His servants, but the Lord now indicates that henceforward He was going to treat them as standing on the higher basis of friendship. This friendship was a real thing, inasmuch as He had made known to them all that He had heard of the Father, as the Revealer of the Father's love and purposes. In saying this we believe the Lord had also in view the coming of the Comforter, who would endow them with the capacity to discern these things, as He had already told them. This privileged place is open to all believers to-day on the same simple ground—love and obedience. Hence we have the Apostle John using the term in the last verse of his third Epistle. As the first century drew to its close Paul's prediction, as to men speaking perverted things "to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20: 30), was being fulfilled, and Diotrephes was an example of such men. Yet there were found saints marked by love and obedience—shining contrasts to Diotrephes, and acknowledged as "friends." Some were with John, joining in the salutation: some with Gaius, to be greeted by name.

Though Jesus thus gave His disciples so exalted a place, He did not

cease to be absolutely pre-eminent among them. Friends they were, but wholly of His choice and not theirs, and therefore His sovereign rights remained unimpaired. They were chosen as friends and appointed to bear fruit of a sort that should remain, in contrast with the transient world in which they were found. Then as friends and fruit-bearers a further happy result follows. They should have access to the Father in the name of the Son with the assurance of a favourable answer. It may be thought that "Whatsoever ye shall ask . . . in My Name" covers a very wide range. So it does, but we must remember that "friends" are in view, who have had revealed

to them all the Father's things. Those things have to do with the Name and glory of the Son, and it is taken for granted therefore that, identified in heart with Him, every request will be in line with the Father's purposes, and hence be sure of an answer.

As a reminder of how intimately connected with these things is love among the disciples, the Lord, in verse 17, repeats His command that they love one another. The Lord foreknew how great would be the need of this word in the history of His people, so He utters this command no less than three times in these closing words before He suffered.

"Peace unto you" (John 20)

Peace at all times is God's provision for us; the greeting with which our Lord Jesus Christ ever meets 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.

"Fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12)

If the Lord has called you to any service you cannot be negligent or slothful in it without suffering loss in your soul. Devotedness to the Lord will produce diligence in His service—the love of Christ constraineth us—and where these are lacking the light and joy of God's favour are not likely to be the conscious portion of the heart.

Servitude is bondage, but the service of Christ is the liberty of love. When we love what God commands are grievous.

"Love" appears. "I suffer long, am kind. I envy not. I vaunt not

"This is My commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you" (chap. 15: 12). "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (chap. 15: 17).

Finally, God is the God of all grace

(chap. 5: 10), and He has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, and meanwhile we stand in the true grace of God. "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

PEACE AND HOLINESS

J. Houston

WE are exhorted to follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (see Hebrews 12: 14).

God is revealed as the God of peace, and as such He acts towards His saints (Rom. 15: 33). What, then, is properly of God is always on the line of peace. As children of God, we have His divine nature, and we are characteristically of peace, as He is of peace. And it matters nothing, whether in the Assembly, or in the world, we are characteristically of peace. It is not simply we are of peaceful tendencies, for we can find natural, unregenerate men who are marked by these; we are characteristically of peace, meaning that peace is our nature, rather than a bent, or disposition, of our mind.

The psalmist said, "I am a man of peace" (Psalm 120: 7; marginal reading). He did not simply mean that he was of peaceful tendencies, but that it was his nature to be so, characteristically of peace.

Now it is to be observed, that it is this peace we have to pursue in all our intercourse with all men, whether in the Assembly, or in the world. In fact, we cannot have any real intercourse with them, save on the ground of peace. In this sense, it is general, for it refers to our intercourse with our fellow-Christians and fellow-men everywhere. When we come into contact with them, and have intercourse with them, it must be on the ground of peace. We could not even go on with our brethren, save on the ground of peace (Gen. 13: 8). To live in an atmosphere of

strife is a living death; we cannot subsist, save in the atmosphere of peace. A fish would die out of the water; a bird would die in the water. Nature has marked out the sphere, and element, of their existence. A Christian must live in peace, if he is to be in his sphere and element. "The Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means" (2 Thess. 3: 16).

With reference to holiness, which is also our nature, rather than something assumed in an outward form, we have in it what is the very centre of our moral being. God is holy, and we should be holy, if we are to be in true relationship with Him. "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1: 16). In fact, we could not have communion with God, save on the ground of holiness, that is, **practical** holiness. There is absolute holiness, which we have in Christ; and there is practical holiness, **which we have to pursue**. It is the latter that is here contemplated. Bitterness, revenge, grudging, disaffection, ill-feeling, and all, indeed, that is of the flesh, must be put away. Holiness is absence of evil, a state of immunity from it. Even the thought of evil is unholiness. God is holy, and we can only be near to Him, and see Him, just in the measure we are like Him. Without holiness, no man shall see God. The pure in heart shall see Him, for they are like Him. Their heart is the reflection of what He is in His unchanging nature—holiness.

If we know anything of our heart, we must be painfully aware of evil feelings. If we know anything of

our mind, we must be as painfully aware of evil thoughts. All these are unholy, and render us unfit for communion with God. We can get rid of them, by dealing with them at the very source from which they come, and judge them in the heart and mind. Well may it be said, that the heart is to be kept above all things, for out of it are the issues of life. In like manner, it is our business to keep the mind occupied with what is pure. Hence the exhortation in Philippians 4: 8.

We do well to follow peace and holiness. They will ensure our proper relations with our fellow-Christians and fellow-men in the ordinary intercourse of everyday life; and they will ensure our happy, and supremely blessed, communion with God. On them hangs all that is good and pure, all that is truly blessed, in practical Christian walk.

" Teach us Thy name to own,
Whilst waiting, Lord, for Thee;
Unholiness and sin to shun,
From all untruth to flee."

THE NEW NATURE

One word describes that nature—LOVE. In 1 Corinthians 13 it is seen, not at home in heaven, but coming out on earth like some rare exotic brought from the Tropics, unfolding its beauties in uncongenial surroundings.

If my stature for God be according to the measure in which the Divine nature is formed and seen in me—and without it I am nothing—let me test myself by reading the above chapter, verses 4-7, putting "I" in where "Love" appears. "I suffer long, am kind. I envy not. I want not myself and am not puffed up, I do not behave myself unseemly. I seek not my own and am not easily provoked. I think no evil; I rejoice not in iniquity, but rejoice in the truth. I bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things."

How far have I travelled on that road? It is a searching and revealing question.

O send me forth, my Saviour,
O send me for Thy glory:
Let not myself,
My carnal self,
Self-seeking self,
Come 'twixt me and Thy glory.
O magnify, O magnify
Thy blessed Name, my Saviour,
Lift high the banner of Thy cross,
And in its folds conceal
Thy standard bearer.

THE OPENING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

J. T. Mawson

CROWNS of glory for the brow of the Lord Jesus Christ shine in the opening chapters of the New Testament. He came into the world as Heir to all the promises made to Abraham and David, for He was the Son of David, a true and proper man, with full title to all David's dominion. But He is also David's Lord, his root as well as his offspring, and as such His throne is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His kingdom. Yes, though in the weakness of human babehood, the names and titles given to Him as quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures declare His divine majesty and reveal His Godhead glory.

We start the history of His earthly life with the announcement made to Joseph by the Angel of the Lord:—“ Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” At once there springs to our minds the declaration in Psalm 40 which we give as it is quoted in Hebrews 10. “ Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not but A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God.” But who was He for whom this body was prepared, and who before He came into the world, before there was a world to come into, bound Himself by a solemn oath to do the will of God? Who in the wide universe could take up that will and

complete it? Surely only the uncreated Son whose eternal dwelling-place is the Father's bosom.

“ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS for He shall save His people from their sins.” His name appears in capital letters on the first page of the New Testament and rightly so, for He is the subject of the Book—His life, death, resurrection, ascension to His Father's throne and His coming again—there would have been no New Testament but for this story; it is God's story—the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. What a wonderful name is His; it is fragrant with meekness and gentleness, grace and truth, holy love and great compassion; it is His human and personal name; the name given to Him in the manger at His birth, and nailed to His cross as His accusation at His death; a name of reproach among men, but carrying with it Divine glory for its full meaning is “ Jehovah the Saviour.” We cannot doubt this when we see the reason for which the Name was given Him. “ Thou shalt call His name JESUS for He shall save His people from their sins.” Israel are His people; He came to save them, and He will yet do it. It was written by the prophet that He was the Lord of His people, “ and the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people” (Zech. 9: 16). He had said to these people, “ Thou art Mine . . . I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour . . . I, even I, am the Lord and beside Me there is no Saviour” (Isaiah 43); and again,

" I will have mercy on the house of Judah and will save them by the Lord their God " (Hosea 1: 7). And they shall see Him again and shall say, " Lo, this is our God . . . He will save us; this is the Lord . . . we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation " (Isa. 25: 9).

" Now 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." That He should come in flesh was the only way if men were to know the heart of God and be saved. The movement must be from His side. It was thus that God intervened in mercy not for the Jew only, but for mankind. " Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not of the Gentiles also? Yea, of the Gentiles also." " For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved." The manner of God's intervention demonstrates beyond all question the utter inability of man to save himself. This is the Lord's doing and it is both marvellous and miraculous in our eyes. Men have had no hand in the matter at all, except to believe and to receive the blessing resulting from it. Emmanuel is a great name. Only the Son could bear it and He did bear it most blessedly and well. " The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." " God was manifest in the flesh." If men were to be saved God must come Himself to do it, and His very nature demanded this for " God is love."

The arrival of the wise men from

the east in search of Him who was born King of the Jews made an unhappy sensation in Jerusalem; it was not welcome news that they brought to that city that killed the prophets, and had grown hoary in its sin and pride. King Herod, the Edomite usurper, was troubled at the tidings and all Jerusalem with him. He would know the certainty of the matter, and gathering together the chief priests and scribes, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. They knew the Scriptures and gave answer without hesitation. Seven hundred years before the prophet Micah had written, " Thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall shepherd My people Israel " (New Trans.). They did not give the complete prophecy. It is strange that they omitted that part of it which in striking terms spoke of His divine glory. " Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." We do not know what those eternal goings forth were, but we do know that the heavens declare the wonders of His goings forth in creative wisdom and power. But now we have a more wonderful thing; He had come forth from the Father in the greatness of His grace. How beautiful upon the mountains were His feet bringing good tidings and publishing peace, and how accessible to the worst of sinners was He. Yet the good news that He brought from heaven called forth no response in the hearts of His own. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. The same Scripture which tells us that His goings forth were from everlasting, foretold the solemn fact of His suffering and humiliation—" they shall smite the

Judge of Israel with the rod upon the cheek." The Shepherd and Judge of Israel submitted to that; " His visage was so marred, more than any man's." Jesus is the Shepherd of Israel, the good Shepherd, and the Shepherd of Israel is the Lord; He is God. So the prophet cried, " O Jerusalem, Behold your God . . . He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom " (Isaiah 40). But yet again, " Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, even against the man that is My fellow, saith Jehovah of Hosts; smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered " (Zech. 13). The good Shepherd gave His life for His flock.

The great red dragon stood up to destroy the Man-child as soon as He was born (Rev. 12), and to escape his murderous intention through Herod, Joseph, at God's bidding, took the young Child and His mother by night and departed into Egypt, " that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

But there was bitter sorrow for the mothers of Bethlehem, " for Herod was exceeding wroth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof from two years old and under, according to the time that he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they are not." But what comfort there would have been for

them if they had turned to the Scripture which spoke of their sorrow. There we read, " The Lord hath appeared of old unto Me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee . . . Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy; and there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border " (Jeremiah 31).

There is one more passage that we must quote. On entering upon His public ministry the Lord Jesus went and dwelt in Capernaum " that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by Esaias the prophet saying, The land of Zabulun and the land of Neptahlim, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 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 " (Matthew 4). What was this great light that the people saw? The chapter from which these words are quoted tells us. " For unto us a Child is born, 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 (Father of eternity), the Prince of peace: of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this " (Isaiah 9).

It is to this glorious person that we are introduced at the opening of the New Testament. He is the door by which we enter into the infinite and eternal blessings that are laid open to our souls in it, and there is no entrance to them at all except through Him, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is

none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4). And those who would enter the blessings of the New Testament and claim the name of Christian apart from this Divine Saviour are thieves and robbers of the glory of God, and their portion is the outer darkness.

Unto Him that loveth us and hath washed us in His blood,
Brought us to His Father thus, made us kings and priests to God.
Glory and dominion be until time shall be no more;
Honour, might and majesty unto Him whom we adore.

The Shepherd

A. M. Chambers

He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom (Isa. 40: 11).

He took them up in His arms (Mark 10: 16).

[The apparently needless suffering of little children caused much heaviness of spirit to the writer. The Scriptures quoted brought a lightening of the load.]

I saw a long, dark road ahead,
Too rough for little feet to tread:
"And dost thou think," the Shepherd said,
"My care is less than thine?"

"This is the road that they must go,—
All-seeing wisdom has willed it so,—
But none of its hardness they shall know,
Carried by love divine.

Safe there on my breast they may learn of ME,
Strong, strong shall My arms about them be,
I can give them a sweet tranquility
Untouched by the world's alarms.

For My **sheep** tread sometimes a stormy way,
(Though My hand still leads them day by day,)
But My **lambs** are lifted above the fray,
And I carry **them** in My arms!"

GOD AND HIS GRACE

J. G. B.

THREE is a greatness in God in the sense of which we should much exercise our hearts. There is no straitness in Him. The Psalmist appears to give himself to this thought in the 36th Psalm. All that he there sees in God he sees in its proper divine greatness and excellency. His mercy is in the heavens, His faithfulness unto the clouds; His righteousness is like the great mountains and His judgments like the deep; His preserving care so perfect that the beasts as well as men are the objects of it; His loving-kindness so excellent that the children of men hide themselves under the shadow of His wings; His house is so stored with all good that His people are abundantly satisfied with its fatness and His pleasures for them so full that they drink of them as of a river. All this is the greatness and magnificence of God, not only in Himself but in His ways and deeds with us.

This is blessed truth for us. Our sins should be judged in the sense of this greatness; it is true indeed, that sin is exceeding sinful. The least soil or stain upon God's fair workmanship is full of horrid shapes in the eye of faith that calculates duly on God's glory. A little hole

dug in the wall is enough to show a prophet great abominations. But when brought to stand side by side with the greatness of the grace that is in God our Saviour, how does it appear? Where was the crimson sin of the adulteress? (John 8). Where the sins that had grown old in the Samaritan woman? They may be searched for but they cannot be found; they disappear in the presence of the grace that was brought to shine beside them. The abounding grace rolled away the reproach for ever. God, who taketh up the isles as a very little thing and measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, takes away our sins far off to a land of separation (Lev. 16: 22).

"I hear the Accuser roar
Of ills that I have done;
I know them well,
And thousands more;
Jehovah findeth none."

With these thoughts we may well encourage our hearts. Our God would have us know Him in His own greatness; set sin alone, and the least speck of it is a monster: set it beside His grace, and it vanishes. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

The Only Name

If Paul had answered the jailor's cry with "Believe on Moses," he could not have added "and thou shalt be saved." If he had said "Believe on John the Baptist," the jailor's agony would not have been relieved and he might have asked, "and who is he that I should believe on him?" If he had said, "Believe on me and thou shalt be saved," the jailor might well have replied, "Don't mock me, I'm a perishing man, tell me of a Saviour." But how satisfying, how sufficient, meeting every need and answering every question was the apostles' inspired word. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." What was the effect of the proclamation of that Name? The jailor received the word and rejoiced believing in God with all his house.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

A. J. Pollock

THIS book begins and ends in a way that marks it out from all the other books of the Bible. It begins with a promised blessing and ends with two most solemn threats.

How does the book begin? God gave it; Jesus Christ received it; our Lord signified it to His angel, who in his turn passed it on to the Apostle John, and he to us. No book in the Bible begins in such a fashion. It is as if to emphasize the solemnity of the message, and affirm its full inspiration. If God gave it to our Lord, and He passed it on, it would most surely come to us in fullest measure in absolute exactitude. The contemplation of Revelation 1 fills the mind with awe and expectation—**awe**, as one grasps that it comes from God; and **expectation**, that we should be prepared to receive such a wonderful message.

The writer John bore record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Then we are told of the blessing that will come to the one who reads, hears the words of this prophecy, and keeps those things that are written therein.

Should not each one of us be anxious to secure this blessing, and begin by reading the book carefully, hear it—that is, pay attention to it—and finally keep its sayings? We live in very serious times, and but for such unfoldings of God's word, Christians would be left in perplexity, but when we see things around us shaping towards the fulfilment of

the prophecies of the Book of the Revelation, we are encouraged. Spite of appearances God is on the throne. Did not the poet, James Russell Lowell, voice this when he wrote:

“Truth for ever on the scaffold,
Wrong for ever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future;
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God behind the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own.”

In one breath the Christian sounds like a pessimist; in another he is like a confident optimist. Prophecy, understood by the Christian, leads him to believe that things will wax worse and worse. When men are talking of peace and safety, of the new world order, of men beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, the Christian will speak of woes and tribulations falling on this world, of sinister totalitarian monsters like the first beast, the head of the revived Roman Empire, and the second beast, the Anti-christ, rising to be the terrible scourge of the world (Rev. 13), of men's hearts failing them for fear.

In another breath the Christian will be the greatest optimist. The man in the street thinks religion is played out, that Christianity is a dying cult, that man can do without God, whereas the Christian looks forward to the day when all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest, when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Such are the glowing prophecies that shine so brilliantly on the Old Testament page.

Yes, God is on the throne, and is working out His own bright plans. The very deepening gloom settling down on this earth is but the prelude of the golden age, of which men in all ages have dreamed, and have sought to bring about by ineffectual means. Only the once-crucified Lord will bring this about, and this the Christian firmly believes.

*"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth its successive journeys run;
His rule shall stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."*

• • • •

The end of the Book contains a threat to any, who shall add to the things contained in this prophecy; and a threat to any, who shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy. The threats could not be more serious; in the one case plagues, greater even than those the prophecy outlines, must be the portion of the one who dares to add. In the other case he, who dares to take away from the prophecy, shall have his part taken out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and out of blessing the prophecy promises to those who are the favoured of God.

Generally speaking we find the **ritualist** adds to the word of God; the **rationalist** takes from it.

In Colossians 2 the plain warning against ritualism is given. The worshipping of angels, the observance of holy days, of new moons, of sabbath days, questions of eating and drinking are instanced. The Romish Church is the greatest example of ritualism. To fasten the grip of the priesthood upon their

adherents they invent purgatory, and add this to the words of the prophecy. This is very serious and will call forth God's judgment. Professing to believe in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord upon the cross, they deny it every time her priests celebrate the Mass. To pretend that the consecrating words of the priest transmute the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the very body and blood of our Lord is a blasphemous addition. No wonder the Romish Church would forbid the possession and reading of the Bible to the laity.

The Romish Church is the greatest example of ritualism. In other bodies it is an axiom that just in proportion as ritualism obtains, so does spiritual power and blessing diminish. The contrast between profession and reality could not be more poignant than in the Laodicean Church, which boasted, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Could pretension go further? Self-satisfaction, self-adulation nauseous to a degree. But what was the naked truth? How crushing and devastating is the rejoinder, "Thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

Ritualism destroys reality. It may dazzle the eye, but it cannot feed the soul, it may appeal to the senses, but it cannot take the soul heavenward.

Rationalism or modernism takes from the word of God. Infidelity is at the bottom of it. The natural man understands not the things of the Spirit of God. Most generally

(concluded on page 160)

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 15: 17—16: 22)

THE command of our Lord, that love be manifested as the bond between His disciples, gains force from the fact of the world's hatred. Love circulating within and hatred pressing from without: this is the situation contemplated as the result of His rejection and death. Let us take this to heart for all through the centuries the tendency has been to reverse the situation; and as the hearts of believers stray into loving the world without and courting its favours, so do coldness, disintegration and even hatred find a place within.

Both the love and the hatred spring out of the intimate relation that exists between the disciples and their Lord. We have already seen this as to the love and now we see it as to the hatred. The world hated Christ before ever it hated them, and it hated them because they had been chosen out of the world and hence were not of it. At the moment when the Lord spoke the hatred had only been manifested by the Jews to whom He had presented Himself, but as we have before noticed He is viewed as rejected from the outset of this Gospel, and the Jew is viewed as having consequently lost his distinctive place nationally. A Nicodemus with all his advantages needs to be born again as much as the degraded Gentile; and so here, in keeping with this, the Jews are just the world—the former distinctions swept away in the presence of the rejected Christ.

Moreover, hatred generates persecution, and so that is predicted in verse 20. The servants must expect just the treatment meted out to their

Master, and all has ultimately to be traced up to the world's ignorance of God, and the fact that they hated Him when they saw Him revealed perfectly in Christ. This revelation brought all things to a clear issue. The Lord speaks of His words in verse 22 and of His works in verse 24; both combined to bring their sin to light in a way that was beyond all question and excuse. In seeing the Son they saw the Father: in hating the Son they hated the Father, and all was without any cause as the Scripture had said.

There remained, however, one further testimony, that of the Comforter. Sent by the glorified Jesus, yet proceeding from the Father, He would complete the witness as the Spirit of truth. The Son, incarnate upon earth, had revealed the Father and His testimony had been refused. Yet the testimony would still be maintained by the Comforter, for proceeding from the Father He would now testify of the Son gone up on high and thus maintain the revelation that He had made. They could cast out the Son: they did so by way of the cross. But there was to come One that they could not eject in this fashion, and so an abiding witness would be secured. The Spirit's testimony is the last to be rendered. Hence the exceeding gravity of sin against the Holy Ghost or doing despite to the Spirit of grace.

Verse 27 speaks of the witness to be borne by the apostles and differentiates it from the testimony of the Comforter. They bore witness to all that they had seen and heard "from the beginning," as we see at the

opening of John's first Epistle; in which Epistle the weight and value of this witness is revealed to us. They were also the appointed witnesses of His resurrection. Their witness to the great facts and realities on which all is based is of the last importance, yet something more was needed, and it was supplied by the fresh testimony of the Spirit of Truth, which we have recorded in the Acts. That was specially given through Stephen in the first place, and then through the converted arch-persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul. We may express the difference by saying that the main witness of the twelve was to the great facts connected with the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ: the witness of the Comforter was to be concerning the significance and bearing of those facts, of the whole purpose of God established in them.

Further words of warning follow in the opening of chapter 16, lest the disciples should be stumbled by being unprepared for persecution. Acts 8: 3; 9: 1, 2; 1 Timothy 1: 13, furnish us with a commentary on verses 2 and 3 of our chapter. Saul of Tarsus persecuted this way unto the death, and he did it ignorantly in his unbelief. At that time he certainly knew neither the Father nor the Son.

Jesus was going to Him that sent Him, and the disciples had sufficient sense of the loss they would suffer to be filled with sorrow, but if only they had enquired more as to where He was going, and what would be involved in His presence with the Father, they would have seen things in a different light. His departure

was going to be profitable for them. Loss there was going to be, but also gain which would outweigh the loss. This was a startling statement, but the Lord proceeds to support it by giving further unfoldings of the benefits which would flow from the coming of the Comforter, which coming was contingent on His departure. He speaks first of what His coming would mean as regards the world, and then as regards themselves.

Being come, He will, by His very presence and activity, be a standing witness against the world. The word "reprove" does not mean that He will bring such conviction to the world as would result in its conversion, but that His coming will bring such a demonstration of these three great realities as shall leave the world without excuse. He comes as the direct consequence of the going on high of Jesus, the One cast out by the unbelieving world. Perfect goodness embodied in the Son of God had been before their eyes and had been totally rejected. Here was sin, an outrageous missing of the mark—and demonstrated by the presence of the Comforter, who came because He was gone.

But Jesus was going through death and resurrection and by ascension into the glory of the Father. Thus Divine righteousness would be vindicated and displayed. The point here is not remission of sins and justification for us, as it is in Romans 3, but of righteousness to be publicly established in every sphere that has been touched and marred by sin. Christ's death was the supreme act of the world's unrighteousness: His glorification was

the supreme act of God's righteousness, and the guarantee that ultimately righteousness shall everywhere prevail, in keeping with Paul's words in Acts 17: 31. Now the Spirit is come from the glorified Christ as the standing Witness to this. To have merely demonstrated sin would not have been enough: righteousness its antithesis, and that which will ultimately abolish it, must be demonstrated too.

The third thing, judgment, follows as the appropriate sequence. If human sin be dealt with in Divine righteousness, judgment cannot be avoided. Paul reasoned before Felix of "judgment to come" and the Roman governor trembled, but the point in our passage is that the prince of this world has been judged by his attitude to Christ, and in the power of His cross. In chapter 12, Jesus had spoken of the judgment of the world and the casting out of its prince. These solemn facts are demonstrated by the presence of the Spirit, for if the prince and leader of the world is judged, the world that he controls is judged too. Satan is also called "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4: 4), as men ignorantly worship him in turning aside to all the things that they idolize: he is "the prince" as being the originator and leader in the world's great schemes.

Now it is indeed expedient and profitable for us that the Comforter should have come with plain demonstration of these things. To see the devil in a true light, to see the world as it really is, to have things brought to an issue as between sin and righteousness, are matters of the deepest moment. The witness truly is against

the world but it stands for our benefit and instruction. Had it been more fully heeded by ourselves, and by the church all through its history, we should have kept ourselves far more unspotted from the world than we have done. The strong words that we read in James 4: 4 are more easily understood in the light of the Lord's words here.

How profitable too is that ministry of the Spirit indicated in verses 13-15. It seems to fall under three heads—"He will guide you . . . He will shew you . . . He shall glorify Me."

He is to guide the disciples into all truth. In the previous verse the Lord indicated that there were many things yet to be revealed but that they were not yet in the condition to receive them. When by the reception of the Spirit they should have that anointing, spoken of in 1 John 2: 20 and 27, they would have the capacity to understand. So, when the Spirit of Truth was come, the Lord said through Him the many things He had yet to say, and all truth was revealed, and into that the Spirit guided them. The Apostles doubtless are primarily in view here, but, as the fruit of this guiding into all truth, the Epistles were written, and thus the saints of all ages down to our own have had all truth brought within the circle of their knowledge. With what diligence have we given ourselves to these things so as to be guided into them?

Then He was to show the disciples "things to come." As the fruit of this particular ministry to the Apostles, we have the book of Revelation as well as certain passages in the Epistles, and thus this ministry

has been made available to us. By these prophetic writings the drift of things both in the church and in the world is made known to us, and hence we are not in darkness, though the rejection and absence of Christ has introduced an epoch in the world's history characterized as "the night."

Then, thirdly, the mission of the Comforter is to glorify the Christ who has been dishonoured by the world. This He does by announcing to us the things that are Christ's, so that we make the discovery that all the Father's things are also His. Let us not miss the tremendous scope of this great declaration. We have already heard twice that the Father has given all things into His hand (3: 35; 13: 3), but that might carry us no further than the fact that, like Joseph in Egypt with Pharaoh's things, all administration is committed to Him. This does carry us further. All the Father's things ARE HIS! And this was said by the Son whilst on earth in His pathway of humiliation. That "ARE" is timeless: it breathes the air of eternity. The Father's things ever were His, they are, and ever will be. He who speaks thus lays claim to Deity, One in the unity of the Godhead. The acknowledgment of this by the ministry of the Comforter does indeed glorify Him.

The transition of thought from verse 15 to 16 may not be apparent at first sight, but we believe the Lord is still pursuing the thought of how profitable for them would be His departure because it involved the Advent of the Comforter. Soon they would no longer see Him, and then again a little while and they would

see Him. But this second seeing was to be "because I go to the Father"; that is, because then the Spirit would be given. In this remarkable statement the Lord used two different words: the first meaning to behold or view as a spectator, the second to perceive or discern. A little while and they would no longer see Him, beholding His ways and works as spectators; then another little while and the Spirit being given, they would see Him in this new fashion, perceiving Him by faith with the inward eye of their Spirit-filled hearts, in a measure unknown before. Blessed be God that it is possible for us too to say, "But we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2: 9).

This saying of His was dark at the moment to the disciples and therefore further explanation was given. The world was going to have its way with Him and His death was impending. It would rejoice in getting rid of Him, but for them the outlook was one of weeping and lamentation. Yet beyond death lay resurrection and His ascension to the Father. This would reverse everything. The travail of childbirth is used as an illustration, for not only does it set forth the idea of joy supervening on sorrow, but also that of new life springing up. Now their sorrow was just a reflex of His sorrow, and His was so deep and of such a nature as to be called "the travail of His soul" in Isaiah 53: 10, whilst the previous verse predicts, "He shall see His seed," evidently in resurrection and in glory. They could not share His atoning sufferings yet they were dimly sharing His sorrow, though largely, without a doubt, in a selfish way. They should soon very really share His joy.

CHRIST HIMSELF THE THEME

Inglis Fleming

IN reading the Holy Scriptures we may find difficulty in discovering the object of some of the sixty-six parts which form the whole. Let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus. When risen from the dead, and being with His disciples, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." "All things must be fulfilled," He said, "which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, CONCERNING ME" (Luke 24: 27, 44).

From these words of our Lord we learn that HE, HIMSELF, is the theme of the Word of God. All centres in Him. Let us look then for Christ in the various sections of the Holy writings, in dependence upon the Spirit of God who has indited them for our learning and comfort. As we do this we shall find that Christ is prominent throughout their pages, and that HE is the key to unlock for us the thoughts of God, in all the centuries and dispensations.

Speaking in a general way let me suggest that He is seen,

In PICTURE from Genesis to Esther;

In POETRY from Job to Canticles;

In PROPHECY from Isaiah to Malachi;

In PERSON from Matthew to John;

In PREACHING in the Book of The Acts;

In PRE-EMINENCE in the Epistles;

In POWER in the Book of the Revelation.

Space forbids our giving more than a reference here and there in each section to the wonderful subject. Firstly, then, let us think of Christ IN PICTURE. Beginning with the first man, Adam, we find "a figure of HIM that was to come," of HIM who is "the Second Man," "the Last Adam." All of Adam the first man's race take character from him when fallen, they are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity (see Psa. 51: 5).

All who are Christ's—"His own"—take character from Him, the **Second** Man. There is no other federal Head to follow. Either "in Adam" or "in Christ" is the designation of each one to-day. "As is Adam the earthly one, such are they also that are earthly ones. And as is (Christ) the Heavenly One such are they also that are heavenly ones." And as we by nature have borne the image of the earthly one, Adam, so in our new nature as born of God shall we who believe bear the image of the heavenly One, Christ. Glorious the prospect of the latter company!

As lord of creation, Adam bestowed names on all the beasts of the field and fowls of the air. Then in his "deep sleep" Eve was formed of him, to be for him and with him. So Christ is Lord of all, Head of the wide creation, and Head of the church, which is viewed as of Him through His death, for Him and His pleasure now, and with Him soon in His glory for ever.

Abel pictures Christ in His sacrifice as he dies in connection with his

offering of the firstlings of his flock. In that offering with the fat thereof (the fat speaking of the hidden energy and perfections of Christ fully displayed at the cross), we may read as it were on a signpost, "To Christ and Calvary." Faith in Abel answered to the revelation God had given. With Cain it was otherwise. He chose his own way of coming to God and to his offering God had not respect.

Noah presents Christ from another standpoint. He saves those connected with him—his household—and is set up in the position of Governor. In this responsibility he failed to govern himself. In Christ there is no failure (**all** is perfection there). On the contrary He restored that which He took not away (Psa. 69).

Isaac and Joseph bring our Lord before us as in death and resurrection, and in Joseph's case as coming forth to be Lord of all.

Then in all the sacrifices under the law, Christ is to be seen in suffering and devotedness, while in the historical books in David and Solomon and others His coming reign and glory is chiefly in view.

He is prominent IN POETRY. Psalms 1, 2, 8, 16, 22, 69, 102 and others present Him vividly before us. His sufferings and the glories to follow being detailed with clearness.

In Proverbs 8 as Wisdom personified, He declares how He delights before His Father, and how His delights are with the sons of men. This led Cowper to sing:

"And couldst Thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted,
And nailed Thee to the tree?
Unfathomable wonder—
And mystery divine—
The voice that speaks in thunder
Says, 'Sinner, thou art Mine'."

In the Canticles He is presented before us as the Bridegroom joying in His Bride and she in Him, who is the chiefest among ten thousand . . . altogether lovely." We look for the hour when He will say, "Arise, my love, my fair one and come away." The marriage of the Lamb lies ahead.

This thought leads us to think of Him IN PROPHECY. In this He is ever in prospect. The prophets "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory (the glories) that should follow." In their writings the Holy Spirit dwells upon His being rejected at His first advent and upon His reign at His second advent.

The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19: 10). He is its centre and its circumference. "To Him," cries Peter, in the house of Cornelius, "give all the prophets witness." And, in his epistle, he tells of the prophets searching their own writings to discover, if possible, what "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" signified therein. They were instructed that it was not for themselves that they wrote, but for us, and we know that Christ was their theme.

Honoured indeed are we to live in these days when Christ has come, has suffered, is risen and gone into heaven, but soon is coming again. We stand now between His past sufferings, in the time of His rejection, and His future coming honours

in His crowning day and glory. (In our turn we are privileged to testify of Him.)

In wonderful detail that which concerns Him is prophesied of in their writings depicting His pathway of devotedness to God and deliverance for man. Then His rejection by Israel is foretold. Chapter 53 of "Isaiah's wild measure," giving it in great detail—the sword awoke against the Shepherd, against the Man who is Jehovah's fellow (Zech. 13: 7).

Finally in glowing words the millennial reign of Christ is depicted and the glorious promise that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11: 9). Then shall He, the King, reign in righteousness, there shall be one Lord and His name one" for He "shall be exalted and extolled and be very high" (Isa. 11, 12, 32, 52).

Coming to the New Testament our Lord is seen in the Gospels IN PERSON. His presence and pathway in the world are delineated. The four evangelists form a quartette in sounding aloud His praise. They present Him in varying glories.

As the Messiah, in royal dignity, in Matthew.

As the Minister, in constant service, in Mark.

As the Man in saving grace, in Luke.

As in Majesty, the Eternal Son revealing His Father, in John.

The full story of His comeliness in going can never be told. But what is written is "written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing,"

we "might have life through His name" (John 20: 31). Enough is brought before us in the Gospel pages to fill and to thrill our hearts, and to form us in our goings, for He has left us an example to "follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2: 21).

Sufficient facts are presented to give a necessary delineation of our Lord and Master and to be the strengthening food of our souls in the days of our pilgrimage. But may it not be that in the glory, "the hidden manna" (Rev. 2: 17) may embrace much that was the food of God, His delight, over and above what we need for our "life and godliness" now. Be that as it may, He is all that we need in our wilderness journeyings and will be enough for our complete contemplation in the "Father's house on high."

The voice of the Father was heard at our Lord's baptism at the beginning of His earthly ministry; and, when on "the holy mount," at its close. "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" expressed His unqualified delight in His Son. In these expressions of His delight the Father calls us who believe to have communion with Him in thinking His thoughts after Him concerning the Son of His love. And is it not for this that He has spread before us, by the Holy Spirit, the table of truth, saying, "Eat, O My friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved" (Cant. 5: 1).

In the Book of the Acts our risen Lord is the Subject IN PREACHING. "The preaching of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 16: 25) might be placed as a subsidiary title to the book. He is the Beginning and the

End in the proclamation of the glad tidings. Peter preaches Him on the day of Pentecost and before the Council in Jerusalem. So Stephen in his masterly apology, Philip in Samaria and on Gaza's desert way, Paul in Damascus, in Jerusalem, in Antioch, in Philippi, in Athens and everywhere in his faithful ministry. One and all of the servants of God have their tongues loosed and, as the pens of ready writers declare, "the things touching the King."

And in varying lights He is brought before the gaze of faith.

As "**Lord and Christ**" He is announced to the astonished men of Israel. They are told that all power is in the hand of the once-despised Jesus of Nazareth, and that He can give repentance and the remission of sins. Fullest authority was His for blessing now and for judgment before long. The Holy Spirit had come from Christ in glory and wonderful works were wrought. The result of that testimony was that three thousand were added to the assembly.

To the Samaritans Philip preached **Christ**, and many believed and were blessed. Then to the Ethiopian treasurer of Candace, the queen, Philip announced **Jesus** as the fulfilment of Isaiah fifty-three. The sweet story was received in the love of it and the Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing.

Saul of Tarsus upon His conversion straightway proclaimed that **Jesus** was "**the Son of God**." His Godhead glory was emphasized though His moral beauties and official position were not overlooked.

Throughout the book Christ Himself is shown to be the subject of

the preaching. And so it should be to-day with all who proclaim the gospel of the grace of God. That gospel is "**concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**" Forgiveness, justification, peace and blessings innumerable are all wrapped up in Him and His atoning work. HE must be proclaimed as the Sun and Centre of all. There is a danger of preaching various blessings instead of presenting the **Blesser Himself**.

The epistles present Him IN PRE-EMINENCE. He was a humbled Christ. He is a glorified Christ now. No longer is He upon the cross of shame. His work there is completed. God has been glorified in the highest there and has now glorified Him at His own right hand.

The Epistle to the Hebrews which has been termed "**The book of the opened heavens,**" is occupied especially with the pre-eminence of Christ. Four times over He is spoken of as at the right hand of God (1: 3; 8: 1; 10: 12; 12: 2). Universal dominion is His. We see not yet all things put under Him, but it will be effected in due time. Already "**we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour.**" And yet a little while and He, the coming One, will come and "**His own**" with Him then will see all heaven and earth honouring Him.

In all things He has the pre-eminence. All glories are His. He is "**the Image of the Invisible God.**" He is Creator of all things. They were "**created by Him and for Him.**" "**He is before all things.**" "**By Him all things consist.**" "**He is the Head of the body, the church.**" He is "**the Firstborn from the dead.**"

All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt and dwells in Him. The peace of God's throne is made by His blood. All things in heaven and in earth are to be reconciled by Him. Believers are reconciled and soon to be presented "holy and unblameable and unreproveable" in God's sight (Col. 1: 15-22). These are some of His pre-eminent glories. But "Christ is ALL."

We who rejoice in His pre-eminence in glory should give Him the pre-eminence in our lives day by day, making everything subject to Him.

In the Book of the Revelation Christ is seen coming IN POWER. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him" (1:7). "Behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me." "Surely, I come quickly" (22: 7, 12, 20). These and other passages tell of His sure, swift, speedy return.

As Kings of kings and Lord of lords He will put down all opposing

rule and authority. For "He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet."

In majestic, awe-inspiring words His coming in glory is depicted. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He, Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God . . . And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (19: 11-16).

In the day of His power and glory we shall be with Him as we read, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). But now during the time of His rejection we are called to be loyal and true to Him.

(continued from page 151)

speaking modernist writers begin with a bias in their minds against the word of God. Scripture speaks of the bias of the natural mind, "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1: 28); whilst the Apostle Peter writes of a class who "willingly are ignorant" (2 Peter 3: 5).

Rationalism or modernism will

rob us of the inspiration of Scripture, which would leave us with no Scripture at all; it would deny the Virgin Birth of our Lord; the atoning character of His death; His physical resurrection; the existence of hell and the reality of eternal punishment of the rejector of God's testimony in Christ.

No wonder such must have their part taken out of the book of life and out of the holy city.

Printer's Errors in Last Issue

Delete two lines beginning "When we love" and "'Love' appears," page 142. On line 7 of "The New Nature," "vaunt" for "want."

Title of poem on inside cover should be "Confidence."

"I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT."

ON the evening of July 19th last, John T. Mawson, the beloved Editor of this Magazine, drew his last breath, and "absent from the body" was "present with the Lord." For a number of years he had suffered more or less from asthma, and on a number of occasions the attack rose to such a pitch of intensity as to endanger his life. He was carried through them however until this last attack which, lasting exactly a week, brought his pilgrimage and service to a close. Our readers may like to know that though in bodily infirmity, owing to the virulence of these attacks added to the weight of years, yet he was enabled to speak twice on the Lord's Day, eight days before his departure; once to a group of believers on Luke 19: the nobleman going into a far country and leaving his servants with the instruction, "Occupy till I come;" and then again in the evening preaching the Gospel from Luke 7. With these two messages his service closed.

Commencing to preach the Gospel when very young he was granted a period of service which extended to a little over 50 years, and he was used to the conversion of many. Possessing a pastor's heart as well as the gift of an evangelist, at the beginning of 1909 he started this Magazine, in collaboration with another servant of God, H. D. R. Jameson, who however did not long survive, and from 1912 he carried on the work alone. By this means, and by his other published writings, he has been used much to help those who have through grace believed. He kept the faith, and his course is

now run. We believe too that it may truly be said that he fought the good fight. The story of God's people has been disfigured by many strivings and contentions that have been by no means good, but from that type of fighting he was singularly free, for he was marked, as we can testify, very largely by the spirit enjoined in 2 Timothy 2:24—"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."

Those who have known him longest are most ready to speak of him in similar terms. Here are three extracts:—

"Perhaps I am able to go back in memory as far as, or farther than, most to the early days of our beloved brother, J. T. Mawson, for we were together in Gospel campaigns (mostly in Tents) in Canada, the U.S.A. and Jamaica from 1894 on. What struck me from the very beginning of his ministry was his emphasis on God's grace. If I have an ever deepening sense of His wonderful grace, I owe it, I truly believe, to the early impressions I received from the one who was for so long my beloved and valued partner in the Lord's service. The touching way in which he often referred to the Lord Himself, even the way he used to pronounce the name 'Jesus' has left an ineffaceable mark upon my memory."

Again, another says,

"We had hoped that our beloved brother, J. T. Mawson, would have been spared for further service, but

the Lord has thought otherwise. We rejoice for his sake, for no more will he be faced with these terrible asthmatical attacks. After many years of strenuous service he has reached the end of his pilgrim journey. He will be remembered as the earnest evangelist whom God used mightily in the Gospel. Many of his children in the faith will read these lines, and thank God they ever heard his faithful messages used to their eternal blessing. He also united the gift of a pastor with that of an evangelist, and his ministry ever exalted Christ, calling for an answer on the part of his hearers that they should be indeed the epistles of Christ known and read of all men. Not only with voice but also with pen he sought the salvation of sinners and the edification of saints. Volume after volume has come from his pen. The end of this year would have completed his thirty-fifth year of service in editing the well-known monthly magazine **Scripture Truth**, which owed its origin to his desire to feed the flock of God. It has gone all over the world, and helped many lonely workers in the mission fields.

"Perhaps what struck the writer more than anything else was the way in which dear John Mawson ripened in the things of God as life advanced and sufferings dogged his footsteps. Especially when there was opposition against him in certain quarters he took it so much like his Master, never hitting back, never complaining. God moulded and fashioned him in such sort that he was the unconscious instrument in God's hand of showing us what the Christ-like spirit is in times of adversity. We shall miss him sorely, but the example he has left behind will lead

us to follow more earnestly in the same steps. His whole spirit would turn our eyes from himself to the Lord whom he loved and served in his spirit."

And yet again, another,

"It was with mixed feelings that on Monday evening, July 19th, at 10.30 we received a telephone message telling us that an hour and a half earlier our beloved Editor had fallen asleep.

"We could not but sorrow at the passing of one who had so devotedly served the Lord for so many years; on the other hand we could only rejoice that his much suffering for so long a time was ended and that he was at home with the Lord.

"For well nigh fifty years we had known him, and only a few weeks before his home call we had been together speaking of the things of the Lord.

"Nothing would have been more repugnant to him than anything suggestive of praise, but we can say, he loved the Lord; he loved the saints; and he loved His service in the glad tidings.

"Now he rests from his labours and his works do follow him. To his devoted wife and to his daughters our hearts go out in sincere sympathy. The representative company that assembled in the quiet little cemetery at Pitlochry was evidence of the widespread esteem in which our brother was held.

"Now there comes a loud call to our young brethren, not necessarily to step out in public service, but

each just in the sphere in which the Lord has been pleased to place him, and in happy fellowship with the company to which the Lord has called him, to serve Him with reverence and with godly fear.

" Thus may the homegoing of our brother be used by the Lord for the stirring up of us all to increased devotedness; more diligent service; and greater desire to be here for His glory till we see Him face to face, for His dear Name's sake."

The present writer is a fourth who had known and esteemed him for nearly, if not quite, fifty years. In heartily endorsing what the others have said, he bears thankful witness to the grace and help received through him, and thanks God for the privilege of having known him.

And now for the future—such future as the Lord may see fit to give us—this Magazine will continue, subject to His will, for the present. If it continues to serve His interests in His people He will bestow all necessary grace and guidance. Should it cease to serve His interests and glory, we hope we may have the wisdom of a humble mind and discontinue it.

On the first page of the first issue, for January 1909, its character was declared; Here is a reprint of what there appeared:—

" The title of our magazine will be sufficient evidence that we wholeheartedly accept the Scriptures as given by inspiration of God, and as such we hold that they have authority to bind the conscience, and are

the final court of appeal in every question of doctrine and conduct.

" They are replete with comfort for the saints of God, and are all-sufficient for correction and instruction in the way of righteousness; so that by them the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

" The Scriptures will always be prized by the children of God, not only because they come from God, but because they speak of Christ, and indeed it is only as this is seen, and Christ is loved, that they are understood.

" We shall endeavour, as time and space permit, to draw out from the Scriptures the things concerning Christ, believing that the surest way of preservation from the seductive movements, doctrines, and spirits that abound, is occupation with that which is good; ' for who is he that shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good.'

" All good is centred in, and flows from Christ; and it is as He is paramount in the lives of His people, that they are happy themselves and useful to others.

" Then Christianity becomes a reality—no longer visionary, but practical; no longer mere doctrine for the mind (important as that is), but power in the life.

" We have a link—an imperishable link—with all those who love this living Lord and Saviour in sincerity and truth. In His Name we greet you.

" May we seek earnestly to build ourselves up in our most holy faith, to pray in the Holy Ghost, and to keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the

only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."

We have only to add that we are still actuated by this desire; we still aim at the same things. We entreat the prayers and help of contributors and readers that grace may be ministered to this end.

"Thou art the Same."

J. T. Mawson

Amid the restlessness of rolling years,
The changing seasons as they pass away,
We rest in Thee, and calmed are all our fears,
For well we know "Thou art the same" alway.

And through the gloom there shines a wondrous light,
Light of a love that glows with fervent flame;
'Tis this that cheers us in the earthly fight—
Jehovah—Jesus—evermore the same.

To cleave death's billows for Thy ransomed host,
Love girded Thee to breast their wrath, unmoved;
Today, for ever, it shall be our boast,
Strong as when in the past its might was proved.

O great and glorious Lord! of Thee we sing,
And tread with triumph in the living way.
O faithful Priest! Thou wilt not fail to bring
Thy people unto God's eternal day.

The above verses appeared in the twelfth issue of this magazine (Dec. 1909). We rejoice that what our loved Editor knew and sang 35 years ago, is known by him in far greater fulness to-day. By these reprinted lines he being dead yet speaketh.

The Holy City

" 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 age-less walls are bounded with amethyst—unpriced
The saints build up Thy fabric and the corner-stone is CHRIST."

THE UNIVERSALITY AND POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

J. T. Mawson

THE Gospel of Mark closes with these words: " So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, [His disciples] He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God; and they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following." The record of this mighty working of the grace of God is given in the Acts of the Apostles. It was carried out under the administration of the ascended Lord and in the fulness of the power of the Holy Ghost come down from Him. It is a record that grows in interest as it is studied. The Lord had commanded His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24). We may well marvel at this for Jerusalem was the most desperately wicked city on earth; its history was one of blood-guiltiness; it had not only slain the prophets but crowned its crimes by crucifying Him who was its Messiah and God. But where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.

The Lord had answered their bitter and murderous hatred by His never-to-be-forgotten prayer upon the cross: " Father forgive them for they know not what they do." That prayer was heard and answered, and instead of judgment, the remission of sins was freely offered to the house of Israel through Peter on the day of Pentecost. It was national forgiveness that was preached to them, national salvation; and had they embraced this great grace in repentance and faith, " times of refreshing "

would have come from the presence of the Lord—"the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Some of them, a small remnant, did believe the message and saved themselves from that untoward generation. But the nation, as such, continued in unbelief and unrepentant; and Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, launched his overwhelming indictment against them: " Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers." The truth of Stephen's charge cut them to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth, and cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, " and ran upon him with one accord and cast him out of the city and stoned him to death " chapter 7. Then they fulfilled the Lord's prophetic parable, " His citizens hated Him and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this Man to reign over us." (Luke 19). The rejected Man of the parable was the Lord Jesus, their Messiah: the message they sent after Him was the murdered Stephen.

From that time the gospel went out, not to the Jew only, but to all men, and the Spirit of God in moving Luke to write the Acts chose three cases of this work of God's grace: the Ethiopian Eunuch, chap. 8; Saul of Tarsus, chap. 9; Cornelius, the

centurion, chap. 10. The Ethiopian was a son of Ham; Saul, the Jew, a son of Shem; Cornelius, the Roman, a son of Japheth; one of each of the three families into which mankind was formed after the flood, clearly showing the universal reach of the gospel of the grace of God and its power. We should have put the centurion first and the man of colour last; but God's ways are not as our ways; He knows how to rebuke our pride, and with Him the last shall be first.

These men were prominent and important in their own spheres; the Eunuch was of great authority under the Queen of the Ethiopians; he was the chancellor of her exchequer; Saul had advanced far in the Jew's religion, and was a recognised leader in his nation; and Cornelius belonged to a noble family of Rome, he was a distinguished soldier, a centurion or greatness can satisfy the as though the Spirit of God would show us, by recording the salvation of these great men, that no worldly honour of greatness can satisfy the hearts of men. But what they had failed to find in the world by honour or wealth they found in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they proved that He is brighter and better than the very best and brightest that the world has to offer.

That which shed light upon the dark souls of these men is of supreme interest. The Eunuch was reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah when Philip the evangelist joined himself to him. The place of the Scripture he had reached was, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth; in His humiliation His judgment was taken away, and who shall declare His

generation? for His life is taken from the earth." Then Philip began at that same Scripture and preached unto him, JESUS. It was the meekness and gentleness of the Lord, His humiliation and suffering and death that won the heart of the Eunuch, and bound him with everlasting bonds to our great Saviour. He did not delay, he must become His disciple at once and be identified with Him in His death; so he said, "Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised?"

The Ethiopian was a seeker after light; his journey to Jerusalem and his earnest reading of the Scriptures were a proof of this. But Paul the Jew was not seeking light—he was resisting it, like an unbroken and restive ox he was kicking against the goads. He was not at the crucifixion of the Lord, but he took a willing and prominent part in the murder of Stephen and in the persecution of the saints. He confessed before King Agrippa, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth . . . and many of the saints did I shut up in prison . . . and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them . . . I persecuted them even unto strange cities." He was the chief of sinners, the spearhead of the devil's war against Christ. His zeal against the Name burned like an oven, and "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" he was journeying to Damascus to hale them to prison in Jerusalem. Then it was that the Lord arrested him; suddenly there shined about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou

Me?" The proud Jew was shaken out of his pride and cried out "Who art Thou Lord?" Then came the answer, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." What a revelation that was to Saul; the One whose name he loathed, and against whom he was so bitterly though ignorantly fighting, was enthroned in highest glory at God's right hand! The discovery revolutionized his whole being, and trembling and astonished he made an immediate, complete and unconditional surrender, saying "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Cornelius was a man with a remarkable record; he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway." The messengers that he sent to Simon Peter said that he was, "a just man and one that feareth God and of good report among all the nation of the Jews." Evidently God had begun a good work in him; there was life in his soul, for not otherwise could his works have been acceptable to God. He had some light and he lived up to the light that he had, and God sent him more. Simon Peter was instructed of the Lord to carry the full light of the gospel to him. It is the entrance of God's word that gives light, and Cornelius had to hear words whereby he and all his house should be saved (chap. 11). The hearing of words is stressed in his case (verses 32, 33) and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Cornelius knew already the word which God had sent to the children of Israel, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)." He knew

that He had been slain and hanged on a tree; he may have heard of His resurrection, but he needed to know the force and meaning of these great facts. What he could not have known was what Peter seemed to have declared for the first time, that the Lord had commanded His disciples "to preach unto the people and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Not only was the Lord enthroned in glory, as Saul saw Him, but He was coming again to judge the world in righteousness, all men being accountable to Him.

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father" (John 5: 22, 23).

In view of that coming judgment Peter made a most blessed proclamation, which was in fact the summing up of the witness of all the prophets: "to Him give all the prophets witness that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Peter's "whosoever" is universal: it goes out to men without distinction of class or colour, and those whose sins are remitted by Him, who is ordained as the universal Judge, are clear of condemnation for ever; for if the Judge justifies, who is he that condemneth? He must have the last word about every man. Cornelius and his household heard the words of Peter with the hearing of faith, and the Holy Ghost fell on them while Peter was yet speaking, sealing their faith and taking possession of them for the Lord, whom they now confessed, being baptised in His Name.

It is deeply interesting to see and to put together the great facts of

the gospel that impressed and blessed these three outstanding men. In the case of the Eunuch it was the humiliation, the suffering and death of the Lord; with Saul it was the fact that He was enthroned at the right hand of God; with Cornelius that He was ordained to come in glory as the Judge. These three lines of truth complete for us the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is all Christ: Christ as He was, Christ as He is, and Christ as He will be. In the past, the present and the future, perfect in all His ways and works, and God is glorified in Him.

The Eunuch went on his way rejoicing, and Cornelius and his household magnified God, and that is the last we hear of them. Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Paul the Apostle, is the only one of the three whose post-conversion life is recorded, and this is given in greater detail than that of any other apostle. The Holy Ghost had a purpose in this, for he tells us it was "that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (I Tim. 1). In him we see the power of the gospel and what it can make of a man who is wholly surrendered to the Lord: the greatest sinner became the pattern saint.

We marvel as we see Paul laying all his glory in the dust as dross and dung, and counting all that in which he might have boasted as a burden of which he was well rid that he might have Christ for his gain; but why should we wonder? With the same breath in which he tells us of his own renunciation he tells us

of the surpassing excellence of Christ Jesus his Lord (Phil. 3). We sometimes marvel that Paul rejoiced that he had gone from his own thoughts, that he was crucified with Christ, so that he no longer lived for Paul, but for Christ; but why should we marvel at this?—when he tells us that the One who enthralled him and controlled him was the Son of God "who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2). Paul laboured more than any other servant of the Lord; his great ambition was to be agreeable to Him; but he tells us the secret of this—it is the love of Christ that constraineth us—the love that surpasses all knowledge. It would seem as though it appeared to him a marvel that it could be a marvel to any that he should labour so, for he adds, "we thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. 5).

In these passages in which Paul speaks of his devotion to Christ it is as though he stretched out his hands to the saints to whom he wrote, and to us also, and cried, Do not marvel that I wholly love my Lord; if you had heard and seen Him as I have heard and seen Him you would love Him wholly too; if He had come to you as He came to me as I lay stricken at His feet, the chief of sinners in my hatred of Him, and forgave me, and blessed me, and gave me His Spirit, and folded me to His heart, you could not forget Him. If you knew His mighty embrace as I do, and if your life bathed itself in His love that is too vast to comprehend, you would cease to
 (concluded on page 172)

MULTUM IN PARVO.

A. J. Pollock

THE Epistle to the Romans is considered Paul's masterpiece. Coleridge thought it to be the most profound work ever written. Calvin stated that it opened the door to all the treasures of Scripture. Luther esteemed it the chief book of the New Testament, and the purest gospel. Godet styled it the cathedral of the Scriptures. A great writer has said of Phoebe, when she sailed to Rome, carrying the parchment, on which was inscribed the Epistle to the Romans, "She carried beneath the folds of her robe the whole future of Christian Theology."

Its start is amazing, a veritable **multum in parvo**, not only in what is stated, but in what is implied. Romans 1: 1-5 needs only a few strokes of the pen as far as writing is concerned, and yet what is presented and implied in these verses would take volumes to expound.

To begin with, the Epistle to the Romans is the orderly presentation of the gospel of the grace of God to Christians, to those who had already believed it. When we are first converted, beyond being convicted of our sin by the working of the Holy Spirit upon our consciences, and then the gracious presentation of a loving Saviour, who died for us in love upon the cross of shame, bringing us peace and joy in believing, we knew next to nothing of the truth of the gospel of God. The careful understanding of the Epistle to the Romans lays, however, a very solid foundation in the soul of the believer.

In these opening verses of the Epistle we have presented to us:

- (1) **The gospel of God.**
- (2) **Its promise in the Old Testament.**
- (3) **Its Mediator.**
- (4) **Its triumphant proof.**
- (5) **Its reception.**
- (6) **Its results.**

(1) It is the gospel of God. God is its source. It springs from His heart of infinite love. It is God's glad tidings. It is the only ray of hope to a perishing world. It is conceived in all its parts by God Himself—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—in Divine counsel.

(2) It was promised centuries before the birth of Christ into this world by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures. No sooner did sin come into the world than the promise was given that the seed of the woman, that is Christ Himself, should bruise the serpent's head, implying the cross of our Lord where this victory was obtained. This promise runs through the Old Testament in book after book. It is seen in the coats of skin with which the Lord God covered our first parents, type of the atoning work of our Lord, procuring righteousness for the believing sinner. We have it set forth in Abel's offering. We have it set forth in the Paschal lamb slain on the night the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt. We have its promise in the writings of Isaiah, notably in chapter 53. We have it in the breathing of the Psalms, especially Psalm 22. Men's minds were being prepared for the wonderful moment when type and prophecy should be

fulfilled in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(3) The gospel of God is concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. The usual idea is that the gospel concerns us sinners. It does indeed most blessedly, but first of all it is for the glory of God, and it concerns His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Sinners get the blessing, but that can only come through the finished work of our Lord upon the cross.

We are told that He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. What does it mean when it speaks of our Lord being made of the seed of David? Solomon was of the seed of David. But he was not existent till he was born. He was the seed of David. He was not made of the seed of David. But here we are told of a Divine Person, who was made of the seed of David, who came of David's seed according to the flesh. Is not the Deity of our Lord implied, His Manhood stated? Is there not a great mystery wrapped up in this great truth?

All the great controversies that have raged in the Christian Church since the days of the fathers down the ages to this present time have centred on this very point. It has ever been the ceaseless attack of Satan. Reduce our Lord to mere manhood, refuse His Deity, and the whole of Scripture becomes a fraud. Refuse His true Manhood, pure and sinless, and you have lost the Saviour. "The Father sent the Son [Deity] to be the Saviour [Manhood] of the world" (1 John 4:14).

Scripture is plain. "GOD was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:

16). "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5: 20). "The Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1: 1, 2, 14). "Who are Israelites . . . of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 9: 4, 5).

It is no wonder with such a Mediator the blessings of the gospel flow world-wide to mankind in every place for all the time. And it is manifest that the mystery of the union of Godhead and Manhood in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ must be beyond the comprehension of the creature. Our Lord Himself said emphatically, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11: 27). Though beyond our comprehension, it is not beyond our faith. It constitutes one of the greatest and most cherished of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5: 5).

(4) The triumphant proof of the gospel is the declaration by His glorious resurrection, that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, and that with power and according to holiness. If our Lord were not what He said He was, God would never have raised Him from the dead. The Jews fully understood that the claim our Lord made that God was His Father was the claim to Deity, for we read, "The Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also

that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5: 18). If that were not a true claim, it would have been the extreme height of blasphemy. If it were not true, God would never have raised Him from the dead. Moreover, if in His holy Manhood there had been the faintest breath of sin, even in thought, God would not have raised a sinner from the dead. Above all He claimed with His latest breath that He had completed the work of redemption on the cross, crying with a loud voice, "IT IS FINISHED" (John 19: 30). If that had not been true, God would never have raised Him from the dead.

Moreover, it came with power. There were outward signs. The rent veil, the chased-away darkness, the rending of the rocks, the mighty earthquake, the opening of the graves after His resurrection, and the outstanding miracle of saints, already dead, being raised, and appearing unto many in the holy city, proof that the power of death was broken, extorted the confession from the Roman centurion as he watched the Holy Sufferer, and witnessed His death, "TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD" (Matt. 27: 54).

Moreover the manner of His resurrection was unique. The Jews remembered the words of our Lord when He again and again said He would rise the third day. They urged on Pilate that the tomb in which His body was laid should be guarded against the possible plot of His disciples to steal His body, by placing round it a powerful Roman guard. To make precaution doubly effective, the tomb was sealed.

do not believe that it was necessary to roll away the stone to allow the Lord to emerge from the tomb. The way the clothes were left, not crumpled up and in disorder, but rather like a chrysalis leaving its silken sheath in the energy of a new life, declares this.

The demonstration on the part of Divine power was seen in the great earthquake, and the angel of the Lord descending and rolling back the stone. The appearance of the angel, unlike most visitations of angels, was enough to make the strong soldiers shake with fear, and become as dead men. The angelic countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was white as snow. Thus was our Lord declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection.

Finally we read that "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection" (Acts 4: 33) Notice, "GREAT power." Scripture does not throw its adjectives about at random. Every word tells as here. No wonder the Jews cried to the magistrates of Thessalonica, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" (Acts 17: 6).

A Mohammedan urged that his belief was superior to Christianity, because they could take the one great pilgrimage of their lives to the tomb of their prophet in Arabia, whereas the Christian had no tomb. The Mohammedan however, played into the hands of the Christian, who replied in something like these words, "Yes, you have the tomb of your prophet, for he is dead, and his bones lie in his coffin; the Christian needs no tomb for he has no corpse, Jesus is triumphant, alive forevermore, risen from the dead."

Did all this effect its purpose? We

A schoolmaster asked his boys to state, who were the three greatest living persons. One lad began his list with the name of the Lord Jesus. "But," said the schoolmaster, "Jesus is dead." "No, sir" replied the young scholar, "He is alive."

Yes, the resurrection is the great proof of the Son of God, and that great fact is the confirmation of all that our Lord was as God and Man, and Saviour. I remember urging upon an infidel the great truth of our Lord's resurrection. He replied, "If you can prove the resurrection, I am bound to be a Christian."

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(5) The Epistle makes it abundantly plain that the reception of the gospel is by FAITH, and by nothing else. The law cannot bring about this blessing. Nor can any works of man earn it. It comes by God's grace, its source; by our Lord Jesus Christ as its Mediator on the ground of His redemptive work performed to God's satisfaction at the cross. It comes as the declaration of God's righteousness, "that He might be just, and the Justifier of Him, which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3: 26). Faith and faith alone links the believer to the Lord Jesus, with all the blessings—forgiveness of sins, salvation, justification, eternal life—consequent on so believing. It is a glorious gospel, and worthy of God. To Him be all the praise, world without end.

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(6) Its results are world-wide. The Apostle "received grace and apostle-

ship for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His Name" (Rom. 1: 5). You have only to read the Acts of the Apostles to see how faithfully Paul carried out his commission, surely in line with the risen Lord's commission given to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16: 15). The resurrection indeed set in movement a mighty force, which the centuries have witnessed. Converts by the million have sprung up. Every part of the world has contributed to this great effort.

John in prophetic vision saw in part the grand results of this glorious resurrection, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. 7: 9). And these are only a section of the great ransomed throng that will sing, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7: 10).

(continued from page 168)

marvel at me. Instead you would marvel that any heart on earth could hold back from Him and any lip remain silent before Him; and you would marvel the more that any, having known Him and His unsearchable riches, should have another thought of self or turn again from Him to the base and beggarly world.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapters 16: 22—17: 8)

THE context of verse 22 would indicate that the Lord was referring, not only to the gladness that would fill the disciples when they met Him in resurrection, but also to their joy when, by the Spirit given, they should have the knowledge of His glory. This is yet more plain when we consider verse 23, for "In that day" does not indicate merely the forty days during which they saw Him before Pentecost, but rather the whole period characterized by His absence and the Spirit's personal presence in the church. That day has not yet run its course, and it is still our privilege to pray in the Holy Ghost, and thus to ask of the Father in the name of the Son.

The word "ask" occurs twice in this verse but actually the Lord used two different words, which might be distinguished by using "demand" or "enquire" for the first and "ask" or "petition" for the second. The Lord had been meeting all their demands, and they had run to Him with all their enquiries, but now that day was closing. But He had revealed the Father **before** them, and directly the Spirit should be given that revelation would become effective **in** them. They would be empowered to take their place as representatives of the Son, and so ask in His Name. Asking thus under the direction of the Spirit, their prayers would be sure of an affirmative answer, as being according to the Father's mind. Striking instances of prayers of this kind are given us in the latter part of Acts 4, and again in Acts 12. Indeed the prayer of the dying Stephen, in the last verse

of Acts 7, illustrates it; for the conversion of the man who presided, like an evil genius, over his martyrdom was an answer to the spirit of the request, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

The change that would be introduced by the coming of the Comforter is still the dominant thought in verse 25. It would affect the very way in which the truth as to the Father was to be presented. He had been making known the Father by doing the Father's works. All the miracles, or "signs" recorded in this gospel, had been a setting forth of the grace and power and glory of the Father, in a parabolic or allegorical way. When we turn to the Epistles we read plain declarations of the Father, His purposes and glory and love, given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. All this came to pass in the day of which the Lord was speaking, when they should be able to ask with all freedom in His Name as knowing the Father's love.

The words in the latter part of verse 26 are no contradiction of the fact that Jesus is our Intercessor on high. They only emphasize the fact of the Father's love for the saints and the place of intimacy that they have in His presence. The attitude of the disciples to Jesus was, as verse 27 shows, one of **love and faith**. Is that our attitude? Then we too come under the benediction of the Father's love. Hence, though we deeply need Christ's gracious intercession for us in view of our weakness and constant failure, as those **in this place** of love and favour, yet we have no need for intercession **that we**

may be in this place. Souls brought up in the darkness of Romanism may imagine they need just the kind of intercession that is precluded here, only so often they sink still lower by thinking that the Virgin Mary or some lesser " saint " must undertake it. Blessed be God, we need no intercessor of that kind at all!

The disciples believed that He had come forth from God, but as yet they had hardly risen to the thought of His coming forth from the Father, though, as their words show, they did not as yet realize their limitations. Until the Spirit was given they were limited in understanding, as verse 31 shows, and also in power and courage, as verse 32 shows. The very men who were groping in their minds here, and in a few hours' time were scattered and running away, were gathered with minds of clear understanding, and with hearts as bold as lions, when the Day of Pentecost was fully come. Understanding and courage: these two things should characterize us to-day. But do they?

Though the Lord had no support from His disciples in the dark hour before Him, He could go forth in perfect dependence on the Father and in the assurance of His abiding presence. Hence He confronted the world's hatred and opposition in perfect peace and wholly overcame it. Now all these communications the Lord had made that His disciples in their turn might have peace in Him, just as He had possessed peace in the Father. His overcoming the world, moreover, was the pledge that overcoming power was also at their disposal. He had just been speaking of the world's hatred and

persecution. To us perhaps its seductions and smiles are more dangerous. But, whichever it be, our safety lies in Christ. Only as begotten of God and as believing that Jesus is the Son of God do we overcome the world, as 1 John 5: 4, 5, tells us.

We need to have in our minds the five words that close chapter 16 as we read the opening words of chapter 17. He who had overcome the world " lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father." In the knowledge of the Father and in the light of heaven, what is the world worth? And what are its threats or persecutions? Here was the Son of God Himself in the absolute fulness of both, and hence the world was, so to speak, beneath His feet. He is now going to present Himself before the Father, and to present His disciples also; so that they, begotten of God, and knowing Himself as the Son of God, and the Father revealed in Him, might be kept from the world through which they were to pass. When Bunyan in his allegory pictured a man with a crown of glory " before his eyes," he very rightly placed the world " behind his back."

In the fourth verse of the next chapter we have the Evangelist's testimony that Jesus knew " all things that should come upon Him." Here He addresses the Father in the consciousness that the hour, for which He specially came into the world, was come. In this matchless chapter we are permitted to hear the Son communing with the Father, and lifted thus into this Divine region, we view His great work as a completed whole and pass in spirit beyond the Cross. Here are words

that defy all human powers of analysis and submerge all human powers of thought. Yet we may consider them. Let us do so, as we pass through the verses, by noting the things for which He made request of the Father, and also His emphatic statements as to what He had already accomplished.

His first request is, "Glorify Thy Son." The Son had been here as the Servant of the Father's pleasure and glory, to which fact this Gospel has borne special and abundant witness. So, in keeping with this, His first request is, that no longer in humiliation on earth but amid the splendours of heaven He may still serve and glorify the Father by exerting the power over all flesh conferred upon Him in a way of peculiar wonder and blessedness. By-and-by He will exert that power over all flesh in the execution of judgment: at present He exerts it in the bestowal of eternal life to all that have been given to Him of the Father. Of that life He is the Source and Fountain for men. We have life and we have the Spirit from the glorified One, and the Father is glorified in this in a way that surpasses the solemn glory that will be His in the hour of judgment.

Now all life takes character from the conditions that surround it—from its environment. Eternal life can only be lived in the knowledge of the only true God as Father, and of Jesus Christ the Sent One of the Father. This it is doubtless that accounts for the fact that life of an eternal sort is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament, and then simply as hinting prophetically at that which will be enjoyed in the millen-

nial age to come. It was promise rather than known and enjoyed blessing. The law offered life on earth. The age of life eternal began when the Son of God appeared, and having finished His work on earth He was glorified in heaven.

Ten times over in this chapter does Jesus utter the words, "I have," in declaring the fulness of all that He had accomplished. The first two occurrences are in verse 4, where He urges the completeness of His work in support of His request for glory. He had glorified the Father, be it noted, **on the earth**—that particular corner of the wide universe where He had been most signally dishonoured by the sin and breakdown of the first man and his race. That great work had been entrusted to Him, together with the parallel work of making propitiation for sin, so that there might be redemption for sinners. Passing in spirit beyond the Cross, He declared the completeness and perfection of His own work. No mere man could utter words like this. The work of the most eminent servants of God has been but fragmentary and incomplete. And had it been otherwise not one of them would have dared to approach God, the Searcher of hearts and ways, and pronounce on their own work, declaring its finished perfection, for it would have betokened impudent presumption of the worst kind. But here the Son is speaking, and it was no presumption for Him.

Yet He was truly Man; and that is what strikes us as we read verse 5, where He repeats His request for glory—that particular glory which He had had along with the Father

before the world came into being. He is to be re-invested with that glory, only now as the Son in Manhood—**risen Manhood**. Here is a fact of greatest wonder and weightiest moment: a Risen Man, Christ Jesus, is invested with the uncreated glory of Deity. In that glory is the church's Head, the Leader of the chosen race to which we belong. Who can measure the consequences that are going to flow from this great fact?

The chosen race come into view in the next verse. They are designated, “the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world.” So at the outset they are sharply differentiated from the world, as taken out of it by the Father and given to the Son. They were the Father's according to His counsel before time was, but they were given to the Son that He might bring them to the knowledge of the Father by manifesting His Name to them. At the end of His prayer Jesus speaks of **declaring** the Father's Name, which lays the stress upon His words. Here however it is **manifesting**, and that was accomplished more in His life and works; as He had said previously, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” Of these men He says, “They have kept Thy word.”

This was very touching, for think what these men had been, how slow, how obtuse, how unresponsive! And think what they were on the point of showing themselves to be. What cowardice, what denials, in a few hours time! But the Son viewed

them in the light of the Divine purpose, and He knew that the Father had power to ultimately effect in them all that He had purposed. So He credited them with the possession in fulness of that which they as yet only realized in very feeble measure. And does He not treat His saints to-day, and intercede for them, in just the same way? He credits them also, in the next verse, with tracing up to the Father all that they had seen displayed in Him. All through this Gospel we find Him attributing everything to the Father. His words and His works were the Father's. He neither spoke nor acted as from Himself, though He was the Word and the Son. So real was the Humanity that He took: so real the place of subjection He assumed that He might manifest the Father's Name and glory.

In verse 8 He speaks not of “the word” but of “the words” that had been given to Him and handed on to the disciples. The one is the revelation, considered as one whole; the other the many and varied sayings in which He had communicated the word to them. These sayings they had received, and thereby had been directed to the Father Himself. They had indeed received them, but had they really grasped the tiniest fraction of their meaning? How much have we grasped—we who have the Spirit? Yet it is no small thing if we implicitly receive and believe what He says because He says it. All that He has said will put us into touch with the Father who has sent Him.

“LIFE OR DEATH . . . ALL ARE YOURS.”

ON July 22nd last the body of the late Editor of this magazine, our beloved brother, John T. Mawson, was laid to rest at Pitlochry, and we now give a short account of what transpired, believing that it will be appreciated by many of our readers.

The first part of the service was held at the house and opened with Hymn 326, “As debtors to mercy alone” given out by Mr. J. Stoddart (Newcastle), of which verses 1 and 3 were sung. Mr. E. P. Brown (Carlisle) read 2 Corinthians 4:5-18; after which Mr. F. B. Hole (Cambridge) read 1 Corinthians 3: 21-23, and spoke somewhat as follows:—

Nothing would have been less desired by the beloved servant of the Lord who has been taken from us, than that we should spend the time today in speaking much of him. In the scripture just read, we have heard the Apostle Paul saying, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake,” and I am sure that our dear brother carried out his life of service in the spirit of these words. Moreover, I believe that he entered more fully into their spirit as his years of service increased, and he has been granted more than fifty of them.

This passage in 2 Corinthians identifies “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” with this preaching of “Christ Jesus the Lord,” and the Apostle proceeds to speak of it as “this treasure” which we have “in earthen vessels,” so that the power which accompanies the preach-

ing may be evidently of God and not of us. Now we ourselves are the earthen vessels, or, more exactly our earthly bodies are. The thing of all importance is the light of the Gospel, to which the earthen vessel can add nothing, but from which it may easily detract much; so much so that it has to be dealt with in ways that are detailed in the rest of the chapter.

A variety of expressions is used: “our body;” “our mortal flesh;” “our outward man;” and in the opening verse of chapter 5, “our earthly house of this tabernacle.” All these refer to our present bodies of flesh and blood, in which we bear “the image of the earthy;” to that “tabernacle” which our dear brother has now put off, but in which for the present we remain. Each servant of the Lord must regard his body as just the earthen vessel through which it may please God to work, in the shining out of the light: it is in no wise to take a ruling place, but to be wholly in a subservient position. The Apostle Paul was no exception to this; indeed he presents himself to us in this scripture as a pattern in whom the Divine dealings reached their fullest expression. Those dealings fall under two heads.

First, in verse 10, there is that inward, spiritual dealing which takes place in the body—and in the spirit—of the servant himself. If he falls under the power of his body, so that it rules him, the outcome is bound to be departure and sin and the clouding of the light; therefore there has to be the “bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

As this is maintained, the life of Jesus—and not the life of the servant, be he Saul of Tarsus, or anybody else—is made manifest in the body.

Second, in verse 11, there is the **outward** action of God in His disciplinary dealings. These Paul speaks of in a way that was personal to himself. He was continually being “delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake,” so that later in the Epistle he speaks of himself as being “in deaths oft;” yet all had the same object in view—the life of Jesus was to be manifested in his mortal flesh. This involved the trouble on every side, the perplexity, the persecution, the castings down, that he speaks of in verses 8 and 9 of our chapter. All these things were designed to help, not to hinder, the shining of the Gospel through him.

We have all known of the dealings of God with our beloved friend. Not in the same way as with Paul, but in a very real and trying way through increasing infirmities of the body, has God dealt with him, placing him “in deaths oft” by these violent asthma attacks, but until now raising him up for further service. And I am sure we have all seen and appreciated the way in which spiritual grace has increasingly marked his increasing years, and the life of Jesus as well as the light of the Gospel has been manifested. As with Paul, death had to work in him before death of the body came upon him.

But, one may say, surely a life of this sort must be very gloomy! Not at all, for everything is illumined with the light of resurrection. Paul

goes on to speak of having the same spirit of faith as the Psalmist possessed. He quotes from Psalm 116, and finds this faith where we might hardly have suspected it. The Psalmist was much distressed and has to say, “the sorrows of death compassed me.” Yet he got a spiritual deliverance and says, “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken.” We might have thought that he meant that instead of dying he would continue his life in this world. But it was not that, for this world is the land of the dying. The land of the living is the resurrection world, and on that the Psalmist had his eye; and so had Paul, and so should we.

We have with Paul more abundant reason for our faith in resurrection. The Psalmist believed that it would be, but he lived centuries before it was possible to speak of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. His resurrection is the basis of our faith and hope, as verse 14 shows, and in this there is power to carry us through the trials and the perishing of the outward man, for we can look at the unseen and eternal things and not merely at things visible and temporal.

Moreover, we know that the visible things, even those which seem to be against us and hindrances, are really for us and overruled for our help. This led me to read the few verses in the first Epistle. “All things are yours.” What an amazing statement. Staggering and almost incredible! we might say. But we must note the steps in our title-deed:—“all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” All

things are God's: there is no difficulty about that. Yes, but He will take up all things in His Christ, who is the Heir of all things. And the Heir is going to take up all things by giving possession to His saints. So, whether it be the servants of God or the world, whether life or death, whether things present or to come; all are ours. We must not boast in a man, as did the party-men at Corinth. They were like children who annex one pretty pebble from a beach. But the ocean and all its shores are ours!

So we can take up this happy language in regard to the dear servant of God who is taken from us. While he was yet in the world and amongst the things of this present life, all that most seemed to be against him—his losses and bodily infirmities, and more things beside—were really his servants, working out that which will in the coming day prove to have been pleasing to the Lord. And now we can say that death itself has been but the servant that closed his eyes upon the things seen and temporal, and more fully opened them upon the eternal things, as being absent from the body and present with the Lord.

To the man of the world death means defeat. To us resurrection means victory, and death is our servant. In the faith of this we can go to the grave and there place the body of our dear brother to await the coming again of Jesus our Lord.

Mr. A. J. Pollock (Edinburgh) then prayed, thanking God for every remembrance of one who had been known to so many of us for so many years, and that there was the record on high of his steady purpose in ser-

ving the Lord. We rendered thanks for him as a great gift from the Head in Heaven to His members here on earth, and for the many precious souls he had been instrumental in leading to Christ, as also for his pastoral spirit and ministry both by voice and pen. While thus giving thanks he prayed that others likeminded might be raised up to serve the Lord.

At the graveside Mr. W. B. Dick (Edinburgh) gave out hymn 161, "For ever with the Lord."

Mr. Coutts (Aberdeen) read 2 Corinthians 5: 1-9 and 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-18.

Dr. Sutherland (Bradford) read Colossians 1: 7-14 and 4: 12-13, and remarking upon the words "Ephaphras, our dear fellow-servant and for you a faithful minister of Christ" he said:

It was the heart's desire of our brother that men should be delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. For this he diligently worked and fervently prayed, and as an echo of his service in the Gospel, and according to the present invitation of the Holy Spirit, I would say to any gathered round his grave, to whom it applies, "we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." It was not only in the wide field of evangelism, however, that our dear brother served the Lord. He had a great care for the flock of God, seeking that it might be fed and cared for, ministering to the saints that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God; and in this service he was to you his contemporaries who stand round his

grave, surely, your "dear Fellow-servant." Seeking in the words of the Apostle that we of a younger generation "might walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God," he was to us indeed "a faithful minister of Christ"—we mourn his loss.

But not only did he minister to the companies of God's people: he carried the sympathies of Christ to the bedside of the sick and dying saints. I have been with him when he has ministered to such, quoting the Lord's words "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The saint could reply with a smile and note of confidence, "I will fear no evil for Thou art with me."

I speak now of what is personal, but need not be private. Our brother did not preach from the public platform merely a code of ethics, not just theories or rhetoric. In his great suffering I was privileged to see Christianity in action. His patience, confidence and submission to the will of the Lord, was to me more eloquent than his public addresses. Without murmuring or complaining he faced death, with a quiet calm trust in his Lord. The Master stood by His servant and he was strengthened in the hour of his bodily weakness by God's glorious power unto all patience.

Others have spoken to us of the structure of Christianity, Mr. Mawson was to me the interpretation of the spirit of it; for as walls of a house do not necessarily make a home, neither does the knowledge of doctrinal truth alone give a clear witness for Christ. Gracious in his words and ways he showed some-

thing of the spirit of Christ and for this he will be remembered. We think of his spirit, and in the power of our Christian faith we look into the grave and in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, we say regarding his body "a Dieu"—to God. But there is something we shall retain—the fragrance of his Christ-like spirit. When memories are dimmed and then fade away, we will turn to his writings and by the Spirit we will recapture a sense of the gracious manner in which the Lord ministered to us through him, and he being dead will yet speak.

Finally, Mr. D. Ross (Edinburgh) prayed, acknowledging that our hearts were full of grief for the loss of one who was a devoted husband, a loving father, a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, a brother beloved and a wise counsellor. Yet in our grief we could rejoice and give thanks for all that God had given to us through him, for his flaming zeal as an evangelist, his gift as a teacher and writer, for his graciousness and charitableness, for his lack of censoriousness and unfaltering allegiance to Christ, and for the mercy that enabled him, despite the weakness of the earthen vessel, to fulfil his ministry and to die in harness. We render thanks that, constrained by the love of Christ, he had sought to live not unto himself but unto Him who had died for him and rose again, and so he preached not himself but Christ Jesus the Lord and thus was the servant of others for Jesus' sake, interpreting Christ to many of us. In our sorrow we were not as others who have no hope but rather could repeat the challenge, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" and give thanks to

God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the sorrowing relatives we prayed; asking that the consolation and sympathy of Christ might be theirs; at the same time returning thanks for the loving care and ceaseless devotion of his wife, which had so helped in the prolongation of his life of usefulness for God. We besought also comfort for the daughters and the brother, to whom the loss of such a father and brother

would mean a very great sorrow.

Thus to God's keeping we committed the dust of a saint, a servant, a child of God and an heir of glory; looking forward to the day when the voice of the archangel and the trump of God would second the triumph shout of the Lord Himself, and summon us living and sleeping to be forever with the Lord. We prayed that the comfort of these words might remain with us all.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

God has a great purpose in regard to those He did foreknow; they are His children and heirs, and He has "predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren." In effecting this purpose He has won their love—they love Him—this is a mighty triumph. Yet it seems strange to some, that those who have been called to so high a destiny and who love Him, should suffer and groan with a groaning creation, and that their redeemed and Spirit-sealed souls should be left in unredeemed and weak bodies, and that sometimes they should be brought into such trials and straits that they do not know what to pray for. But faith has an answer to every doubt or question that may arise, and it is a triumphant answer. "We know," faith cries, that every circumstance and condition, every trial and tribulation, all suffering and need that may connect with creature conditions, while we await the coming deliverance, are turned to our account. God who is over all, and without whose permission nothing can happen, controls everything and controls it for our good in relation to His ultimate aim for us. We know this must be so since His love is so great that He spared not **His own Son** but delivered Him up for us all. This knowledge gives great confidence and quietness of spirit and leads on to the triumphant conclusion of the chapter (Romans 8).

Romans 8: 28

If there were no difficulties there would be nothing to triumph over. If there were no testing, there would be no manifestation of the reality of God's work in His people. There would be no accomplishment either of that which is wrought by the necessary discipline in it all. The things that seem against us are thus really for us, according to the abiding assurance that God maketh all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

THE OLIVE TREE, THE FIG TREE AND THE VINE.

A. J. Pollock

IN Scripture the Olive, the Fig and the Vine symbolically set forth the children of Israel viewed from different aspects. Not a great deal is said about any of them, but what is said, is very illuminating.

The first mention of them falls from the lips of Jotham in the first parable recorded in the Scriptures, when he addressed the men of Shechem. Doubtless Jotham thought of the olive and fig tree and the vine simply as belonging to the world of nature. But in the light of the whole of Scripture, whilst he may have had no more than that in his mind, he used them in a way that speaks of **God's mind as to Israel**. Indeed it sets forth in a striking way the unity of Scripture, that writers, separated by long centuries, and with no knowledge of each other's contributions to the sacred canon, should each add a part, which fits in exactly with the whole, thus showing the hand of Divine inspiration behind it all.

Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal (Gideon) wished the men of Shechem to make him king. He received from them seventy pieces of silver with which he hired vain and light persons, and murdered his brethren, slaying threescore and ten, save Jotham, who escaped his hand.

Jotham hearing of his brother's design to be King, stood on Mount Gerizim, and uttered his parable. It was a very pithy parable with a very sarcastic note in it.

The trees wanted to anoint a king over them. They approached the olive tree, saying, "Reign thou over us." The olive tree replied, "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

They then said to the fig tree, "Come thou and reign over us." The fig tree replied, "Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

They then approached the vine with the same request. The vine replied, "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

Baffled in turn by these wise answers, to the effect that the safe and right course was to stay as God had placed them, the trees lastly made their request to the bramble. The bramble replied, "If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon" (Judges 9: 15).

It is not our purpose to expatiate on this parable, save to glean an idea or two from the answers of the olive and fig tree and the vine. We may permit ourselves, however, to make this remark. The utter sarcasm employed in the expression, the "shadow" of the bramble, and fire coming out from the thin straggling weed called the bramble, to consume the

mighty cedars of Lebanon, is irony at its best. We think it well illustrates Hitler. The nations who would come under his shadow, will find in spite of all his proud boasting, that they are indeed trusting to the shadow of a straggling weed. Any and every arm of flesh is this in the end.

In Jotham's parable the great thought connected with the olive tree, was **fatness**. With the fig tree it was **sweetness and fruit**. With the vine it was **wine which cheereth the heart of God and man**.

THE OLIVE TREE

Romans 11: 17-24 is the great Scripture which sheds light on this subject. There it speaks about the firstfruit, the lump and the root of the olive tree. To be permanently in this tree speaks of **faith**—not a mere profession, but reality. What then does the olive tree stand for symbolically? We begin with the root, that is Abraham, the repository of all the promises from God of blessing to Israel. Abraham was a man of **faith**, and found righteousness imputed to him on that ground, and on none other.

It is interesting how this is emphasized in Romans and Galatians. In the fullest sense the root is **Christ Himself**. Abraham got his blessing from Christ, though unknown to him on earth, for the Son of God had not been revealed. It is written to Christians of this dispensation, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3: 29). The fatness, that is spiritual enrichment, did not come to a man because he was lineally descended from Abraham as a Jew, but because he shared Abra-

ham's faith, and shared in the blessing that he enjoyed, and this is open to Gentiles as well.

We find some branches were broken off. Why? "Because of unbelief they were broken off." Doubtless this refers to the history of the Jewish nation. Though outwardly standing in relation to God's promises to Abraham, there was no living faith in the nation as such, and therefore because of unbelief the natural branches were broken off.

Wild branches were set in their place, showing the sovereign work of God's mercy among the Gentiles, bringing them by the Gospel to enjoy the fatness, the spiritual enrichment, set forth in this symbolical way.

But they, as not continuing in God's goodness, will in their turn be cut off, and Israel, represented by the natural branches, will be grafted in again. They will not abide in unbelief for ever. Thank God, the spirit of grace and supplication will be given to them, and they shall look upon Him, whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him as a man mourns for his only son. So reads the royal prophecy of Zechariah 12. God's promises to Abraham will be literally and nationally fulfilled, but on the ground of faith, where Abraham, the first one to be called out, found the blessing.

The Apostle Paul used this illustration, "contrary to nature." In nature the root is wild, and by the introduction of a good graft, good fruit is obtained. But the Apostle reverses this for the sake of the teaching involved. The root is good,

the wild branches are grafted in, and, "contrary to nature," the fruit is good. How wonderful is the grace of God, that He can take wild branches—sinners of the Gentiles—and incorporate them by faith in that system of things in which alone blessing is to be found, a system that owes its "fatness" to our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament this was all prospective in anticipation of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into this world, and the results flowing from His sacrificial work on the cross.

"God hath set forth [Christ] to be a propitiation [mercy-seat] through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God [that is of Old Testament saints]: to declare I say, at this time, His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus [believers in this dispensation]" (Rom. 3: 25, 26).

THE FIG TREE

Sweetness and good fruit are what marked the fig tree in Jotham's parable. Israel was chosen nationally among the nations to bear fruit for God, as is shown in Luke 21: 29:—"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees"—the fig tree is differentiated from the rest. The failure of Israel's response to all God's goodness is seen in our Lord cursing the barren fig tree. This was the only miracle our Lord performed that was not benevolent. It tells us that whilst grace and blessing are what God delights in, yet judgment must find its place for God is righteous and must uphold His name.

For three years the dresser of the vineyard had come looking for fruit and found none. For long centuries God had looked for fruit from Israel, but found none nationally. Three years was ample time to prove the fruitfulness or barrenness of the fig tree. For three years our Lord had walked up and down the length of the land, performing His acts of mercy, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom to the nation; with what result? They crucified the Lord of glory.

When the decree went forth in the parable to cut down the barren fig tree, the dresser pleaded for another year of trial, digging and dunging to be tried. Still the tree was fruitless. After our Lord had been rejected and cast out, another chance was given to Israel in the testimony of the Holy Spirit of God, but the only answer to this was the murder of Stephen, and the defiant message sent with him, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." Consequently the barren fig tree has been cut down. Israel as a nation has been set aside by God. "Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hosea 1: 9), is true of Israel today.

But is Israel to be cut down for ever? What of God's promises to Abraham? Are they to be fulfilled? Has God ever failed in His word? The Lord's parable provides the answer. "Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand." "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (Luke 21: 29, 30, 32). Do we not see signs today of the shooting forth of the once barren fig

tree, and all the trees, in a remarkable way? The result of the last great war was to produce a wave of nationalism all over the world. Kings fled and republics were born in a day. As to the Jews, since then they have been going back in streams to their own land. Jeremiah 16: 16 seems to be in process of fulfilment under our very eyes. First the Lord has sent many fishers to DRAW Jews out of the many lands to which they have been scattered for nigh two millenniums. The hunger for their own land has gathered strength through the Zionist movement. Next the Lord sent hunters to DRIVE His people back to their own land, for the wave of cruel, sadistic persecution, springing from anti-semitism, has swept over Europe like a mighty flood.

The fig tree is about to flourish again. "If the casting away of them [the Jewish nation] be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11: 15).

THE VINE

The great thought of the vine is that it ministers wine, which cheers the heart of God and man. Not the blessing of God to man, as set forth symbolically in "the root and fatness of the olive tree;" nor the special place among the nations, and being for God nationally to bear fruit as set forth in the fig tree; the vine has a special thought attached to it symbolically, that is of cheer for GOD, as well as for man. It is not the blessing of God to man so much as the response to GOD. Wherever there is response to God, man is blessed in making the response.

Psalm 80: 8-19 tells us that the

Lord planted a vine in his own land, a vine brought from Egypt, from among the heathen. The Lord prepared room for it, caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land. Alas! the boar out of the wood wasted it, and the wild beast devoured it. In other words Israel failed to minister joy to God, and to be blessed themselves in ministering to Him. They turned aside to idolatry, and were deaf to the calls of repentance from the lips of one prophet after another. Last of all God sent His Son. The last and final test was made. Alas! they rejected Him and cast Him out.

Where then is recovery? When can blessing be found? The Psalm ends with a prayer, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will we not go back from Thee: quicken us, and we will call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."

Where do we get the answer to that petition? It is a real spiritual S.O.S. We get the blessed answer in John 15. There our Lord said, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman." Branches, that is believers on the Lord, abiding in Him bear much fruit, and herein is the Father glorified. There is no breakdown here. The Vine is Christ. The Dresser or Husbandman is the Father. His knife makes no mistakes. The vitality of the Vine cannot be weakend. Our part is to abide in Him, to draw all our sap and fruit from the life of the Vine. If we display the life of Christ down here on earth, we are bringing forth fruit that will cheer the heart of God and man.

THE PATIENCE OF JOB.

J. T. Mawson

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5: 11).

YEWS, we have heard of the patience of Job, and how he held on to his God through a series of unparalleled calamities. Satan, the adversary, had observed him for a long time and had been most evidently annoyed at his God-fearing and upright life. If he could have destroyed him he would have done it, but he had to confess that God had put a hedge about him which he could not break down or surmount.

It did not please the devil, the great accuser, that in the world that he desired to dominate there should be a man who wholly served God; and being only evil he could not understand a pure and disinterested motive; consequently he put down Job's fidelity to God to the good thing he was making out of it. "Doth Job fear God for nought?" he asks. "Hast not Thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, **and he will curse Thee to Thy face.**"

It was a two-handed attack. It was a blow aimed at God, for it meant, "You have created man for your pleasure and you can only gain his service by paying him well;" and it was a blow aimed at Job, for as "the accuser of the brethren," Satan moved God against him. But was the accusation false or true?

That had to be proved for the sakes of all concerned and for ours also. The question was, should God or Satan triumph in the experience of Job?

The hedge that surrounded this man of God was removed and Satan was allowed to do with him as he pleased within the limits of God's will. How thoroughly he did his malignant work! There was no pity, no mercy in his heart; catastrophe followed catastrophe; the Sabeans, the fire from heaven, the Chaldeans and the great wind from the wilderness conspired together against the object of his malice, until not a vestige of his great possessions remained; almost all his servants were slain, and last and worst of all, he was robbed of his ten children. Job was beggared and bereaved of all that he valued, in one day. He was surely a man to be wondered at as with garments rent and head shaved he fell down upon the ground. How eagerly Satan must have watched him and listened to hear the words that would come out of his mouth, and how baffled and beaten he must have been when Job exclaimed, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; **blessed be the Name of the Lord.**" In the first round of that great contest the honours were certainly with God.

It was clear that God was more to Job than the blessings He had given him. He was not like the man of the world who thinks that whatever he possesses he has gained by

his own skill or industry. His was true piety; he received all from God and gave thanks even when all he possessed was taken from him. He gave to God His rightful place in regard to all He had given him, and when he lost all he looked at no second cause. God was above all, behind all and in everything to Job.

But Satan though astonished was unabashed; he would try again. Job had still a healthy body and his life, and incidentally, his wife. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and **he will curse Thee to Thy face.**" So said the great adversary to God, repeating his accusation against Job and casting his taunt at God. "You have made this man, and though You are more to him than his possessions, You are not more to him than himself; he loves himself better than he loves You." And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold he is in thine hand, but save his life." So Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. No part of him was spared, and "he took a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes."

What must have been his perplexity, his bewilderment as he sat in his misery? His was a living death! And he knew not the cause of it, and was silent, until his wife came to him, and through her Satan made his last and most subtle attack upon him. Said she, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." It was a foul blow, and just like the devil, but it opened Job's mouth and made him give a

triumphant answer, even if he did not understand its full meaning. "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Curse God! That would have meant giving up his God. Could he do that? Never. He could lose everything, but not his God. Many things may have seemed indispensable to him in former days, but he had come to this point in his experience now; he could do without everything but God. God alone was indispensable to Job, so that he cried out later in his agony yet earnestness of soul, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him."

Thus did Job endure, in this was his patience seen and Satan is heard of no more in the story, he had nothing more to say, he was silenced by Job's faith in God, and he left him to God in whom he trusted, and He "is very pitiful and of tender mercy." He will surely give a full compensation for all suffering that has been suffered according to His will and in the learning of His ways for our final good. Job was compensated here for "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning," and his former wealth was doubled, and his children were restored to him, and his daughters were fairer than any women in the land and their names meant peace and fragrance and beauty. And moreover he prayed for his friends, and his brethren and sisters who had forsaken him in his calamity returned to him, and he went down at last to an honoured grave, being old and full of years.

"**The end of the Lord**" is not reached for us in this life. The New Testament has revealed to us a life

beyond this, and as we realize this we shall be patient and endure. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us

a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 16-18).

BIBLE STUDY, concluded.

that is, their consciously realized portion. As the Father's love thus dwelt in them, they would be qualified to be an expression of Christ: He would be "in them" in display.

This wonderful prayer—the outbreathings of the Son in communion

with the Father—must of necessity be beyond all our thoughts, yet it is effective beyond all else in bringing the warmth of Divine love into our hearts. It is a joy to notice that just as it begins with the Son glorified **by** the Father, it ends with the Son manifested and thus glorified **in** the saints.

True Worship

In true worship the soul is led from the blessing enjoyed to Him who is blessed for evermore; from the gift to the Giver. The joy in the gift will not be less because there is the acknowledgment of the Giver. "Thou shalt worship before the Lord thy God"—this is the first thing, and "thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God giveth thee." False worship is to rejoice in the work of one's hands. "They made a golden calf in those days and offered sacrifices unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands." In true worship, God Himself is the glory of the worshipper—it is in Him that the soul makes her boast. It is what God is that produces worship. God in His greatness and glory, God in His faithfulness and love, God as revealed as Father by His only begotten Son who dwells in His bosom—when He fills the vision of the soul, then there is worship in spirit and in truth.

Printer's error in our last issue.

The lines on p. 166, paragraph 2, should have read:—
Cornelius belonged to a noble family of Rome, he was a distinguished sol-

dier, a centurion of the Italian Band. It seems as though the Spirit of God would show us, by recording the salvation of these great men, that no worldly honour or greatness can satisfy the hearts of men.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapter 17: 9-26)

THUS far we have heard the Son making His first and greatest request; that He should be glorified in His risen Manhood, in order that He might glorify the Father in a new way. We have also heard Him state four things which He had perfectly accomplished. He had glorified the Father on the earth. He had finished the work given Him to do. He had manifested the Father's name to the disciples; and given them the words which the Father had given to Him. In verse 9 we meet with His second request, not for Himself but for His disciples. He begins by dissociating them from the world in the most decisive fashion.

The old line of cleavage had been between Jew and Gentile, but that, though it had been sharp enough up to this point, was now disappearing, and was being replaced by the cleavage between the disciples who received Him and the world that rejected Him. If a Jew rejected Him, his place of privilege disappeared, and he was just one of the units of which the world was composed. Note how the Lord characterizes His disciples here. They were the Father's by His purpose and choice, and then given by Him to the Son. As thus given they were held as belonging jointly to the Father and the Son. But they were peculiarly the vessel or vehicle in which the Son is to be glorified.

"All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." Ponder these words. A mere man may say, "All mine are Thine," but no mere man could say,

"All Thine are mine," or he would be guilty of unpardonable and blasphemous presumption. But the Son could so speak with seemliness and truth; for He is One with the Father.

Having placed the disciples before the Father as the objects of His second request, Jesus mentioned as the occasion of it that He was leaving the world and coming to the Father, while they were to be left in it. They had very little conception of what the world was, with its dangers and snares; He knew it perfectly. Nothing but the keeping power of the Father, according to His own holiness, would be sufficient to preserve them. They were not merely to be preserved but kept in a unity after the pattern of the Father and the Son. The Son had revealed that holy name of Father, and in it there was binding power and grace, as also there was in the life eternal which the Son gives, coupled with the gift of the Spirit, soon to be. These men moreover were left to be witnesses to their Lord who was going, and it was essential that their witness should be marked by unity to be effectual. The Acts and the Epistles show us how fully this unity of witness was preserved.

Hitherto they had been kept by the Son in the Father's name, and the only one missing was no true disciple at all but the son of perdition, and even this sad happening was in fulfilment of Scripture. As to all those really given to Him of the Father, Jesus could say, "I have kept;" the fifth occurrence of "I

have" in the chapter. Now as going **out** of the world He puts the disciples in His own place, as verse 13 shows. He had been here in His Father's name, finding His joy in serving His interests. They were henceforward to be here in His Name and have that same joy fulfilled in themselves as they served the Father in representing the Son.

But for this they would need to be in the knowledge of the Father's mind and purpose; hence the Son had given to them the Father's word. For the sixth time we have the words, "I have," and this time concerning not "the words" but "the word;" that is, the whole revelation which He had brought. They had as yet but little entered into its fulness, but thereby they had been separated from the world as to their knowledge, just as they were separated also in their origin, for they were not **OF** the world even as He was not. Yet as to place they were **IN** the world, and the Lord did not desire that they should be taken out of it, but rather kept from the evil.

Here we have very explicitly a thing for which the Lord did NOT make request. Yet the thing, with strange perversity, has been sought by earnest souls—and many true believers among them—through the centuries, as embodied in the monastic idea. That idea may be pursued by the aid of walls of thick masonry, or it may be pursued without them. The result, however, is the same. If we turn Divinely-ordained separation into monastic isolation, we shall always end by generating within the area of our seclusion the very evils we are supposed to be avoiding. The world

indeed presents us with a deadly peril. But why? Because of what we are in ourselves. A holy angel would neither court its favours nor fear its frowns: it would leave him wholly unmoved. The world does present, so to speak, the infectious germs from without; but the main trouble lies in ourselves—the susceptibility of the flesh within. No monastic isolation affects that.

What the Lord did request was, "Sanctify them through thy truth," for the truth separates by building up that spiritual **immunity** which preserves from spiritual disease. The root idea of sanctification is setting apart. The Son has given the Father's word, which introduces us to all His love, His thoughts, His purposes, His glory. All this is truth; that is, reality of the Divinest sort. The world lives so largely in a region of unreality and make-believe, striving to establish its systems which have no solid basis and which eventually must pass away. If we know Divine realities we must of necessity be set apart from the world's unrealities. This will expose us to the world's hatred, but it will build up strong spiritual resistance to its **snares**. It will immunise us against its germs. This is the kind of separation that endures, because effected by the Father's word and truth.

The seventh "I have," is found in verse 18. As the holy and perfect One, Jesus had been sent into the world by the Father, that He might represent Him and make Him known. Now He sends His disciples into the world in similar manner. They were to represent Him and make Him known. What qualified them for this was the sanctification of

which the previous verse had spoken. Had it been His plan to place them in monastic isolation, no such mission would have been possible, and it would not have been possible had they not been sanctified by the truth. But with the spiritual immunity which the truth confers **it was possible.**

But a further thing was needed as indicated in verse 19. The Lord Jesus must Himself be set apart in the glory of heaven, that He might shed upon them His Spirit, that He might become the attractive Object for their hearts, and the Pattern to whom they are to be conformed in due time. Being intrinsically and Divinely holy, the only sanctification possible for Him was such a setting apart as this; and let us notice that, according to this verse, **He does it Himself.** Another tribute to His Deity, for no mere man could set himself apart in the glory of heaven!

Verse 17, then, gives us the sanctifying power of truth, reaching us through the Father's word, which had been ministered by the Son, as verse 14 has stated. Verse 19 adds the sanctifying power of Christ's glory, to be ministered by the Spirit, who was to come to the disciples as the consequence of His glorification. To state the matter more briefly: it is the revelation of the Father by the Son, and the knowledge of the glory of the Son in risen Manhood by the Spirit, that sanctifies the believer today.

Verse 20 should touch all our hearts. The Lord Jesus had been praying for the little band of disciples that surrounded Him at that

moment: He now enlarged His requests to embrace even ourselves. Though nineteen centuries have passed since the first disciples went forth with the word, we have believed on Him as the result of it. Their spoken word has long since died away, but their word in the shape of inspired New Testament writings abides, and it has been the authoritative basis of all Gospel preaching through the years, and it is still that today. It should also touch our hearts that the first of the two requests, which He made for us, was for our unification.

The oneness He desired is of a fundamental nature. We are to be one as the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father. Between the Father and the Son there is the unity of essential being, and consequently of life and nature and manifestation. We so truly derive life and nature from the Son and the Father that the Lord Jesus could say, "One in Us"—this very expression showing the quality which exists between Them—and without oneness of this sort nothing of a more outward kind would have been of value. Ecclesiastical union without this would have been only the binding together of a mass of heterogeneous material. This request being granted, the Divine nature would characterize **all** saints; and the formation of such an underlying unity in those who on the surface were so different (Jews and Gentiles; as had been intimated in chapter 10: 16) was a satisfying proof of the Divine mission of Christ. He does not say that the world **would** believe, but there was sufficient proof so that they **might.**

The oneness for which the Lord

prayed, is to be perfected in glory, though first established in grace. Again we find the words "I have" and this time connected with glory. To His disciples, ourselves amongst them, He has donated the glory given to Him of the Father. Questions of time do not enter into the intercourse of the Divine Persons, so He does not say, "I will give," but, "I have given." When things are viewed from the standpoint of God's counsel and purpose we find similar statements of an absolute kind—Romans 8: 30 and Ephesians 2: 6, for instance. It is indeed a marvellous fact that the glory given to Him as Man by the Father is now irreversibly ours by His gift to us; and this with a view to the perfection of our oneness in Him. In verse 23, then, we have the unity displayed: the Father displayed in the Son; the Son displayed in the glorified saints. This will be a perfected unity indeed! The world of that day will know that the Father sent the Son, and has loved the saints even as He loved Him. The glory will declare the love.

This leads to the second request of the Lord which was framed to embrace all the saints of this present period. He had given His glory to them, and now He asks the Father to place them in association and company with Himself. Glory with Himself above is His desire, yet the crowning point of it for us will be to behold the supreme glory which shall be His. Earlier in His prayer He had asked to be glorified along with the Father with the glory that He had with Him before the world was. That uncreated glory had been His from eternity as being in the unity of the Godhead: He has now

been re-invested with it, but in a new way; receiving it as gift from the Father in His risen Manhood. As glorified with Him we are to behold His glory, which will witness to us for ever, not only the perfection of all that He wrought in Manhood, but also of the Father's love, of which He had been the Object from all eternity.

The world was sunk in ignorance of the Father. When Jesus prayed for the preservation of His disciples in the world, He addressed the Father as "Holy" (verse 11), for **their separation** from it was to be governed by **His holiness**. In verse 25 He contemplates the world itself in its sin and blindness, so He addresses the Father as "Righteous." Thus the Divine righteousness is set over against the world's sin, as before it had been—chapter 16: 9, 10. He had come as the Sent One, bringing the knowledge of the Father, and the disciples had received it in receiving Him, for He had declared to them the Father's Name. Here are the closing occurrences of, "I have"—"I have known Thee . . . I have declared unto them Thy name."

He had spoken, in verse 6, of the **manifestation** of the Father's name, and this was accomplished in the life He had lived and needed no addition. But He also had made a **declaration** of His name by lip and word, and this He would supplement in the future, when risen from the dead. We are permitted to hear of it in this Gospel: chapter 20: 17. And all this was to the end that the Father's love, which supremely centred in Him, might be "in them;"

(Concluded on page 188)

FROM SADNESS TO GREAT JOY.

J. T. Mawson

(Notes of an Address on Luke 24: 15-53)

ISUPPOSE we are all familiar with this beautiful Scripture. I think we agree that of all the chapters in the Gospels, with perhaps the exception of the crucifixion chapters, none can interest us more than the resurrection chapters. Here were two of the Lord's disciples, and as they walked together to their home they were sad, so that the Lord said to them, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" At the end of the chapter we find them in a very different state of mind; they were filled with great joy, praising and blessing God in the temple, and yet when the Lord joins Himself to them they were sad. Why were they sad?

Why are we sad? There are many things to make us sad in these days. When we think of men made in the likeness and image of God only living to destroy one another, of nations, down-trodden and terrorized over, of all the destruction, the blood-shed, the sorrow and bereavement in the world, we might well be sad. We should have hard and unchristian hearts if we were not saddened as we think of all these things. Yet while on the one hand we may be sorrowing, on the other hand are we not rejoicing? The Apostle Paul spoke of being sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrowful as he thought of the sin of the world, of the rebellion of man against God and the rejection of God's grace and mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ, but rejoicing because he had no doubt that God would triumph in the end; that God's glory would fill the earth; that

the rebellion of man would be crushed and peace established. How do we know that this will come to pass? God has given us assurance of it in that He has raised up Christ from the dead. So here is a great fact that should make us rejoice, that should fill us with confidence and with hope, so that the sadness that we have in regard to the state of things in the world is more than balanced by the joy that we have in the knowledge of God's coming mighty triumph.

Here were these two disciples, and as they walked they were sad. Was it not a wonderful thing that Jesus joined Himself to their company? One thing strikes me and that is the grace that was in the heart of the Lord Jesus. As we read the story of His words and ways from the earlier chapters of the Gospel we have to confess that the Lord is gracious. No kind of need ever came into His presence without it being met, and met so graciously that they were blessed by the way He imparted it to them. We need to read the Gospels with that end in view—that we might see that the Lord is gracious; not only in the great blessing He bestows, but in the very way in which He bestows the blessing. He joins Himself to these two sad disciples. They had turned their backs upon Jerusalem. They had decided between themselves that it was no longer any use attempting to stand for the One they had followed. Everything had failed. He whom they supposed was to redeem Israel had been crucified like the worst of criminals; they thought that was

the end and so they had lost hope. But it was not that they had expected too much of the Lord Jesus—they did not expect enough.

He joins Himself to them. He might have gone to Jerusalem and convinced the leaders of the people that He was indeed the Christ; He might have gone to Pilate and convinced him that he had crucified an innocent Person; but he did neither of these things. There were those two disheartened disciples who had lost their faith, turning their backs upon the place where He would meet His own, and His heart went out in sympathy and pity towards them; so He joins Himself to their company. Are you sad? Are you full of anxiety? The Lord knows that, He wants to make His presence a great reality to you, and you know the presence of the Lord Jesus, His company, will change everything for you. In answer to His question, they explain that they had followed Jesus of Nazareth and thought He was the One who was to redeem Israel; instead He had been crucified. But He will redeem Israel. They thought the highest glory He could attain to was the throne of David. They would have been satisfied to see Him sitting upon David's throne, but oh, the Father had something greater than that for Him. David's throne at that time was not sufficient glory; He was to enter into His own glory. What a wonderful day when He destroyed the power of death and the dominion of the devil. There was only one place for Him when He came forth victorious from the grave—the highest place in heaven at the Father's right hand.

The secret then comes out; "O, fools and slow of heart to believe all

that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" And opening up to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, their hearts burned within them. They had their favourite texts and had dwelt upon them and had not taken in all the Scriptures: they had not realised that He was the theme of the Scriptures. If we realise that, we shall pay greater attention to them; we shall read them more constantly and not have our favourite texts. As He talked with them they were gladdened and warmed by the words He spoke, although they did not know who He was. He was talking about the right Person and they loved Him, and their hearts were moved as the Scriptures were opened unto them, so that although they did not know Him, He assumed His right place in their thoughts. Everything begins there. If we would know the Lord in the various ways in which He is presented to us we must begin with our own individual thoughts of Him—individual hearts first of all. It is not a bit of use talking about our service for the Lord, if our own hearts are cold and icy towards Him. The first thing then is the individual heart warmed, as the hearts of these two were warmed. "Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" If our hearts are not burning hearts then we had better get down before the Lord and ask Him to warm them.

They reached their own home. "And He made as though He would have gone further." We get as much of the Lord's company as we desire, and if He is to stay with us we must constrain Him. These two disciples constrained Him and He entered their

house and abode with them. First He put them right in regard to Himself, individually, and then He took His place in their home: He was Lord there. It is the only place He can take. Has the Lord the first place in our homes? We will gladly give Him His true place in our domestic circle if He is Lord in our individual hearts. They supposed that He was their guest, but as a matter of fact they were His guests. He took bread, and blessed it and handed it to them. There was in that village of Emmaus one home a least that recognised Him as Lord. We may only have a small cottage, perhaps only one room, but what a wonderful thing to be able to say, "Within the four walls of this room the Lord has His true place." That means that while we wait for His kingdom to come we have yielded what little space we have in the world, to Him. The great kingdoms of the earth do not acknowledge Him. In the vast majority of homes He has no place at all. But we say, "Lord, come into my home; this little space over which I have the right shall be yielded to Thee, and here Thou shalt be supreme." Well, He will take that place if we yield it to Him, and what is the use of praying, "Thy kingdom come," if we do not acknowledge Him as Lord in our own little sphere.

He was made known to them; their eyes were opened in the breaking of bread, and then He vanished out of their sight. He gave them His presence in their home when they were there, and now He wants to draw them into His circle. The Lord will take His place in our circle if we will let Him, and He has His circle, and His circle is greater than ours. He said to the Church at Laodicea, "If

any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." In "supping with him" He goes into that man's circle; "and he with Me," He draws them into His own circle. What a wonderful thing it is that the Lord has opened wide the door of His own circle and invites us to have a place there. Blessed indeed it is to have Him in our circle, interested in our things, but far more wonderful it is that He should invite us to His table, far more wonderful that we should have our place in His circle.

So now they arise and start back to Jerusalem. They knew where the Lord was, they knew where He would have them. They know where the disciples are and they find them gathered together, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." What thrilling news, how glad their hearts must have been! The Lord is risen indeed! Do we know we have such a triumphant Saviour? What is the greatest power which men know? Death! Death brings to an end all man's devices, his ambitions are silenced by his open grave. Death is master where sin is, but our Saviour, our Lord Jesus, has triumphed over the power of death. We belong to Him; He has called us His; He has bound up our fortunes with His and we have our place in relation to Him and God, in His grace, has identified us with the name and fortune of Christ. We pray for our land, for the British Empire, but our fortunes are not bound up with the British Empire; our fortunes are bound up with Christ's universal empire. The Lord is risen indeed! If they had stopped there I am certain they would have said, "Yes, the Lord is risen

indeed, and we lost all faith in Him and when we saw Him taken by His enemies we were afraid, we had no courage and we were very faithless. Now He will choose other men who will be more faithful than we have been." But they added "and hath appeared unto Simon." Simon who had denied his Lord with oaths and curses and who had not the courage to confess his Lord—Simon the backslider. He not only went after those two disciples on the road to Emmaus, but He went to Simon Peter. Peter was his converted name; Simon was his unconverted name. Doesn't that reveal to us the grace that is in the heart of the Lord. He had gone after the most failing of His disciples; He had sought the one who had treated Him the worst, in spite of all his protestations of faithfulness to the Lord. We are not told what happened; the interview is not recorded for us, and a sacred interview it must have been; but the fact is recorded that on that resurrection day, before coming in the midst of His own gathered together, He had gone after Simon in forgiving mercy. "The Lord is risen,"—that was His power; "and hath appeared unto Simon,"—that was His grace. He revealed Himself to the backslidden heart, to restore that heart to communion with Himself.

"And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them," and there He was surrounded by the company of disciples who were His own and whom He never ceased to love. There was the nucleus of His kingdom, for the beginning of His Church on earth over 1,900 years ago. That company has been extended and God has been working, spreading the fame of the Lord

Jesus, and that company, begun on the resurrection day, abides to this day, and you, Christian are part of it. If we have given the Lord His place in our hearts we will not assert ourselves in His circle, but that is just what has happened in the history of the Church, and so the Lord's people have been divided into sects and schisms. Oh! to give the Lord His proper place! They were afraid and thought they had seen a spirit, and He showed them His hands and feet. "It is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." That body went to glory. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily today, and the day is coming when we shall see Him as He is. Dear Christian, the Lord is a living Man in heaven; not a spirit—a living Man in heaven. You supposed all Christians knew that? They don't! I remember listening to a rather eccentric brother preaching the Word, and I suppose he said, not less than 100 times, "The Lord is a real living Man in heaven; He is not a spirit, He is a real living Man in heaven." I wondered why he kept repeating that; for surely we all knew it well enough. When the meeting was over, a man senior to myself said, "It is the first time I ever knew the Lord is a real living Man in heaven, I always thought He was a spirit." He is a real living Man in heaven and He has a heart that beats in sympathy towards His own in this world. He has entered into our trials and difficulties, He has passed through them Himself. What a blessed thing it is to know that the Man Christ Jesus is worthy to sit on the throne of God. We know that He is God, but His Manhood was just as perfect as His Godhead.

Well, there He stood in the midst of them and He showed them His hands and feet, the evidence of His love, the love that carried Him to death for us. So I believe when we gather to remember Him it is as though the Lord is showing us afresh His hands and feet, and saying, "It is I myself." Oh, that we may lay hold of that—that it is His own circle in which He stands supreme and He invites us to join Him. And there, gathered together in this way, He begins by opening their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." When we read the Old Testament we see these great facts set forth in type and prophecy and our hearts are greatly blessed as we see Christ thus. He was to suffer and rise again on the third day. With what end in view? That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. What a revelation of the heart of God to a rebel world. The way has been opened up so that the nations, in turning to God, would meet a pardoning God. Repentance means turn, right about face, and when a sinner turns he comes face to face with God, and the God with whom he comes face to face is a God whose heart is full of pardoning grace. He finds His delight in forgiving. Do you remember the day when you met God like that? Let your mind travel back to the happy day when Jesus washed your sins away, when you came face to face wth God and found He was a pardoning God. There we have, from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ

in resurrection, the object for which He suffered and rose again from the dead—"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name."

It is very well to keep in mind that it is to be done in His name. When we speak to souls of Christ we should speak as His representatives. He came into the world; "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," and if we are to speak at all of the Saviour we do so as representatives of Him. How the grace of our God is unveiled! They had to start in Jerusalem itself. The Lord revealed Himself to the disciple that had sinned the most; the Gospel had to go to the city that had sinned the most, the city where He had been crucified. There was forgiveness for that city, and for the worst men in that city. If the worst can be forgiven, then, you see, none ever need despair. So the Lord instructs them; how their hearts must have been overjoyed and blessed as they listened to His words. We have in the first chapter of Acts the last words they hear from His lips: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." Then He says, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Do not attempt to speak for Me until the Spirit of God comes, for the work of God can only be done by the Spirit of God; the Spirit of God is the only power in this world for God, and if we attempt to serve Him in our own strength, the result will be disaster. I do not suppose Satan cares two straws about a man preaching the Gospel if he is doing it in his own strength and wisdom. So He told them of the only power that can carry them through and enable them

to serve the Lord rightly; that is why 3,000 were converted on the day of Pentecost.

As He talked to them, He lifted His hands in blessing over them and while He was so doing He ascended into heaven and a cloud received Him out of their sight. The last sight of Him they had was with His hands uplifted in blessing. Although the Lord has gone to the highest and most glorious place in the universe of God, He is there as our great High Priest; He has not forgotten us; He ever liveth to make intercession for us. As we go through the chapter we see these three things: His greatness, His glory, and His grace, and nothing will lift our hearts above the

clouds that are growing darker and darker in this world, but the sense of what Christ is; we need a new vision of Christ; we need to have His glory set before our souls by the Spirit of God and then we shall be filled, as were the disciples, with great joy, praising and blessing God. What a change from the sadness at the beginning of the story!

That joy is within our reach—the Lord will give it to us, so that while we are sorrowful because of the state of things in the world, we may rejoice in the Lord, and the Word says, “Again I say rejoice.” The Lord grant that everyone of us may have that joy, for His name’s sake.

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW IT?

A. J. Pollock

TODAY this question is being asked on every hand. Sorrow and bereavement, anxiety and grief, poverty and trouble are invading countless homes. Young men in the prime of life are being cut off on the battlefield, destroyed in the air, or drowned at sea. Husbands, sons, brothers, sweethearts are missing. Who can realise the anguish the official telegram brings to many a home! What does it all mean? Why does God allow it?

The truth is we learn more under grey and leaden skies than when the sky is blue, and the sun is shining. We gain more soul history from our trials, than from our joys and successes.

We see this illustrated in the life

of King Hezekiah. He was brought near to the gates of death. The prophet Isaiah came unto him with a message from the Lord, “Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live” (Isa. 38: 1). Hezekiah wept sore and prayed to God. God saw his tears and heard his anguished prayer, and granted him fifteen years to be added to his life. He recovered in the mercy of God.

What did Hezekiah say of his illness? How did he re-act to this truly distressing experience? What did he get out of it? He exclaimed, “O Lord, by these things men LIVE, and in all these things is the LIFE of my spirit” (Isa. 38: 16). What an extraordinary thing! LIFE not death was the outcome of the trial. The body might be battered

and brought low, but the spirit was revitalised.

Just as steel is hardened and tempered by being subjected to immense heat, and then being cooled off again and again, so it is with God's dealings with His children. He would produce spiritual robustness, true Christian character, by means of the circumstances nature shrinks from.

A recent incident focussed this question, Why does God allow it? and set one thinking. A Christian friend sat day after day in his office. One day he had a chill, and stayed away, taking a day in bed, a rare luxury for him. That very day a strong wind blew an A.R.P. bucket off a high wall on to the glass sky-light, bringing heavy jagged glass crashing on the spot where he would have been sitting, had he not taken a day off.

All who heard of this occurrence exclaimed, "What a merciful deliverance!" Yes, it was, but one asked the question, Why could God not have gone further, and prevented the wind blowing the bucket on to the sky-light, and thus have averted the accident altogether? It certainly was within the power of omnipotence to have done this. Why then was this not done?

The answer came in this wise. If God willed it that accidents and trials and deliverances did not come our way, then our lives would be one succession of freedom from troubles. Our skies would be always blue. Our winds would be zephyr breezes. Grey and leaden skies and fierce winds, carrying devastation in their train, would be unknown. In our

folly and shortsightedness we should in this case never know God's delivering power. We should become soft and nerveless.

But what if God in His wisdom and omniscience designed that our lives should have trials and troubles, and with them the experience of His sustaining and delivering care, what then? Should we not be greatly the losers, if it were not so?

Then a verse of Scripture came unbidden — was it unbidden, or brought to one's recollection by the Holy Spirit? — into one's mind: "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8: 3).

Here was the divine answer to my mental enquiry. God suffered the children of Israel to hunger. Why? In order that in feeding them with "bread from heaven" (John 6: 31), He might teach them a definite spiritual lesson of the greatest importance, which this experience of hunger and being fed by almighty power could alone teach them.

We can conceive of nothing more despairing than to suffer hunger in the waterless desert sand, without a blade of vegetation, stretching illimitably in every direction. What a lesson, when, absolutely shut up to God, the manna fell from heaven on the camp, and thus tens of thousands were fed.

But God would not by His dealings satisfy merely **physical** hunger with angel's food, but would teach them they had spirits as well as bodies, and the food of their spirits was "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."

King Hezekiah learnt this lesson. Physical life was brought low, in order that spiritual life might be strengthened and invigorated. He exclaimed, "By these things men LIVE," when the reverse would be said by the carnal mind. Hezekiah learned a lesson that lifted him into living touch with a delivering God.

"**Afterward**" is a wonderful word. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless **afterward** it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12: 11). God has the end in view. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." So wrote the apostle James.

God could have restrained the Sabeans, and preserved Job's oxen and asses. He could have withheld the fire from heaven, and his seven thousand sheep might have been preserved. He could have restrained the Chaldeans, who carried off his three thousand camels. Above all He might have restrained the mighty wind that smote the house where his

seven sons and three daughters were feasting, destroying them at one fell stroke. In one day Job was stripped. Never was there such a devastating trial.

But by it all Job learned a priceless lesson, worth infinitely more than oxen, asses, sheep, camels, worth more than sons or daughters—he learned **himself** in the presence of God, and measured himself accordingly, and was thus the gainer. "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42: 12).

Moreover, "there hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but **God is faithful**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape [**not to get out of the trial, but being in it**] that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10: 13).

We ask, Why does God allow it? only to answer that He knows best and loves most, and that understanding aright we would not be without trials and sorrows, if thereby we may learn His delivering grace, and realise that we live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." Then can we truly sing:

"We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."

What sweet and sustaining truths the Lord often whispers to His saints from behind clouds, yet the ear of faith is too often stunned by the roaring of the thunder, while under the cloud, and hears not, till the still small voice follows.

GOD'S CARE AND ORDER.

J. Houston

GO'D cares for His people, and He orders all things well for their good. He descends into the minutest detail of their concerns, and He plans for their highest blessing. If we believe that in divine counsel He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, we ought also to believe that by divine power He will lead us home, providing for every need on the way. Yes, He cares for us, and He orders all things well for us. It is our business to trust Him fully, in reliance and obedience.

What we have before us now is the care He shows, and the order He requires, in all that concerns our walk through the desert on our way to Canaan. This is a very interesting subject, for it manifests His love in caring for us, and His wisdom in ordering all things for us. He has nothing but our good in view, because we are the objects of His love, His peculiar people on earth, His redeemed ones, near and dear to Him.

We are told that His earthly people, the Jews, in all their experiences, were but types of His people today (I Cor. 10: 11). This makes their history pulsate with interest for us. We read in them what we can see in ourselves. Such things, for instance, happened to them; like things can now happen to us. And when we keep in mind the essential difference that they were a people in the flesh, and that we are in the Spirit; that they had a system of worship and service suited to the flesh, and that we have a system of things suited to the spiritual relationship we have with Christ, the Son,

and God, the Father; all is made clear to us. In the way of application we can greatly benefit by a study of their history. This we purpose doing briefly.

We would ask the reader to look at the first two chapters of the Book of Numbers. The point from which God speaks to His people there gives character to the communication He addresses to them. He speaks to Moses **in the wilderness**. The instructions given to them, therefore, have reference to them **in that place**. In fact, the whole book has to do with their pilgrimage.

God ordered Moses to take a census of His people. Of course, **this** was not necessary for divine knowledge. Surely God knew their number and all about them! It was necessary for their knowledge, to show them that God cared for them. Just as a shepherd counts his sheep, and calls each one by name, and watches each one with special care, so God cares for His people. He not only numbers them, but even the hairs of their heads! As Creator He numbers and names all the stars; as Redeemer He numbers His redeemed ones, and watches over them night and day. He who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

There were twelve tribes in the redeemed family of Israel. This general entry might have sufficed for registration purposes, if we may thus speak. But no. God would know how many He had in each family; yea, even the names, and order of birth, of those who composed each family. This shows that He does not simply think of His people in bulk and totality, but enters into the

details of their individual life. This is a precious thought of God, and shows how He cares for us.

They were to be numbered from twenty years old and upwards, such as were able to go to war. They were to form **armies**, and not only **families**. The **conflict** side of their life was as much a concern to God as the **domestic** side. The reason they were set in armies was that they might face the conflict of a hostile scene. They were going through the desert where foes abounded. To overcome enemies, difficulties, and all that was proper to desert experience they had to wage a warfare. But they did not wage it at their own expense. God provided for everything; He went before them as their Leader, and He was round about them like a wall of fire. How comforting it is to know this!

Then God had leaders amongst His people who are called the "renowned of the congregation." Needless to say, this distinction was not left to individual ambition. God tells Moses **who they are**, mentioning them by name. This unerring choice of God left no room for contention. Representatives were necessary, "princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel." For orderly government this was necessary.

There are leaders today who by their **moral** status and comportment fulfil a very important place for the well-being of God's people. But they are raised up by God; not by themselves, nor by others. When God raises up a leader, all is well, all is in order. When presumption in man does it, all is wrong, all is in disorder. Oh, that God's order were observed in all things! How perfectly He does it!

The Levites were not numbered; neither did they take part in war. The reason for this was they had a special calling to minister to the Lord, as the holy priesthood. Their work was in the tabernacle of witness. When they set forward in marching, they bore the holy things of the sanctuary and the tabernacle. So **exclusively** was this their work that a stranger dare not touch anything of it under pain of death. "The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." When the tabernacle was set up, the Levites encamped round about it. This safeguarded the congregation. "The Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel." Surely in this we see a type of Christ the true Minister of the Sanctuary, and that in company with His people, all of whom He has made priests to God. This world little knows what it owes to Christ and His people.

The chapter ends (chap. 1) with the announcement that God's people did exactly as they were commanded. This was their wisdom and the secret of their blessing. When divine order is set before us it is incumbent on us to follow it unquestioningly and obediently. Herein lies the secret of peace and blessing.

Coming to chapter 2, we see much that we can admire as to God's order. For instance, a place is assigned to each tribe, and a standard given to each, or a distinctive mark. It was the duty of each one to pitch his tent in the appointed place, and to raise the standard of the tribe to which he belonged. Place and ensign were divinely ordered. Surely we see here that God is a God of order!

The tabernacle was the centre round which the camps were pitched. Judah on the east, Simeon on the south, Ephraim on the west, and Dan on the north. Two tribes were joined to each of these four, making twelve in all. Levi, as we have already said, was not counted, and camped around the tabernacle.

Twelve captains had the lead, corresponding to the twelve tribes. Their names are mentioned, thus showing they were appointed to the dignity. When the congregation moved forward, Judah led the way. This was God's express commandment. Royalty came from Judah, and it therefore befitted this tribe to lead. Following Judah came Reuben, then Ephraim; lastly Dan. The tabernacle was in charge of the Levites, and was carried in the midst of the congregation, between Reuben and Ephraim. The central place was reserved for the tabernacle, whether on the march or stationary. When we take into consideration it spoke of God's presence, we can see the appropriateness of it having the central place. God dwells in the midst of His people, and they are

arranged in reference to Him in that place.

The orderly way in which everything was done was evidence that God was in their midst, and **all was in accordance with that**. So the Assembly today is gathered out from the world to our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him we are gathered; from Him all blessing flows; His very presence secures this. Everything has to be ordered in view of that great fact. The first epistle to the Corinthians gives us instruction as to orderly comportment. We are exhorted to do all things decently and in order, for we are God's habitation on earth through the Spirit. And if we took this into account, and let it govern all our activities as Christians, how blessed it would be for us. God's presence in the midst of His people is the source of all blessing and safety. Who can assail us if God be with us? His care for us, and His minute ordering of everything concerning us, ought to be a subject of joy and thanksgiving. And it behoves us to see this, and answer to it with loving trust and obedience.

Philippians 4: 6, 7.

This is trust; and His peace, the peace of God Himself, shall keep our hearts. It does not say that our hearts shall keep the peace of God; but, having cast our burden on Him whose peace nothing can disturb, His peace keeps our hearts.

Our trouble is before Him, and the constant peace of the God of love, who takes charge of everything and knows all beforehand, quiets our disburdened hearts, and imparts to us the peace which is in Himself, and which is above all understanding (or at least keeps our hearts by it), even as He Himself is above all the circumstances that can disquiet us, and above the poor human heart that is troubled by them.

Oh, what grace that even our anxieties are a means of our being filled with this marvellous peace, if we know how to bring them to God, and how true He is!

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapter 18: 1-40)

HAVING communed with the Father and expressed His desires, Jesus went forth to meet His foes, who were led by the traitor, and then to the death that He should die. True to the character of this Gospel, striking witness is borne to His omniscience. He went forth in the full knowledge of "all things that should come upon Him"—not only of outward circumstances but of the inward weight of all involved. If we refer back to chapters 6: 6, and 13: 3, we shall find statements of similar import.

But the scene in the Garden also furnishes us with a display of His omnipotence. They sought Jesus of Nazareth, but when He replied, "I am," reminiscent of the way Jehovah declared Himself in the Old Testament, they were felled to the ground. Thus irresistibly, yet unwillingly, they did obeisance before Him. So the signs of His Deity were present even while He submitted to their hands, since He was here as the Man subject to the Father's will. His desire was to extend protection to His disciples according to His own word, and Peter's zealous but mistaken action only gave occasion to the display of His complete oneness of mind with the Father. He accepted all as coming from His hands, even though the highest religious authorities in Jewry were His chief opponents. The servant of the high priest, Malchus, was prominent in His arrest, and to the tribunal of Annas and Caiaphas was He first led. Caiaphas had the decisive voice and was already determined upon His death.

Verses 15-18 are parenthetical, as again are verses 25-27. Taken together they give us the sad story of Peter's downfall, in which the Lord's prediction of 13: 38 was fulfilled. That this should be one of the few episodes recorded by all four Evangelists is worthy of note. God does not take pleasure in recording the sins of His saints, so we may be sure that there is in it warning and instruction much needed by all saints in all ages, for self-confidence is one of the commonest and most deep-seated tendencies of the flesh: a tendency which, if not judged and refused, invariably leads to disaster. True spiritual circumcision involves "no confidence in the flesh," (See, Phil. 3: 3), but that is a lesson we do not learn save through a good deal of painful experience.

The "other disciple" known to the high priest was pretty evidently John himself. His acquaintance with the high priest gave him a little worldly status and privilege, which he used to introduce Peter into the place of danger. The word "also" in verse 17 seems to imply that the damsel keeping the door knew that John was a disciple of Jesus. He had not been tempted to deny the fact as Peter had. That which trips up one disciple may leave another unmoved. Moreover, Satan knows just exactly how to set his traps. That the third questioner should be a relation of the Malchus, who had suffered in the Garden at Peter's hands, was a masterstroke of his craft. That encompassed Peter's third and worst denial, and his sin and discomfiture were complete.

Verses 19-24, give details of what transpired in the palace of the high priest, and they are the connecting link between verses 14 and 28. The question raised as to His disciples and doctrine was an attempt to obtain from His lips something incriminating as a basis for the death sentence they had determined to pronounce. The other Gospels tell us that they sought for witness against Him and found none, which accounts for the fact that when He referred them to the witness of His hearers they were so irritated as to strike our Lord. Matthew tells us that they went so far as to seek for false witness against Him.

It is well to note the contrast between Jesus in verse 23 and Paul in Acts 23: 5. There is a gulf between the Master and the most devoted of His servants. The reply of Jesus was conclusive. There was no evil to which any could bear witness: no one could convince Him of sin.

John's account of the proceedings before the high priest is very brief. In contrast to this he gives us a fuller account of what transpired before Pilate than any of the others. Paul writes of "Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession," and the details of that good confession come particularly to light here.

First however, we are given a sight of the fearful hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. To have walked inside the judgment hall would have defiled them, so they felt. Yet they had no scruple as to committing themselves to murder, and hunting for liars in order to give some semblance of decency to their action. Alas! Alas! to such lengths will religious flesh proceed. Pilate rightly desired a definite accusation, but,

having none to offer, they attempted in the first place to rush Pilate into a verdict on the general plea that He was an evil-doer. To denounce on general grounds, whilst avoiding any specific charge, is a common trick of the religious persecutor. This irregularity made Pilate wish to throw the case back on their hands. Their answer showed that they were determined upon His death, yet it led to the fulfilment of the Lord's own predictions as to the death He should die—see, 3: 14; 8: 28; 12: 32. However, they eventually fixed on the charge that He sought to make Himself a King. The Lord's question in verse 34 infers this; and it comes clearly to light in the next chapter, verse 12.

The "good confession" before Pilate covered at least four great points. First, the Lord boldly confessed that He was a King. The context shows that in saying this He referred not merely to the fact that He was the true Son of David according to the flesh, but that He held the place as Son of God, just as Psalm 2 predicted.

But secondly, He affirmed that His kingdom was neither "of this world," nor "from hence." It does not bear the character or stamp of this world nor does it derive its authority and power from this place. His Kingdom of course derives all its authority and power from Heaven, and it bears the heavenly character; but instead of stating this positively He put the matter in that negative light which tacitly put a sentence of condemnation and repudiation upon this world and this place. It was a bold statement to make in the presence of the man who represented the greatest existing earthly power.

Thirdly, He asserted that He was born to Kingship inasmuch as He came into the world as **the Witness to the truth**. He who brings the light of truth is the only One fitted to hold the Royal power, as David stated in 2 Samuel 23: 3. We started this Gospel with the fact that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, but in this moment of crisis grace had been rejected and truth was the matter in question. Outside were the men who embodied lying and hypocrisy. Pilate held the judicial authority, and therefore was responsible to discern truth and judge accordingly, but his question, "What is truth?" was evidently uttered in a vein of flippant scepticism, and showed how judgment was divorced from righteousness in his mind. As a Roman judge he knew all too much of men and their deceits, and he felt that to pursue truth was to chase a mirage. But this did not excuse his folly, manifested in turning his back on Christ and going out to the lying Jews directly he had asked his question.

Fourthly, He claimed to be not merely the Witness to the truth, but **the very embodiment of truth itself**. In the farewell discourse He had said, "I am . . . the truth," to His disciples; now before His adversaries the same thing is implicit in the remarkable words, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My Voice." He is the truth in such absolute fashion that He is the test of every man. Those of whom it can be said, "Of His own will beget He us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1: 18), are "of the truth," and such hear His voice. It is remarkable how often in this Gospel our attention is called to hearing

His voice or hearing His word—see, for instance, 3: 34; 4: 42; 5: 24, 25, 28; 6: 68; 7: 17; 8: 43; 10: 4, 16; 27; 12: 49, 50. Everything hinges upon it for us, as these scriptures make manifest, and (to use a modern illustration) we must be on the right wave-length in order to hear. Nothing but being begotten of God with the word of truth can put us on the right wave-length.

Pilate had no real ear for His voice as his words and action plainly showed. He walked out from the presence of the Truth that again he might establish contact with the world of unreality, yet he had sufficient judicial sense to perceive how false was the case against the Lord and to pronounce Him to be without fault. His effort, however, to side-track the accusers by the Pass-over custom failed, yet it was overruled to bring out in the plainest possible fashion their implacable hostility.

Five words sufficed to express their utter rejection of the Lord—"Not this Man, but Barabbas," and they were wholly unanimous for this was the cry of **all**. The Evangelist's comment on this cry is equally terse and also compressed into five words, "Now Barabbas was a robber." Without exaggeration we may designate this cry as the most fateful in all history. It has controlled the course of the world for nearly two thousand years and will ultimately seal its doom—more particularly we might say it has controlled the sad course of Jewish history. What have they not endured at the hands of the spoilers during the centuries! What are they not enduring today! But if they cry out and even wish to complain against God, it is sufficient answer to refer them to this

unanimous demand of their leaders. The One who was the embodiment of grace and truth they rejected. Barabbas, the robber, they demanded. Incidentally, he was also a revolutionary and a murderer, as other Gospels show. Robbery, revolution and murder has been their portion with a vengeance, right through the centuries.

The fact is that in the holy government of God they have just reaped what they have sown. And the same thing has been true of the

Gentile world generally, though perhaps on not quite so intensive a scale. Still, again and again through the years there have arisen men of striking personality in whom the Barabbas spirit has reappeared. At the present moment the whole earth is groaning beneath this very thing. As we contemplate the awful sufferings of many peoples under the iron hand of the modern specimen, named Hitler, we have to remind ourselves, "Now Barabbas was a robber." ,

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF US.

A young Christian writes complaining of failure and disappointment in the endeavour to live unto God, and says, "Yet God knows my heart and sees all the desires and motives that are there; I wish sometimes that He did not."

YOUR greatest need is the knowledge of the grace of God. When you do know of His grace, sovereign and unconditional as it is, you will never wish to have anything in your life and heart hidden from Him. There can be no comfort, no lasting peace, unless we see that He knows all and has seen all. If we could hide anything from Him we should ever be in the fear that He would by some means discover it, and what then? Take the prodigal (Luke 15) as an illustration. If he had not been able to say, "I have sinned . . . in thy sight," he could not have been completely at rest. He would have been always fearing that some old companion would arrive at his father's house to tell the full story of his shame, and that his father, discovering all, would then drive him from his door. But instead of

being in a state of fear he had perfect rest about it all. He could say, my father knows all and has forgiven all; he has seen all and covered all he has seen; he knows the worst about me and has given me the best. He has kissed me, clothed me and fed me, and made his whole house rejoice over me, vile, guilty me, who was lost and is found, who was dead and is alive again! And so may we say, for such is the grace with which we are blest. And such unconditional blessing is just what grace is.

Having been **saved** by grace, we **stand** in grace (1 Pet. 5: 12). God's attitude towards us will never change; He will always act towards us in grace. Never shall we be put upon the ground of law before Him.

THE SPRING OF OUR BLESSING will always be in Him as revealed to us in His beloved Son, and not in us; the cause of our blessing and its continuation is what He is and not what we are. If He could change as we do, then the grace in which we stand could change, but that is impossible; our blessing is

based upon the immutability of the blessed God, it is as sure as His word and as stable as His throne.

He knows all that is in our hearts; He has no discoveries to make in regard to us, for He knew all that we had been and all that we would be before ever He took us up at all. We have discoveries to make as to what we are and He would have us to make them in His presence and not in the presence of Satan's temptations and power. If we discover what we are in His presence, He is there in all the plenitude of His grace, and Christ is there in all the value of His work, and our hearts are made to rejoice that His grace is greater than all our sin, and we find that we can turn from what we are

to what He is, and in thinking of Him we have a better object than self. But if we learn what we are by falling under Satan's temptation, shame and bitterness of soul are ours, and the lesson that we must learn is learnt in a hard school. Yet even then God does not change His feelings and attitude towards us, and we can tell Him everything who knows all, and be assured of His forgiveness; and to be restored to communion and a sense of forgiveness before Him is a very blessed experience. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered." God has no sympathy with our sin, but He deals very tenderly with us when we confess all to Him.

John 11 and 12

Before men were permitted to lay their lawless hands upon Jesus, God gave a threefold testimony to His glory, or rather gave testimony to a three-fold glory. In the raising of Lazarus from the dead there was testimony to Him as the Son of God; in His riding into Jerusalem on an ass's colt there was testimony to Him as the Son of David; and when the Greeks came up desiring to see Him there was testimony to Him as the Son of Man.

"Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me" (Ps. 3: 3).

The shield of my fellow-soldier will be of little avail to me. I need a shield that I can call my own, and God in His care, and grace and power is that to me. He is a shield to me as truly as though He were mine alone. My necessities are His care, my weakness His consideration, my enemies are His. To know Him is to trust Him, and to trust Him is surely to find Him an ever-present and all-sufficient shield, and to me He says, as surely as He said to Abraham, "I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward."

Divine truth is of vast extent, and is many sided, taking up the nature of God, His dispensations, His ways with men, their responsibilities, the positive relations of His counsels, the moral and eternal relations which flow from what He is and from what others are. Consequently on all points it may be looked at in many ways. I see this even in the apostolic writings. John speaks of the nature of God, Paul of His counsels, Peter of His ways, but they all speak of one God and of one Christ; everything finds its centre in Him.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME.

J. W. S.

I QUOTE the above words from the Revised Version of the 3rd Epistle of John—"The Name." What Name? "Because that for sake of the Name they went forth," writes the beloved Apostle.

In this brief fervent letter three names are mentioned; that of Gaius; that of Diotrephes; and that of Demetrius. Whilst certain others are spoken of as "strangers," but are unnamed.

Each of these men had his history; but what of the mysterious Name which exerted so great an influence over these "stranger" brethren, who went forth expressly and solely for its exaltation, and under its exclusive authority at all costs to themselves? What of its omnipotence? its charm? its all-sufficiency? its infinite magnetism over heart and mind and hand and foot—the Name that captivated, that saved, that delivered, that constrained, that separated, that entranced, that controlled without a rival, that commanded, and that obtained unqualified obedience—what name was that? It was not that of an apostle, nor of a church, nor of a school, nor of a mission; it favoured no party, nor clique, nor section, nor division; all such things were annihilated in the immensities of the Name.

"His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, [Father of Eternity] the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9: 6). "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 . . . and that every

tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 9-11).

Now we understand why these devoted strangers went forth; they had come under the spell of "the Name": it meant their complete salvation, their purchase at a price incalculable— even His precious blood; they were slaves no more; they were Christ's free men and servants. He was their Lord and Master, their Leader and Commander, their Treasurer and Source of their supply. From Him they received and held their commission; they owned His absolute pre-eminence. These were some of the brethren whom Diotrephes would not receive. Then he should receive his own judgment; he may not be imitated. Happy it is to turn to the large-hearted, loving and trustful Gaius, or to a record like that of the upright Demetrius, and seek to follow their faith while honestly and before God loathing the spirit of the wilful place-seeking of domineering Diotrephes; or to tread humbly in self-denying, devoted footsteps of the strangers and brethren, who went forth independently of man, simply and wholeheartedly for the sake of "the Name."

It is just possible that this epistle was the last inspired writing. Anyhow it is striking that the expression "the Name" should have such prominence; for these last days are, alas, witnesses of a vast Babel of party names. Sects are distinguished by the names of men, of doctrines, of places, to our common shame; all of which would, were the supremacy of "the Name" but owned, sink into their own miserable nothingness.

as, thank God they certainly shall, when as the rising sun outshines all lesser luminaries, that Name which is above every name shall obliterate for ever the petty names and designations to which we attach so much

puerile importance to-day. Oh that the Spirit of God may magnify before the hearts of the children of God the worth and glory and power and excellency of "the Name." It gives its outline to the Philadelphian.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD

(From Notes of an Address)

A. J. Pollock

IN every sphere of human activity there is unrest and confusion, because God is left out. In politics, for instance, there is much talk of democracy, which was once defined by a famous man as, "Government of the people, for the people, by the people." But this has one great fault—it is all of fallen man. There is one fatal omission—God is left entirely out of the reckoning. One may say that it is horizontal, never rising higher than man. When God rules we have that which is perpendicular, reaching down from above.

When Israel came out of Egypt a Theocracy was established in their midst, but later they turned aside to their own ideas. They chose Saul, a type of man in the flesh, by outward show, by feet and inches and by good looks. So God said to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (I Sam. 8: 7). As a result they chose misery and disaster.

Now Theocracy, i.e., the rule of God, is clearly God's way, and democracy should not mark Christians. Its principles are foreign to the church of God, and its spirit betrays a lack of the knowledge of God. All nature is under control to God:

should man, and especially a Christian man, be an exception? We have known unspiritual Christians to say, "I've as much right to speak and give out a hymn as So-and-so." Have we any rights? We have privileges. We ought to recognize that believers "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 22). The recognition of this would leave the spirit of the world outside and beget in us a reverence, a subjection to God that would be acceptable to Him.

There are in the Scriptures three great passages dealing with "gifts." Ephesians 4; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12. In the first of these we read of our Lord, "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." It says, you notice, "unto men," not "unto the Church," for what is the mission of the Church in the world? Is it not to be a continuation of the life and testimony of our blessed Lord? Its destiny and all its promises are heavenly, yet it is not intended to shut itself up in solemn contemplation of its own blessings, but to be set for blessing toward the world. It is not part of the world. Its power lies in separation from the world, yet in being animated by the spirit of its Found-

er, who went about doing good.

The first gifts mentioned are the apostles and prophets, and upon their foundation the Church is built; though, infinitely more than this, Jesus Christ Himself is the chief Corner Stone. This guards against the Church arrogating to itself the place that belongs to Christ alone. He gives character to the Church. He is the rock upon whom the Church is built, according to His words to Peter in Matthew 16. If Peter had been the rock, as Romish authorities wrongly teach, he would have furnished a very insecure foundation, for in the same chapter the Lord had to say to him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Yet Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and that was the Rock upon which everything was to stand. The apostles and prophets appear in Revelation 21, as in the foundation of the heavenly Jerusalem, which symbolizes the Church. They were appointed to lay the foundation by their preaching and teaching, and by means of their inspired writings, especially those of the Apostle Paul, to give teaching and guidance to the Church when they themselves were gone.

The evangelist is another of the gifts given to men, and his service lies in preaching the Gospel to sinners, seeking souls for the glory of Christ. It has been well said that the evangelist should be like a pair of compasses—the fixed leg firmly set in the assembly, for he should be a good churchman; the movable leg stretched out as far as he is led of the Holy Spirit, it may be to the ends of the earth. Thus He brings his converts first to the feet of Christ and then to the assembly. Suppose you were about to establish an api-

ary, what is the first step you would take. Would you procure a swarm of bees? You would find yourself in a difficulty if you did. Where would you put them? No, the first thing would be to obtain a hive so that when the bees are procured they may be placed at once in their future home. God is the Author of order, so His first gifts were apostles and prophets to lay the foundation of the Church—thus producing the hive—then come the evangelists who labour to fill it.

The next gift mentioned is that of the pastor. He is one whose heart is touched with the spiritual interests of God's people, old and young. He devotes his energy to feeding the flock in the absence of the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then there are the teachers. Now teaching is not merely the ability to expound a passage of Scripture, for mere human intelligence has no power to unlock the treasures of the Word. One who is enabled by the Holy Spirit, in expounding the Word, to really convey its spiritual meaning to his hearers, may truly be termed a teacher. It is a rare and valuable gift.

Teachers are to be prized, not idolized. They are to be listened to with affection and respect, but not placed on a higher plane than their brethren, for all gift is received from God, and without the power of His Spirit nothing avails. Clerisy in all its forms is to be avoided. It creeps in with subtlety, and has helped to produce most of the parties and divisions which we have to deplore to-day. The French infidel, Voltaire once sneeringly said that the French had many soups but only one religion (meaning Roman Catholicism),

but that the British had many religions but only one soup. By this he aimed his satire at both British cookery and British sectarianism. As to the sectarianism he was sadly correct, and behind it is to be discerned the master hand of Satan. He can never destroy Christ's body on the earth, but he has had a large measure of success in marring its outward and visible unity. Paul could say of himself, "I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," and at the same time he was a great evangelist and a great teacher, as witness the epistles that came from his pen. This illustrates the fact that between teachers and evangelists and all the gifts there is to be nothing but the greatest harmony, and oneness for the furtherance of the Lord's interests in His absence.

There are rife in Christendom today a number of weird religions, or perhaps a better term would be modernistic cults. The trend of the human mind is seen in the seeking after novelties, and the misconstruing of Scripture to make it fit in with strange ideas. Alas! it is easier to propagate error than truth. Error appeals to the flesh in some way or other. Truth sets aside man in the flesh and brings in God. In the face of all this it is extremely important that we should be found following the exhortation, "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

If we turn to 1 Corinthians 12, we find the gifts referred to in this passage are those exercised in the assembly with the Spirit of God as the living power. It also sets forth the position of the Church since the ascension of our Lord. The Head of the Church is exalted to the right

hand of God in glory, and His body is here—the continuation of His life through its members. This is effected by the Holy Spirit taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto us, and reproducing His life in us—Christ in us, the hope of glory.

In our natural body all direction proceeds from our head. So it is in spiritual things. The body of Christ is in the place of dependence upon its Head, and in intimate connection with Him. If the members, instead of looking to an earthly head, look up to Him, come under His control and walk in the Spirit, His guidance will be manifested, especially in the assembly. The state of the Corinthians was not a high one as the reproofs and exhortations of the Epistle show. Evil, both moral and doctrinal was amongst them, and in carnal fashion they were turning gifted men into leaders of parties, so as to mar the expression of unity. They were saying, "I am of Paul," and "I am of Apollos," and "I am of Cephas," and worst of all "I am of Christ," as though they would make Him a party to their sectarianism and strife. What was at the bottom of all this ungodly discord? Was it not that the saints at Corinth had got out of true dependence upon their risen Lord?

Then again, instead of respecting those among them who were sober, godly and dependent, they were fascinated by those who could make a display with their lesser gifts, such as tongues and healings, or who had the natural ability of eloquence and persuasive speech, things which attract the natural man. Therefore the Apostle pleaded with them to "covet earnestly the best gifts;" that is, such gifts as prophesying,

teaching, etc., which excel to the edifying of the Church.

At the present time the state of Christendom is sadly like that of the Corinthians. If I were to advertise sufficiently a meeting in the Town Hall, where I would manifest some gift of tongues or perform some miracle of healing, there would not be enough seats to accommodate the crowds which would come to gratify their curiosity. The display, even if genuine, would only be that of the inferior gifts. We do well to give these sensational displays a very wide berth, for speaking generally they are by no means genuine. It is not worldly display or worldly organization that counts. The Church of God is a living organism, with its unseen Head in heaven, and we may be sure that if dependent upon Him we shall find He has made all provision for order and administration during His absence.

To sum up, in Ephesians 4, we have the gifts seen from the standpoint of Divine purpose, and that purpose will be fulfilled in the day when we all come to the unity of the faith. Surely that will be reached at the Rapture, when our Lord's prayer in John 17 will be gloriously fulfilled, "that they may be one, even as We [the Father and the Son] are one." In this passage the gifts are the men themselves: **THE LORD is the great name in this chapter,**

and the gifts are given to men for the blessing of the world.

In 1 Corinthians 12 the assembly is the sphere for the exercise of gifts. This gift is given to this one, and that gift is given to another and all as the Spirit in His sovereign will pleases. **THE SPIRIT is the great name in this chapter.**

In Romans 12 the gifts are seen in connection with the house of God, and therefore are manifested in the relation of one saint to another. It ranges from that which is exercised in the assembly, such as ministering, teaching, exhorting, to that which is exercised amongst the saints in their intercourse one with another, such as being "kindly affectioned one to another," giving, showing hospitality, and so on. **GOD is the great name in this chapter.**

We recommend the careful comparison of these three great chapters. Above all may every breath of the spirit of this age be foreign to the saints of God, and may God, our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit each have His portion in God's people, especially as we come together in assembly. In these broken days failure has to be confessed in every direction by the Church of God, for every Christian is a member of the one body, and what affects the whole affects each member just as what affects each member affects the whole.

One word alone describes the Divine Nature—**Love.** In 1 Corinthians 13 it is seen, not at home in heaven, but coming out on earth, like some rare exotic, brought from the Tropics, unfolding its beauties amid uncongenial surroundings.

"THE WEAK BROTHER . . . FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED."

(I Cor. 8: 11)

I. Fleming

WELL it would be if each Christian were to look upon every brother from this standpoint, and to say as looking upon him, "The brother for whom Christ died." The words are spoken with regard to a **weak** brother. His weakness might lead a strong one to slight or despise him because he was legal and not in the enjoyment of Christian liberty. But **for such an one** Christ died. The Lord of glory valued him at such a price that He died for him. Yes! He died for him as though he were the only one who needed His atoning sufferings. If Christ valued him so highly let us ask, How much do we value him? Or coming right home, How much do I value him?

This "brother for whom Christ died" differs from me. Perhaps he is but young in the faith. Perhaps he is ignorant of the freedom wherewith Christ has made me free. Perhaps he is not very conversant with truth I hold dear (this may be partly my fault). Perhaps he differs from me on points of doctrine. Perhaps he is not prepared to enter the company of Christians with whom I associate—perhaps he may not see eye to eye with me on certain ecclesiastical procedure — perhaps — but enough. It may be that he is not this or that or the other, BUT HE IS "THE BROTHER FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED."

Should we not look upon him then with the eyes of Christ, with the eyes of His love? And should we not treat him accordingly? If we sin against

our brother for whom Christ died we "**sin against Christ.**" Solemn words are these. We are not under the law but under grace and we rejoice in our liberation from bondage. But "**whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,**" "**written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.**"

What were some of these things written for us among the many admonitions of the Lord to His earthly people, with regard to those who were brothers in the nation of Israel.

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother. But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth"

(Deut. 15: 7, 8).

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again" (Deut. 22: 4).

"Let there be no strife I pray thee, between me and thee . . . for we be brethren" (Gen. 13: 8), said Abram to Lot, and magnanimously he gave the choice of location to his nephew.

If we turn now to the New Testament we shall find the same care for our brother is pressed upon our hearts and consciences.

"Thou hast gained thy brother"
(Matt. 18: 15).

"One is your Master, even Christ,
and all ye are brethren"
(Matt. 23: 8).

"Then shalt thou see clearly to pull
out the mote that is in thy brother's eye"
(Luke 6: 42).

"But why dost thou judge thy brother?
or why dost thou set at
naught thy brother? for we shall
all stand before the judgment-seat
of Christ"
(Rom. 14: 10).

"But if thy brother be grieved with
thy meat, now walkest thou not
charitably"
(Rom. 14: 15).

These brief extracts are sufficient
to show the care and consideration
of our God for the feelings and for
the interests of the weak and needy
and erring among His people. May
it be ours to think His thoughts after
Him with regard to **every** brother in
the great family of God, in the light
of the fact that he is a "brother for

whom Christ died."

Is there not a danger of thinking
a true saint, when we are apart from
him, to be a foe; whereas getting in-
to nearness with him we find him
to be a brother beloved. It has been
said that we may think a brother
at a distance is an enemy. When
near him we find true affection. Go-
ing down a hill in a fog to cross a
bridge one may see a man approach-
ing from the other side. He appears
big and powerful being distorted by
the fog. We may fear him. As he
gets nearer we find he is only our
own size. As he gets nearer still we
may see that he is our own brother.

"Where is Abel thy brother?"
was the challenge of Jehovah to Cain
of old. "I know not: am I my
brothers keeper?" was the proud and
lying response. May we be saved
from the spirit he manifested and be
found seeking the good of each
"brother for whom Christ died."

AFFECTION FOR HIM.

L. A. Anderson

(Luke 7: 36-50)

IF anyone wants the Lord's com-
pany He knows it and will be
their guest. So it happened that
when one of the Pharisees "desired
Him that He would eat with him,"
we read, "**and He went.**"

We are not told whether Simon
wished to act in a patronizing way
or whether it was that he felt it would
be a great honour, as indeed it was,
to have such a notable Guest in his
house. It hardly appears, however,
that there was any real affection for
Him. Nevertheless, if any invite the
Lord Jesus into their home, He will

go without questioning our motives,
though He knows them every time.

But a second visitor comes to Si-
mon's house, and on this occasion it
is a sinner, and known by all around
to be such. She, however, desires
the Lord's company too, and ob-
serve she knows where to find Him;
for He is where He has been invited.
Is it not thus when we meet together
to remember Him?—He is where the
two or three are gathered together
in His name. We may be some-
times, alas, very formal and cold
when our hearts should be warmed

up: but we do want Him, do we not?

The woman stands at His feet behind Him weeping. Let us notice the things that she does, all done without any ostentation but just naturally. No words pass her lips, but He observes every one of her actions.

(1) The tears begin to fall: for in the presence of One who knows all about her she realizes her exceeding sinfulness. She was a sinner and she recognized the fact. Her repentance was surely no mere superficial thing though she said nothing.

(2) She thereupon wipes those tears from His feet with the hairs of her head. Her very glory was laid at His feet. Those tears of sorrow should never have dropped on His blessed feet so she would hasten quickly to carefully wipe them away.

(3) She then kisses His feet. These feet that had trod many a weary mile were very precious to her, and she bows with humility at His feet.

(4) Finally she anoints His feet with the ointment which she has brought. She would worship and adore Him giving of her very best, though He might so far as we know

not even have looked round or uttered a word to her up this point.

In all this there is undoubtedly deep affection for Him.

This is too much for Simon, and afraid to say it aloud, he muses within himself as to the propriety of the Lord allowing such a sinful woman even to touch Him.

We will not go into the story the Lord told Simon. It is evident that its implication went home. The Lord however, definitely noticed and mentioned each one of the four acts of that woman (v. 44 & 45). He also noticed how they were each one missing in Simon's life.

Simon was probably very correct and proper, and yet he had forgotten some of the little courtesies in life.

Shall we learn a lesson from this how it is possible for us to even desire the Lord's company in an outward formal kind of way, and yet to be without real inward affection for Him? Also may we remember that He observes even the most trivial of actions as seen in the woman.

May our hearts be ever kept warm for Him and seek His companionship for His Name's sake.

We have before us the majesty of that love which sets its face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, in perfect acquiescence to the will of the Father. May we see to it that nothing impedes us as we follow Him, or weakens our faith in Him, or prevents our subjection to His holy will. Let us be honest with ourselves and earnest with God. Let us treasure no Babylonish garment, however goodly, or worldly ambition. Let us sanctify ourselves; for if there be any accursed thing hidden in our hearts, we shall not be able to stand in the day of trial.

GOD'S WAYS IN DISCIPLINE.

J. Houston

GO'D ways in discipline with His people are a profitable study. We do well to attend to them. And if we have a deep sense of His grace in our hearts, we shall value every lesson there is to be learned, whether it is something that is directly taught to us, or something that has been taught to others.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses reviews God's ways in discipline (see chapter 8), and he calls on the children of Israel to remember all the way which the Lord their God led them. This retrospect is salutary. We see how good, kind, forbearing and patient God has been with us. We see too how proud, overbearing, rebellious and disobedient we have been. This ought to humble us. But is it not strange we should need to be humbled? And yet it would seem that all His discipline is directed to that one thing, namely, to humble us. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee" (v. 2).

Pride is the first thing to possess us, and the last thing we get rid of. We carry it through life, and make fresh discoveries of its presence, as we learn our lessons from God, and find that it is our constant enemy to the end of our journey. Few learn of the blessed Master, who is "meek and lowly in heart," without having to undergo some wilderness training, where they are humbled. Moses, David, Paul, John and others may serve as examples of this. No doubt, they were trained for special service; but their training is just that of us all. We all need to be taken aside, into the wilderness, in circumstances

of trial, that we may learn lessons about ourselves and God.

Why in the wilderness? Because it is here God leads us in His ways of discipline. Were we left to lie on a bed of roses, or tread a smooth path with no hardship to face, no suffering to endure, no hard lessons to learn, we would be a selfish, proud and overbearing people. We would have little, or no, grace with others, and we would have little, or no, fruit in our life for God. Would we like to be in this state? God forbid! Better far we should be under God's discipline, in the wilderness, and learn His lessons well, even though this should mean a complete emptying of our proud hearts, that He might fill them with His love.

Then God has a definite end in view in taking us into the wilderness to discipline us, and this is, to do us good at our latter end. God sees the end from the beginning. He always works towards His end. What an end it is! To do us good and only good! If we only kept this end in view, the process, or course of discipline, would be easier. Had Job seen the end of the Lord, he probably would have been still more patient, and less argumentative, while he passed through his trials. So too, we would be less resentful, more docile, when we are learning our lessons from God, in days of trial, had we God's end in view, that is, to do us good, and only good. Have we lost anything in the process? He will restore it, or give us something better. Have we suffered much? He will cause this to mellow us in His grace. If heat is necessary to ripen fruit, suffering is necessary to mellow saints in God's

grace. Whatever be our loss, our sorrow, our suffering, our hardship, God can, and does, turn it all into good account, for He is good, and does good, and only good. Oh! may we never forget, "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called

according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28).

We would recommend the reader to read Deuteronomy 8, and remember all the way God has led him, and look forward to the latter end God has in view for him, **to do him good.**

"Go down to the Potter's House." (Jer. 18: 2).

Have we ever stood in the potter's house, and beheld him, as he wrought on the wheels? The workman takes a lump of clay; he presses it to the wheel; the wheel revolves before his eye. Where now is the vessel? It is in the mind of the potter, before it is formed; the design is there. His fingers shape the mass before him: gradually it grows up before his eye: gradually the thought in his mind is transferred to the clay, and it rises up before him, and the thoughts hitherto unexpressed, grow into the vessel which his fingers mould.

He sees a flaw; an imperfection in the clay. Others, beholding, have not detected it, as with the artist's eye. He crushes the clay, under his hand into a shapeless mass again. And again his fingers mould and fashion it into his design, until at last it rises, in perfection of design before him; his eye surveys it with satisfaction and pride; and he removes it from the wheel to take its place with the choice things of the earth around.

Where was the vessel before he began? It was in the potter! Where now is the potter? He is in the vessel! All that his mind designed and wrought is there seen. The vessel is fit for that which he had intended.

And this is the history of the soul. The clay is in the Potter's hand. His fingers fashion it, and it is marred; the clay needs more of His patient manipulation and skill. It is not yet smooth and even, nor pliable to His hand. He crushes it time after time. But when all is done, He has transformed his thought with unerring skill to the clay; the Potter is now seen in His handiwork; and it is a vessel of mercy, which he afore has prepared for glory.

How important, as these crushings take place, is the need of the interpretation of these skilful workings of the hand of the Potter! How often are the lessons misunderstood; or not apprehended at all! In the history of souls in the Word these actions are seen; the results are reached. In them we read the history of His dealings with our own souls, and the handiwork of God. We look then for the lines of beauty, resulting from His hand; we yield ourselves to the things that happen; we see the end of the Lord: we know how it is that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapter 19: 1-27)

IN the first verse of chapter 19 the word, " therefore " is to be noted. Pilate had pronounced already the verdict of " No fault " as to Jesus, but because the Jews shouted for Barabbas and rejected Him, he took Him and scourged Him. All attempt at a display of ordinary human justice was thrown to the winds, all public decencies were outraged. Taking their cue from the action of the judge, the soldiers followed suit in their own rough way. Yet the hand of God was so over even Pilate that a second and yet a third time was he constrained to pronounce the verdict of " No fault " over the Lord. He attempted to throw the onus of the death sentence on to the Jews. They repudiated it however, while declaring that His claim to be the Son of God demanded death according to their law.

They said He should die because He said He was **the Son of God**, while demanding that Pilate should condemn Him because He said He was **the King of Israel**. At the start of the Gospel we heard Nathanael owning Him in that twofold way, as we, thank God, own Him today. But on those two counts He was condemned.

The remark of the Evangelist in verse 8, throws a flood of light on the situation as far as Pilate was concerned. Secular history informs us that he badly antagonized the Jews in the earlier years of his governorship and therefore he feared to irritate them further. Yet he was convinced of the innocence of the Prisoner, whose serene bearing made him even

more uneasy. The accusation relating to " the Son of God," raised fears which were probably superstitious, but none the less potent, and which prompted the question, " Whence art Thou?"

Had this question sprung from real spiritual exercise the Lord doubtless would have responded, as He did to the two disciples with their question, " Where dwellest Thou?" in the first chapter of this Gospel. As it was prompted by superstition and fear the Lord gave no answer. This led Pilate to the threatening assertion of the power of life and death which he held under Cæsar. The Lord's reply to this evidently increased his fears—for lo! the Prisoner calmly assumed the judicial position, and with an air of finality pointed him to a higher Power than Cæsar as the real Source of any transient authority that he possessed, and also adjudicated on the degree of guilt attaching to himself and to the Jewish leaders respectively. The desperate animus lay with the Jews and he was but their tool. Still, though less guilty than they, he was definitely a guilty man. It was a shattering situation for Pilate, who found himself without knowing it in the presence of the Word become flesh. What then was the answer to Pilate's unanswered question? Surely that Jesus was Himself " from above," came from the Fountain-Head of Pilate's authority.

This episode greatly increased Pilate's desire to release Jesus but the crafty Jews knew how to exert decisive pressure. In view of the ten-

sion previously existing between himself and the Jews he could only regard their cry, recorded in verse 12, as a direct threat to impeach him to Cæsar if he let Jesus go. The Jewish leaders themselves "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God," (12: 43); Pilate had much more regard for the praise of Cæsar than for judgment according to truth and justice.

He made, however, one more appeal. In the last chapter, verse 31, we saw him making a suggestion calculated to appeal to their national pride; again in verse 39, he asked a question, appealing to their custom. Now in our chapter, verses 13 & 14, he makes an appeal to their sentiment. All, however, was in vain as regards his wish to divest himself of the responsibility of pronouncing judgment against the Lord. All was ordered so that the guilt of the Jews, and more especially of the chief priests, should be proclaimed in clearest fashion by their own lips. They crown their cry, "Not this Man, but Barabbas," with the statement, "We have no king but Cæsar."

Hosea's prediction had been, "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince . . ." (3:4). The two tribes had had the kings of the God-appointed line, and the ten tribes princes of their own selection. Hosea declared that soon they should have neither. But as if that were not enough for these evil men they now deliberately accepted Gentile despotism. They appealed unto Cæsar, and under the iron heel of a succession of despots God has seen fit to leave them. For nineteen centuries the two names, Barabbas and Cæsar,

might serve to sum up their history of misery. The lawless and insurrectionary spirit of mankind had been headed up in Barabbas: the order which is enforced by powerful autocracy was expressed in Cæsar. For nineteen centuries the Jews have suffered; now from the organized cruelty of the authorities, and then from the unorganized rabble — ground, as it were, between this upper and nether millstone. They have yet to suffer under the last forms of Cæsar and Barabbas, which will prove to be worse than the first.

When Pilate brought Jesus forth to make his last appeal, he seated himself in the judgment seat on the Pavement, which indicated that he was about to pronounce judgment in the case. John pauses here to give us the note as to time, which is recorded in verse 14. The fact that there is an apparent clash between it and that given so plainly in Mark 15: 25, has occasioned much discussion and controversy. We cannot but enquire, If He was crucified at the third hour, how comes it that Pilate should be said to deliver his sentence about the sixth hour? The solution would appear to be that our Evangelist, dealing with what transpired before the Roman judge, uses the Roman reckoning, which was similar to ours, whereas Mark reckons according to Jewish custom. If this is so, all is simple. It was about 6 a.m. when Pilate's examination drew to a close, and about 9 a.m. when Jesus was crucified. The "preparation of the Passover" was the 24 hours, starting at 6 the evening before. Into that 24 hours were crowded the most tremendous events in time, or indeed in eternity.

In our Gospel nothing is said as

to the mockery of the Roman soldiers, the scarlet robe, the crown of thorns; for after all these were but the crude actions of pagans and lay upon the surface. What we are told in verse 16 is that Pilate delivered Him "unto them," that is, the chief priests and officers, of which verse 6 had spoken. They were His persecutors and prosecutors. The animus lay with them. They it was who hated both Him and His Father. Pilate delivered Him into their hands that they might perpetrate their greatest sin by handing Him over to the Gentile executioners.

As the others Gospels show, the Lord had used such expressions as "taking his cross," and "bearing his cross," as figurative of the fact that His disciple must be prepared to come under the death sentence of the world. The full force of that figure is seen here, for, "He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull." The place got its name from the peculiar configuration of the rock, but it is significant for all that! A skull speaks of the humiliating end of all man's power and glory. In some living man it may once have held as brilliant and powerful a brain as ever existed; and it has come to this! The Son of God accepted the judgment of death as from man's hand, and to a place which set forth symbolically the end of all man's glory He went to bear it.

Moreover, He accepted death from the hands of men in its most shameful form. Crucifixion was peculiarly a death of repudiation and shame. As a Roman invention it expressed the haughty contempt with which they put to death the conquered barbarians, nailing them up as though

they were vermin. To such a death was Jesus delivered by the leaders of the Jews. John gives us but the briefest and plainest statement of that tremendous fact. The Lord of glory was crucified. That fact needs no embellishment of any kind.

But when this was accomplished Pilate intervened, writing a title and putting it on the cross. It would appear that not one of the Evangelists quotes every word of the title, though John comes nearest to doing so. In full it seems to have been, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." As regards the Jews this act of Pilate was definitely provocative, and intended to be so. They had forced his hand in the condemnation of Jesus and he retaliated by the public statement that the hated Jesus of Nazareth was the King of the Jews. This was the last thing they wished to admit, hence their expostulation. But here Pilate was adamant. He refused to alter one jot or tittle, and his curt answer, "What I have written I have written," has become almost proverbial.

In all this we can see the hand of God. The Word had become flesh and had dwelt among us. God had so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son. He was known among men as Jesus of Nazareth—a title of disparagement. When He entered Jerusalem a week before there had been some testimony to His glory, and had there not been the stones would immediately have cried out—so Luke tells us. But here indeed there was no human testimony and so a piece of board, inscribed by the hand of Pilate, or by his order, cried out that the despised Jesus of Nazareth was indeed King of the Jews. It is remarkable how our Lord Himself adopted the title

of shame, and weaved it as a chaplet for His brow when risen and glorified. It is an astounding fact that, JESUS OF NAZARETH IS IN HEAVEN—See, Acts 22: 8.

The title was written in the three prevailing languages of that day. Hebrew, the tongue in which the Law of Moses had appeared, the language of religion. Greek, the language of Gentile culture. Latin, the language of Gentile imperialism. In this representative way the whole world was involved in His death.

In verse 23, the Roman soldiers do appear as the instruments of His death, and also as fulfilling prophecies that had stood in the Scripture for about a thousand years and of which they knew nothing. In Psalm 22, David had foretold the parting of His garments among them and the casting of lots upon His vesture. These two things the four soldiers did, and John puts on record the circumstances which led to so exact a fulfilment. His coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Things which to us might seem quite trivial lead to the fulfilment of the Word of God.

We cannot but think, however, that this feature is mentioned because it also has a symbolic value. Everything about our Lord, both as to His Person and work, was of one piece, woven throughout without seam. With man in his fallen condition it is otherwise. The appropriate symbol for man and his work is the fig leaf apron to which Adam and his wife had recourse after their sin. They sewed the fig leaves together, and anyone who knows the shape of the fig leaf will realize how many a seam there must have been.

All was patchwork of an elaborate sort. **Theirs** was the **patchwork apron**: **His** was the **seamless coat**.

In that coat Jesus appeared before men, the symbol of His perfection and it was not to be rent. It is remarkable that John only speaks of this coat, telling us it was woven "from the top throughout," for unlike the other Gospels he omits any mention of the vail in the temple that was "rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Everything about the Lord testified to the fact that He came from above and was above all. And the stroke that at the hour of His death set aside the old order of things came from above also.

Verses 25-27 are particularly striking as occurring in this Gospel, written as it was to declare His divine glory that we might believe Him to be the Christ, the Son of God. Viewing Him thus we might have supposed that such lower things as human relationships would be disregarded. But it is just the opposite. All through the Gospel we have noticed how the reality of His Manhood is stressed. Every human perfection reached its fullest display in Him, and hence we see the affection connected with near human relationship fully displayed even in the hour of His deepest agony. The hour had struck when the words of the aged Simeon to Mary were fulfilled—"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." The sword of Jehovah, according to Zechariah, was about to awake against the true Shepherd of Israel, but a sword of another kind would also pierce the soul of His mother, and the Shepherd thought of that.

Only seven words were spoken—four to Mary, and three to John; but their significance was plain, and they struck a chord of love which met with a ready response. Jesus entrusted His mother to the disciple whom He loved, and who in the

knowledge of His love, loved in return. Love can be trusted, especially when it is not mere human affection but divine in its source, as springing from the appreciation of the love of Jesus.

“IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER.”

A reader of our magazine writes that he has been asked to give in few words an answer to the question, “Why was it necessary for Christ to be crucified?” He asks us to give a brief reply, for his questioner stated he had never heard what he considered to be a really satisfactory answer.

TH E Lord's own words in Luke 24: 46, quoted above, show that it was necessary, for the simple reason that it had been prophetically recorded in the Scriptures, and every word of God must be fulfilled. We may carry the enquiry, however, back one step by asking why God had so spoken? Do the Scriptures make clear the moral reason why?

We believe they do, and that we may summarize their answer in two statements, as follows:—

(1) Since Christ came to bear our sins, and “to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9: 26), He must of necessity meet it in the full weight of its penalty, which was announced as being death, even before sin actually entered. Adam was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and warned “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2: 17). The New Testament corroborates this in the terse statement,

“The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6: 23).

(2) Death then was a **necessity of the case**. But why must CHRIST die? Because the death of no other had in it sufficient value to **meet the case**. This point is argued at length in Hebrews 10: 1-18, where Psalm 40 is quoted to show that the sacrifice of Christ was according to the pre-determined purpose of God. The sacrifices of ancient days were ordained to remind men that death was the only basis on which sinners could have to do with God; and also as types and pledges of the one great sacrifice of infinite value, that in due time was to come. They had no intrinsic value, even as the bank notes that we all use with confidence have none, being just paper and ink. We accept them at their relative value because we know the gold reserve and the Government are behind them. The ancient sacrifices had a yearly value (see, Heb. 10: 1-3), but nothing more; and that, because they were like promissory notes, to be redeemed when Christ came and offered the golden sacrifice, the efficacy of which is intrinsic and abides to eternity.

All this of course hangs upon the true Deity of Christ as well as His

full and proper and perfect Manhood. Had He not been truly and perfectly Man, He could not have died for men. Had He not been truly God, there would not have been infinite and eternal value in His death.

The main point of the question may, however, lie in the word " crucified." Granted that His death was necessary if God was to be vindicated and glorified, and men saved: but why death by **crucifixion**? We should answer, Because death in this particular form had about it, in the Divine wisdom, peculiar significance and appropriateness. Sin entered by disobedience as to the **tree** of the knowledge of good and evil. Later on, in Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23, a peculiar curse rested on the man put to death by hanging on a **tree**. That curse was brought home to men by the law of Moses; and in Galatians

3: 9-14, it is stated in a twofold way. First, that which comes on all who break the law in any particular: second, the curse specially expressed by the dying of the guilty on a tree. Christ has redeemed us by taking the place of guilty men. It was **on a tree** He died, and thus redeemed us from the curse.

Crucifixion was, moreover, a form of death which put upon the sufferer a peculiar brand of shame, and of repudiation by men. Dying by crucifixion, Christ took the place of the curse as from God, and of scornful repudiation as from men. It was "the Lord of Glory" whom they crucified (see, 1 Cor. 2: 8). In that disastrous and overwhelming blunder lies the true root of the world's muddles and miseries; not to be remedied until "the Lord of Glory" reappears in the full display of the glory that is His.

"Some have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15: 16).

"No, no, it is not dying, to go unto our God;
The glowing earth forsaking,
Our homeward journey taking along the starry road.
No, no, it is not dying, heaven's citizen to be;
The crown eternal wearing,
And rest unbroken sharing, from care and conflict free.
No, no, it is not dying, to hear the precious word;
Receive the Father's blessing,
'Tis absent from the body, and present with the Lord."

When He smites it is to wound, to cause pain, not for His pleasure but for our profit. They on whom the Lord bestows most trouble here, will shine most brightly in the kingdom—polished stones, fit for the royal diadem; tribulation of every kind—not merely persecution for the Lord's sake, but tribulation; and who partook of all so much as the King of glory? The troubles incident to humanity the Lord Jesus made His own; all were appropriated by Him.

THE SECOND WORD.

A. J. Pollock.

OUR title needs a brief explanation. There are very many words in the English language that imply no second word: there are certain words that do, as we think this article will make plain. We do not intend to exhaust a list of such words found in our English Bibles, but would like to draw attention to four such words. They are found in the following four texts, and the words that suggest a second word will be in heavy type to draw attention to them.

“ And when the **chief Shepherd** shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away ” (I Peter 5: 4).

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“ The **Forerunner** is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec ” (Heb. 6: 20).

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“ Having an **High Priest** over the house of God, let us draw near ” (Heb. 10: 21, 22).

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“ Christ the **Firstfruits**; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming ” (I Cor. 15: 23).

Does not the title, Chief Shepherd imply the second word, **under-shepherds** or **pastors**?

Does not the title, Forerunner, imply the second word, **runners** or **after-runners**?

Does not the title, High Priest,

suggest the second word, **priests**?

Does not the title, Firstfruits, denote the second word, **after-fruits** or **harvest**?

We understand the usage of such words in ordinary language. The chief general manager of a bank, of course, means there are under-managers. We were in the company of a Christian friend very recently, and he told us he was employed on a large building scheme in London, and that he was a general foreman. We knew he could not employ that term unless there had been foremen under him.

Let us examine briefly the four words we have chosen. Take the first one,

“ THE CHIEF SHEPHERD ”

In Northumberland amid the Cheviot Hills there are many farms principally devoted to the raising of sheep. There are many shepherds in those parts. It would be a very big sheep farm that would employ a chief shepherd. The flock of God is, however, a very large flock indeed, and our Lord is the Chief Shepherd. He laid the foundation for this when He became “ the Good Shepherd ” (John 10: 11), the Good Shepherd that, “ giveth His life for the sheep.” That title, the Good Shepherd, in the sense in which it is used in John 10, He cannot share with another, for His was indeed a sacrificial death, the glory of which is unique, and cannot be shared with another. But His care for His own was not exhausted by what He did on the cross. **He lives for His own TO-DAY.** He cares for them. He is our “ High Priest;” our “ Advo-

cate;" "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I Peter 2: 25).

But He is no longer on earth, and He puts into the heart of this believer and that a care for the spiritual welfare of believers with whom they come in contact. Indeed there are special gifts from an ascended Lord, the glorious Head in Heaven, called "pastors" (Eph. 4: 11), men specially fitted by gift and desire, communicated to them by the Holy Spirit of God, to do the work of shepherding. The word, **pastor**, means **shepherd**. One has often admired the sight of a Christian taking a real care and interest in another, younger or less settled in the Christian life. These remarks are more suggestive than exhaustive, but may set the mind of the reader running on the lines of meditation, and may perhaps stir such to care for others.

What a glorious moment it will be when the Chief Shepherd appears! Then will come to pass His supreme act as Shepherd, calling His flock home, not one missing and then He will award crowns of glory to the under-shepherds, "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." The laurel or parsley or ivy crown placed upon the heated brow of the victor in the athletic games of Greece would begin to wither as soon as placed in position. But this crown will never fade away. Is it not well worth going in for?

"THE FORERUNNER"

It is good to see that our Lord died, was buried, rose again, and ascended to glory **representatively**. These great landmarks in our Lord's life involve all believers. They are not unrelated events confined to our Lord,

for He "died for our sins." We are "buried with Him in baptism." We are "risen with Him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." He hath "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." So we are entitled to view the Forerunner, the blessed Man of God's purpose and counsel, and observe where He has arrived. He arrived there **representatively**, which means that where He has arrived, everyone of His own will arrive. Where has He arrived? "Inside the veil," past the wilderness, the weariness and thirst, past the slowness of appreciation of His own, past their dullness of comprehension. "Inside the veil," the very dwelling place of God, the place where His glory is unveiled, that is where every true believer will arrive. Where the Forerunner has arrived, the after-runners will assuredly arrive. What an incentive to run the race diligently and well. How glorious the prospect!

"HIGH PRIEST"

As High Priest our Lord succours the weak, has compassion on the ignorant, a High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities, the One who strengthens His own to give them boldness to enter into the holiest of all, there to forget all but the very presence of God, there to worship and adore. He is the Leader of the worship. The Father seeks worshippers, who shall worship Him in spirit and in truth, and our Lord died on the cross of Calvary that worshippers should be found of those, who are redeemed by His blood, and whose hearts are touched by the display of such infinite love at such infinite cost. How sweet it is that He is the High Priest, the "great

High Priest," and that believers are priests to God and His Father,—all believers, sisters as well as brothers. Is not this exercise of holy worship the very antechamber of Heaven itself? Have we not often sung the verse of a hymn, our hearts swelling as the Spirit, the Earnest within us, thrilled us with the anticipation of what is to come?

"What will the sunshine of His glory prove?
What the unmingle fulness of His love?
What hallelujahs will His presence raise?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise!"

"THE FIRSTFRUITS"

We have kept this to the close of our remarks for it links up the first with the last, the beginning with the end. When was our Lord the "Firstfruits"? Leviticus 23 gives us the Jewish feast of "the firstfruits of your harvest." This was waved on the "morrow after the sabbath." The sabbath was the great day among the children of Israel. "The first day after the sabbath" must have struck with surprise and wonder a godly Jew, and he might well have been puzzled about it. But in the light of the New Testament all is clear. What was the greatest event this poor world has ever seen on the "morrow after the sabbath," called in the New Testament "the first day of the week"? Judaism looks to her sabbath—Christianity to "the first day of the week," "the Lord's day," the day of triumph when Jesus rose from the dead. That was the beginning of a new day for this world, the day of the proclamation of the triumph of our Lord's sacrificial work on the cross. This is the

day of the longsuffering grace of our God, the day when the harvest is being reaped, the fruit of that atoning work, a harvest of redeemed souls from every clime and language and condition and century.

But when Christ comes for His own "the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9: 28), He will come as the "Firstfruits" to claim those that are His, the full harvest of His redemptive work on the cross. Does this not give us a very personal interest in the resurrection, since our resurrection, if we pass through the article of death, is involved in His resurrection? that is to say, if He is raised, we shall be assuredly raised, for He was raised representatively.

The question was asked recently in a Bible reading why there should be such a chapter relating to the resurrection in I Corinthians. The answer was given that there were some in the assembly at Corinth, who said that there was no resurrection of the dead, and this chapter was a reply to such false ideas. After the Apostle had referred to the Old Testament Scriptures, showing that the resurrection of the One that was to come, our Lord Jesus Christ, was stated in them, he brings forward the wonderful number of witnesses, over five hundred at once. Then he plunges into his argument, that if Christ did not rise, we believers are of all men most miserable; but if Christ was raised, and He was, that is the pledge that all His own, who have passed away shall be raised. So we see how the title, "Firstfruits" involves the whole harvest, of which you and I form a part. Of course it is the resurrection that is the main theme in I Corinthians 15, but it is clearly

stated in the later part of the chapter that not only "this corruptible must put on incorruption," that is, the dead in Christ will be delivered from the corruption of the grave, but "this mortal must put on immortality," that is to say, that believers on earth when the Lord comes will be lifted out of this condition of mortality, to life; life eternal in all its fulness,

touching our very bodies.

How cheering it is to think on the second word; but in each case the second word owes all its sweetness and meaning to **the first word** which presents our Lord to us in a different aspect. In each case, however, the believer is linked indissolubly and for ever with **Him**. Hallelujah!

"Witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1: 8).

When the Lord sent out the twelve to preach the kingdom of heaven to Israel (Matt. 10), the mission was confined and narrow. He was "a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. 15: 8). All the promises to Israel were fulfilled in Himself. Their mission was "Go not into the way of the **Gentiles**"—there was yet no word for them. "And into any city of the **Samaritans** enter ye not." This mongrel race, half heathen, half Jew, had no promises from God any more than the Gentiles. "But," said the Lord, "Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of **Israel**." They were the objects of this narrow, but necessary and preliminary mission. And yet it did not even embrace all Israel, "For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel" (Rom. 9: 6). Nay, "Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire **who in it is worthy**!" Narrowed up thus, was this mission, to the worthy ones—the godly remnant of the people. But the nation having refused Jesus, and His atoning work having been accomplished on the cross, where His own people had placed Him by Gentile hands, all was now over on the ground of promises to Israel.

But Christ had risen; triumphant over all His foes. The boundless grace of God was set free to bless all men in righteousness through His work on the cross. The old enactment of Matthew 10 must now be changed. The sphere was too narrow for this grace to flow out; and as His footfall grew lighter, as it were, as He neared the top of Olivet, He turns round to a lost and ruined world of sinners—giving His disciples in the breadth of His heart, their new and fresh enactment. They were to begin at Jerusalem, where faith was dead: they were to carry the mission onwards to Samaria, where faith was corrupted for centuries; and to the uttermost parts of the earth, where there was no faith at all! And the grand answer to every state of man would be found in a risen Christ, of whom they were witnesses.

SONSHIP IN THREE ASPECTS.

J. Houston

IT is interesting to see how the subject of sonship is presented in Paul's teaching. In Ephesians, chapter 1, he gives it in relation to the counsels of God; in Galatians, chapter 4, he refers to it in relation to liberty from bondage; and in Romans, chapter 8, he speaks of it in relation to suffering. We have it, therefore, in connection with **God's counsels**; then in connection with **liberty**; lastly, in connection with **suffering**.

The highest conception of sonship we can possibly have is that which goes back to God, in His eternal counsels. The first chapter of Ephesians gives us this, for "the adoption of children" (verse 6) is really just "sonship." We see there it was no afterthought, no development in the ways of God, but something in eternity, in eternal counsels. This is extraordinary. We cannot explain it. We may even have difficulty in conceiving it by our finite minds. It is properly and entirely of God. He has condescended to reveal it to us, that we might know it, and enjoy it, before Him in love.

What emanates from eternity does not belong to the fleeting course of time. It may be accomplished in time, but it is not confined to it. So sonship was before time, though in time it was brought to pass. "Whom He [God] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified,

them He also glorified" (Rom. 8: 29, 30). From these plain Scriptures, we see counsel, foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification, all following each other in perfect, consecutive order, like golden links in a chain, yet the chain never began, and never can end. It is endless, quite outside the course of time, though accomplished in time. This is sonship according to God's counsels.

Coming to the second aspect of sonship, we see it is raised in connection with liberty from bondage. This is clearly taught in the Epistle to the Galatians, for they had not realized they were sons, and their ignorance gave the enemy occasion to drag them back to the position of servants. The apostle had to teach them, "thou art no more a servant, but a son" (Gal. 4: 7). They ought to have known it; but they did not because of their state of carnality, being occupied with the law and its ordinances, which the apostle calls "the elements of the world." If they had known they belonged to a system of things, outside the world, in the sphere of privileges proper to sonship, they would never have allowed themselves to be dragged into, or involved with, "the weak and beggarly elements" of the world. God's sons are no more of the world than Christ Himself is of the world (see, John 17: 16). All (the Son and the sons) belong to the Father's world. That is the sphere of their life, joy and untold happiness. There the Father is known, His love enjoyed, and worship flows unceasingly to Him.

For the sake of clearness, as to an understanding of this point, let us suppose a case, in ordinary life, where sons leave the father's abode proper, and get into the servants' quarters. Suppose, still further, they lost all sense of relationship to their father, and take the ground of his servants. Then filial love, liberty and privilege, as to actual enjoyment, are all forfeited, and fear, servitude and distance, take possession of them. They are servants in practice, though sons by calling. So great is this anomaly, in ordinary life, that we can scarcely imagine it. Sons on the ground of servants! It simply baffles our liveliest and most imaginative thoughts! Yet it does not baffle us when we look around us, and see many of God's dear children who are, as to practice, on the ground of servants, and seem to have lost all sense, if they ever possessed it, of their new and dear relationship to God the Father, through Christ, the Son. They try to keep the law; they are linked with the world, almost as those who belong to it; they rarely, if ever, draw near to God, the Father, through Christ, the Son, with the words, "Abba, Father," on their lips; they have little, or no, sense of the dignity of their calling; they live at distance, not nearness in any sense, and serve as hirelings. What a loss to the Father! What a loss to the sons! This deplorable state of things is what the Epistle to the Galatians contemplates, and we can understand the apostle's anxiety, grief and concern for them. He had to say to them, "Ye are fallen from grace." Again, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Again, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." All these utterances well show the

grief, and almost despair, of his heart.

The opening word in Galatians, "Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God **and our Father**," gives the keynote to the Epistle. The last appeal in the Epistle is, "Stand fast therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." From beginning to end, the Epistle teaches us that sons must have liberty, for it is their element. This liberty from the present evil world is to them, as sons, as essential as breath is to life. In view of this, what need we have to keep free from every species of bondage in the world, in order to enjoy our sonship privileges, as we have them in God, the Father, through Christ, the Son!

Lastly, we have sonship in connection with suffering. Why should sons suffer? This pertinent question has been often asked. To some it seems to present some incongruity, or anomaly. Sonship and privilege go well together. But with suffering, it presents something strange, to say the least. But in fact, it is not strange. It is quite in order. Here is an apt Scripture: "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5: 8). Now we, as sons, are called to obey, as Christ obeyed. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2: 21). Again, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1: 29).

From these Scriptures it is evident that suffering is the lot we must expect, as sons of God, through faith in Christ. If we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, then suffering must play an important part in that work of conformation in us. Patience, endurance, longsuffering, meekness, gentleness, and much more that is in conformity to Christ, could only be produced through suffering. Our whole life as Christians, goes to prove that suffering is of the greatest advantage, if born in a spirit of grace, and allowed to do the work in us that God intends. In this sense it is not a calamity, a hardship, a sorrowful experience, from which we would escape if we could, but a **concession**, a real favour, a blessing, from which untold good is to come. It is written, "unto you it is **conceded . . .**" (Phil. 1: 29). It must then be considered as a **favour**, if it is **conceded**.

But how often we view suffering in an altogether different light! We look upon it as something of a misadventure, an unfortunate happening, an untoward experience, with nothing for us but inconvenience and loss. When viewed in this way, it is no wonder we shrink from it. On the other hand, when we see God's purposes for us, to conform us to the image of His Son, and that suffering is the means by which this, to a very large extent, is accomplished, the whole outlook is altered. Patience then comes with its benign influence on our spirit, and we bear it with fortitude, hope, and even joy.

There is yet one other consideration in reference to sons of God suffering. They are in a groaning cre-

ation, and in this they have part. On no account are they exempt. Nor have they reason to think they ought to be exempt. In the providence of God, unerring and wise, it is meet His sons should go through the sufferings of a groaning creation, of which they are an essential part, since they are in bodies of clay, even as others that are in that creation. A plague, an epidemic, a national scourge, may come. Must they, as sons be exempt from these? Oh, no! They have their part in them in the providence of God; and they are expected to go through them, **even as others**. Thus we find God's sons in hospitals, **even as others**. Why not? Do they not form part, **as to their bodies**, of the same groaning creation? Unquestionably they do. Then they must go through that which is common to all. In this they are **human**, even though, as to their calling, they are **sons of God**, through faith in Christ.

How careful we should be not to judge our brethren when they fall ill, go through long and painful trials of broken health, are wounded, oftentimes mortally, in accidents and other mishaps! A kind of superstition may easily possess us, especially if we are free from these sufferings ourselves, in thinking that they must have done something evil, that such calamities should come to them. It is nothing short of pagan to entertain any such thought. The barbarians thought Paul was not allowed to escape, when the viper fastened on his hand. They judged him to be a murderer, and thought that though he escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffered him not live (see, Acts 28: 1-4).

Better far it would be that, instead of judging our suffering brethren, we

took up the work of prayer and intercession for them, and remember that suffering in them is intended to call forth sympathy in us. In this way Christ is set forth, for Christ has nothing but sympathy for His suffering saints, and as High Priest intercedes for them.

In conclusion, Peter, sums up all in these words, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after that ye have suffered a while**, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5: 10). So we see, suffering ends in glory.

"CALLED UNTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SON."

J. F. English

IT is GOD who has called us to this exalted fellowship, and not something which we have done or chosen ourselves. Before our conversion we neither knew nor thought of such a fellowship. But by the Gospel God called us and, after first setting us at rest in our conscience and mind about our sins and sinful condition, He taught us, by His Spirit, of the purpose He had in mind in calling us. Part of that purpose was that we should be here on earth, in the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

We learn by this Scripture that our Lord Jesus Christ has a fellowship here on earth, during the time of His rejection and absence; a partnership (in the power of God the Holy Spirit) which our Lord has established and of which He is the Head. Therefore, in that fellowship everything must be exclusively of Him.

It will be plainly seen that anyone walking with those who deny that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not moving in that fellowship to which all Christians are called, for it is the fellowship of His Son.

Everyone in this fellowship has been taught, by the Holy Spirit of God that Jesus is the Son of the Living God; perhaps the knowledge came to us through the ministry of a servant of the Lord, or it may be direct from the Word of God, the Scriptures, but it is made good in our souls, as is all truth, by God the Holy Spirit.

Then our testimony is to Jesus; He who was the lowly, despised, rejected and crucified man. That is what He is to the people of the world in which we live—the crucified Nazarene. Knowing this, we cannot have fellowship with that world any longer. It was the wisdom of man that led to this. It was the religious, educated man who despised and rejected Him and nailed Him to the tree of Calvary. How can we then any longer go on with that man, either in ourselves or any other? To do so in any degree is to deny the fellowship of God's Son. For those who would be true to the fellowship, there can only be, the life of Jesus manifested in our mortal body, and, by the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling, this is now possible for each one who has been called of God.

He is the Christ, the anointed Head from God for man. We can acknowledge no other Head before God but Christ. Blessed truth, all in this fellowship have a portion in Him—Christ—as their own, in all that He is to God. We are in Christ before God, not in ourselves in any way. In the death of our Lord Jesus, we have died. That same blessed One, who has died, has risen again and we are risen with Him. He is now in the presence of God for us, made by God both Lord and Christ. He is our living Head in Heaven and our life is hid with Christ in God.

This means too, that in our pathway before God, nothing but what is of Christ is of value, and to walk in the fellowship of God's Son is to be for us, what it was to the Apostle Paul, "not I but Christ liveth in me." As another has expressed it, the test for all that goes to make up our daily lives, as walking in this great fellowship is:—Is it CHRIST?

If He is our Head before God and for God, He also is our Lord, which

means we can look to Him to administrate all that which we need. It is notable that when He was here on earth, those who appealed to Him as Lord, always had their needs met. In His Lordship He is invested with all power and authority; He is the great Administrator of all the bounty and resources of God. Joseph in Egypt was the great type, in the ways of God in Old Testament times, of the Lordship of Christ. He was the man with supreme power and authority in the Kingdom, and the administration of it. He is thus a picture of our Blessed Lord in His office now as the glorified Lord at the right hand of God. In the fellowship of God's Son, we know Him as our Lord and we call upon His Name, looking to Him alone for power and wisdom to live as those in the Kingdom of God.

To all this God has called us, and as surely as He is faithful He will never deviate from it. May we on our side be faithful and adhere to that to which we are called.

A Word to those who minister. (Extract from a letter.)

I could wish that some who aspire to minister the Word in fellowship meetings would study how to be most effective. I was much impressed by _____. Growth in spirituality and knowledge of the Word were remarkable, but I was much depressed by two things. (1) Length, not knowing when to stop, and that most irritating habit of always stopping, and then breaking out with a fresh thought *ad infinitum*. (2) The tendency to start with a good line, and then giving several addresses within the main address—a reference to any Scripture or personality being followed by telling all the speaker knows on that—result is, nothing is left on the mind. They are not without older examples, i.e. _____, who always gave about six confused addresses in one. The contrast is best found in _____, whose addresses were crystal clear, and could be remembered for years afterwards, and he was short. One was like a sparkling, refreshing drink, and the other was like asking for a drink and getting it supplied through a hose-pipe. If younger brethren would aim at getting a little over briefly, they would not only be effective, but they would be acceptable to the brethren, who will tolerate moderate ministry provided it is short.

SOWING AND REAPING.

L. A. Anderson

“**W**HATSOEVER a man soweth that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6: 7) is indeed very true, as regards natural things as well as spiritual. As we sow so we reap and there is no getting away from it, though God in His goodness may overrule circumstances and turn them to good account for our blessing.

It is a fact we know that the weather may to some extent affect crops sown on the land and a good or poor crop may follow accordingly, but nevertheless the broad principle remains for all time.

If we sow the ground carefully and bountifully we expect to reap in proportion to such sowing. Moreover, we do not expect tares if we sow wheat, nor wheat if we sow tares. And in the spiritual realm the above is true in just the same way.

It not infrequently happens as the Lord Himself said, “**O**ne soweth and **a**nother reapeth” (John 4: 37). Indeed how often is it that the Sunday School teacher does a great deal of sowing, and then at the proper time another comes along and reaps the harvest; and what a joy it is to work in with one another in this way, and so rejoice together. Happy service indeed!

Sometimes, however, we are promised that we shall experience **both** sowing and reaping, but special conditions are attached. For instance, Psalm 126: 5, tells us that “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” I have at times pondered as to how much we know about this sowing in tears. It is rather to be feared that

we know little, very little, of it in these days, but we can testify that when it has been practised it has been fruitful.

But to sow in tears does **not** mean that we are to go about very mournfully, and thus act as a wet blanket on all whom we meet.

It is **tears** that are spoken of in the above verse, and the sowing has to be done in tears **if** there is to be the reaping in joy. Our service perhaps is too superficial because we do not spend enough time and care over the sowing. Would that we were more tender-hearted and compassionate.

Even Christ “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears” (Heb. 5: 7), but He also “for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12: 2). He indeed sowed in tears, but oh, what a joy and rejoicing there will be at His coming as He presents us faultless by virtue of His work upon Calvary’s cross and subsequent resurrection.

But to return to our Psalm, there is a double emphasis on this point, as the following verse shows. “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Notice that there must be the **going forth**. Now we can pray in our own homes or in some quiet place just where we are, and all very necessary; but if there is to be this effective sowing there must also be definite action and movement, just as in natural things we cannot sow indoors.

Then again the weeping must ever accompany the going forth. If we have a real yearning for souls we shall weep over them before we go forth. We shall plead with God with much earnestness as did Moses, Elijah, Brainerd and others of later date. How we read again and again of the Lord having compassion on the multitudes. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, He wept over Jerusalem, He agonized in Gethsemane.

But there is yet a further point we must remember. If we go forth and weep, we must also bear the precious seed. How useless it will be if we take no seed—can we expect results? And we are told in another place the seed is the word of God. Whilst we may take the portions of Scripture, texts and Gospel literature we must above all have the word of God thoroughly in our hearts so that we

can at once apply it. Moreover this seed is said to be precious, it is not to be thought of lightly in any way.

Now if there is the going forth, the weeping, the bearing the precious seed, let us read on, "shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him." So the reaping will be **sure** in the future, even if not always in this life.

What encouragement we have here in these two verses. There are other passages on the same lines, but the above will repay us for our prayerful consideration. They are plain unequivocal statements which will bear no alteration, and indeed there are many such in the word of God.

May we all know more of the sowing and the reaping of which the Psalm tells.

New Life.

We picked up a paper the other day and read the following extract:—
"In China there is the **New Life Movement**. Its very name suggests its inadequacy, for the word used for **life** is not **sheng ming** (life, the essential principle) but **sheng hoh**, which means life in its outward expression, as in the phrases, the necessities of life, or, the standard of living. Chinese preachers of the Gospel seize on this and point out that men need new **sheng ming** before they can really enjoy new **sheng hoh**."

In English we only have one word, and are losers thereby. In spite of this let preachers of the Gospel in this and every other land outside China make very plain the great fact which is embodied in these two Chinese words. No new life in its outward characteristics, or "New Order," is possible save to those who have new life in its inward principle and power. When Nicodemus came to our Lord, feeling that He was a Teacher come from God, and therefore could instruct him in a new way of living, he was confronted with the inescapable fact, "Ye must be born again."

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole

(Chapter 19: 28-42)

IN verse 28 we get another of those flashes of omniscience which characterize this Gospel. A few verses earlier we saw the soldiers fulfilling Scripture, though utterly unconscious that they were doing so. We now see Jesus Himself in that dark hour surveying the whole field of prophecy, and well aware that of all the predictions centering on His death only one remained to be fulfilled. In Psalm 69 David had written, "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." A small thing in itself, but every word of God must be verified in its season, and we are informed that in that hour of suffering He was able to rise above His circumstances and not only discern the one thing lacking but also utter words that at once brought it to pass. No mere man could have done either the one or the other.

The remarkable thing is also that just before He was crucified the soldiers gave Him vinegar mixed with gall and myrrh, but He would not accept it, as recorded in Matthew and Mark. This was doubtless because He would have nothing of any human device to lessen the physical suffering involved, and also because at that moment there was **no thirst** on His part. Divine predictions must be fulfilled with exactitude and precision.

John makes no mention of the three hours of darkness, nor of the forsaking with the bitter cry that it called forth, which had been predicted in the first verse of Psalm 22. Those things did not particularly illustrate the Deity of Jesus, upon

which the Spirit of God had led him to lay such emphasis. What did illustrate it was the triumphant cry with which His earthly life closed. Psalm 22 ends with the words, "He hath done," and of this the New Testament equivalent is, "It is finished." He had come into the world in the full knowledge of all that had been entrusted to Him of the Father: He was now leaving it in the full knowledge that all had been fulfilled; not one thing was lacking. The prophet had predicted that Jehovah should "make His soul an offering for sin," and this was accomplished. As a consequence faith can now take up the language of Isaiah 53: 5, and make it its own; just as the repentant remnant of Israel will adopt it in a coming day.

In this also our Lord was unique. There have been servants of God who like Paul have been able to speak with confidence of having finished their course, but none would have dared to affirm that they had put the finishing touch to the work in their hands; they have rather handed on the work to him who should succeed them. His work was exclusively His own, He carried it to its perfect completion. He could appraise His own work, and announce it as finished. All others have to humbly submit their labour to the Divine scrutiny and verdict in the day to come.

Both Matthew and Mark tell us that after crying with a loud voice Jesus expired. It would appear that Luke and John each give us a part of that last utterance. If so, it must

have been, " It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The first part helps to emphasize His Deity, so John records it: the second emphasizes His perfect Humanity, in its dependence upon God, so Luke records it. True also to the character of his Gospel, John chronicles the very act of His death in a special way—" He delivered up His spirit " (New Trans.) The wise man of the Old Testament has told us, " There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death " (Eccles. 8: 8), but here is One who had that power. He is able at one moment to lift up His voice with unimpaired strength, and the next moment to deliver up His spirit, and thus fulfil His own words recorded in chapter 10. True, there He spoke of the laying down of His " life " or " soul," saying, " No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." But the two statements are entirely in agreement for we all know that when the human spirit quits the body a man's life on earth ceases. When God calls his spirit, go he must. Here is One who has full command over His spirit; He delivered it up to His Father, and thus He laid down His life.

That, having laid it down, He took it again in resurrection, we find in the next chapter: the rest of our chapter is filled with the various activities of men, some of them His foes and some His friends, but all working together to the end that the determinate counsel of God should be fulfilled, just as He had spoken in His word.

First on the scene were the Jews, the men who were His most implacable foes. They were great sticklers for the ceremonial side of things and the Passover sabbath being an **high** day it was of peculiar sanctity in their eyes. They could not enter the judgment hall lest they defile themselves, as we saw in the last chapter. Now we see that the idea of the dead bodies of men they esteemed evildoers remaining exposed in the sight of men and Heaven over that day was abhorrent to their ritualistic souls. They were right of course, for it had been so ordered in Deuteronomy 21: 23, but that was the type of enactment which they loved to observe, whilst overlooking matters of greater moment. Thus from them came the request that death might be hastened by the breaking of the legs, and so indirectly they played their part in bringing to fulfilment another of the many predictions which were focussed on that great day when Jesus died.

We might have supposed that life with the Lord would have been prolonged far beyond the others, but in fact it was the opposite, just because He deliberately laid His life down. Had He not done so, man's act in crucifying Him would have had no power against Him. It is significant also that John does not designate the two men as thieves or malefactors; they were " two other " (ver. 18). No need to mention their particularly bad character to heighten the contrast. The greatness of the Divine Son is such that it is sufficient to say that they were two other men.

Pilate's order to the soldiers, at the instance of the Jews, had two effects. First, while the two other had their legs broken to hasten their

end not a bone of our Lord was broken, and thus Scripture was fulfilled. The reference must be to Psalm 34: 20, and to the instructions given as to the Passover lamb in Exodus 12, and repeated in Numbers 9. This is worthy of note as showing how fully the Spirit of God identifies the typical lamb with its Antitype, inasmuch as that which is said of the type is treated as applying to the Antitype. With this agree the words of Paul in I Corinthians 5, when he says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

Secondly, there was the wanton and vindictive act of the soldier with a spear. Seeing that Jesus was dead, and hence he had no authority to break His bones, he thrust the spear into His side. He did it without the least understanding of the significant effect of His act. Once more, however, that which lay in the Divine counsel was brought to pass and a Scripture found its fulfilment. The prophet Zechariah had declared that at last the spirit of grace and of supplications should be poured upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "and they shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced" (12:10). Notice here how the act of the subordinate official is treated as the act of those whose determination and will lay at the root of all that happened. The Roman soldier was but the instrument of this wickedness, and in the coming day the repentant remnant of Israel will acknowledge it as the act of their nation. Even to-day do we not acknowledge that spear-thrust to have been the terrible expression of man's hatred and contemptuous rejection of the Son of God?

But the Evangelist specially concentrates our attention upon the re-

sult of that wanton deed—"forth-with came there out blood and water." When, in verse 35, he solemnly affirms the truth of his record, so that faith may spring up in the reader, it is to this he refers. In the first place, this piercing of His side publicly demonstrated that death had really taken place. In the second place, by it His blood was actually shed, and we have only to recall that, "without shedding of blood is no remission," (Heb. 9: 22), to realize the importance of that fact. In the third place, we know what gracious and blessed results flow to us each individually when our faith reaches out and reposes in the Christ who died and in the blood that He shed. So we are not surprised at John's strong affirmation of the truth of his witness.

But water came thereout as well as blood and we do well to study the significance of that, for John dwells on it again in chapter 5 of his first Epistle, where we read that Jesus Christ came "by water and blood," and it is emphasized that it was "not by water only, but by water and blood." If the blood speaks of judicial expiation, the water speaks of moral purification, and both are absolutely essential and only to be found in the death of Christ. There is always a tendency to separate the two. When John wrote it was to emphasize the water and ignore or belittle the blood, and this tendency is still powerfully felt for there are many who like to think of His death as having a moral effect on us while they dislike the thought of death paying the wages of sin and thus effecting expiation. It is quite possible of course to find the opposite extreme in those who recognize nothing but the blood shed for our sins, and thus

overlook the necessity of that moral cleansing of which the death of Christ is the all-essential basis.

It is remarkable too that in the Gospel we have the record of John as to the fact, whereas in his Epistle both the water and the blood are regarded as bearing witness, together with the Spirit. They bear record "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." Blood and water came forth from the dead Christ. The Spirit has been shed forth from the risen and glorified Christ. Together they bear record that, while there is no life in us, we have eternal life in the Son of God.

Joseph of Arimathæa now appears at the precise moment when he can serve the purpose of God. He is mentioned in each of the Gospels, and each supplies us with some special detail concerning him. Matthew tells us that he was rich and a disciple. Mark calls him an honourable counsellor who waited for the kingdom of God. Luke says he was a good man and a just and that he had not consented to the counsel and deed of the great majority of the Sanhedrim in putting Jesus to death. John admits that he was a disciple, but a secret one for fear of the Jews. So apparently he had been in a position akin to that of the Pharisees, who are mentioned in verses 42, 43, of chapter 12. Yet, wonderful to say, in this the darkest hour, when everything seemed hopelessly lost,—as witness the attitude of the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 24)—Joseph found his courage and went to Pilate with his request to have possession of the body of Jesus. Mark it is, who tells us that he went in boldly to Pilate, and the decision

of the Governor was overruled of God. Isaiah had declared that He should be "with the rich in His death," though His grave was appointed to Him with the wicked. The Jews would have desired nothing better than that He should be flung under a heap of stones with the bodies of the malefactors. But God fulfilled His own word, firstly through the sudden boldness of Joseph, and then through Pilate's disposition to thwart the Jews by reason of his irritation with them. God everywhere has sway and all things serve His might.

At this point Nicodemus again appears. Mentioned nowhere else, he is mentioned three times in our Gospel. We see him first as an enquirer, but needing to be humbled, and brought down from his high estate as Pharisee, teacher, and ruler in Israel. He must be born again. At the end of chapter 7 we find him raising a mild objection to the evil counsel and actions of the council, and standing up for what is right, and being snubbed for his remonstrance. Now we find him taking a further step in advance. He identified himself with Jesus in His death more definitely than he ever had during His life. He too must have been rich, judging from the amount of spices that he brought. The crisis, which had paralyzed the men who had boldly identified themselves with the Lord in His life and ministry, had nerved these timid and cautious men, who hitherto had been in the background unrecognized, into boldness and action. Truly Omnipotence has servants everywhere!

One other point remains at the end of the chapter. Close by the place of the crucifixion was a garden and

a tomb in the rock. Only Matthew tells us that it was Joseph's own tomb; he also says that it was new; both Luke and John are more emphatic on this point, saying no man before had lain there. It had been foretold through the Psalmist that Jehovah would not suffer His "Holy One to see corruption." That this signified that the holy and sacred body of Jesus though undergoing death was not in the least touched by the process of disintegration and

corruption, we all know. But it also meant that His body should not even come into contact with it externally. When God fulfils His word, He does so with thoroughness and completeness.

Thus, as we intimated, when the Divine Son suffered the hand of Omnipotence overshadowed all men and all things, so that all that He had declared through holy men of old might come to pass. The counsel of the Lord, it shall stand.

"Yea, hath God said . . . ?" (Gen. 3: 1).

Satan did not begin by calling attention to the blessedness with which man had been surrounded: nor to the character of God as "giving all things richly to enjoy." Rather does he seize upon the prohibition—calling attention to the interdict alone—"yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" whereas, God had said. "Ye shall eat of every tree." The grand master-stroke of the serpent was, to instil lust into the soul, and distrust of God; to cast a suspicion on the fulness and freeness of His nature to bestow. This was the poison of the serpent which has permeated humanity ever since that day. It was done before ever a sin was committed. The devil had stepped in, and sown distrust in man's heart; creating a suspicion in the soul; and separating man and his Creator by the loss of faith in Him.

This is what men do between each other now-a-days, to reach some end they have in view. I dare say they may not perhaps think so: but the largest portion of the sorrows between men, or even between brethren, are caused by some hint, behind backs; or some whispered story, to which the heart of others is ready to lend an ear; which causes distrust to spring up between souls. Distrust engendered, dislike follows, but more especially in the one who has wronged the other. **It is exceedingly hard to trust a heart you have wronged.** "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it" (Prov. 26: 28); and "He that repeateth a matter, separateth very friends;" and "He that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away." These passages are but the workings of this principle of evil. Hence the true saying, "The injured may forget; the injurer never!"

To restore man to perfect confidence in God, and to meet the outrage on His nature, was the work of Christ at the "end of the world."

THE CLOSING MESSAGES.

F. B. Holc

(Notes of an address on Malachi 4: 1-6; Revelation 22: 8-21)

THREE is always something peculiarly arresting in last words, and I have just read, firstly, the last words which God gave through the Old Testament prophets, and secondly the last words which have come to us in the closing prophetic message of the New Testament.

Malachi prophesied over four centuries before Christ came, and then followed a period of silence on the part of heaven. We today are living in a long period which has been spoken of as the Silence of God. Men are mightily perplexed because God seems to have retired into His heaven, and shut the brazen gates. The world is being convulsed and yet there does not seem to be any utterance from the Divine lips. Heaven has been silent, but for a very good reason. God has spoken in His Son and fully uttered all He has to say in the way of grace. The only thing that remains is for God to speak in His wrath, and vex the nations in His sore displeasure. Unconverted people blame God and ask, Why does He not do something? But if He did, they would be overwhelmed in condemnation. Having said all He has to say in grace, He is silent until He speaks again in judgment.

In the Old Testament we have the record of how God raised up Moses and the prophets and through them formulated His holy demands upon men, and upon Israel in particular. In the New we have the revelation of grace and salvation in Christ. The contrast between the closing mess-

ages of the one and the other is very instructive and helpful.

Yet, while there are striking contrasts, we notice that certain things mark them both. For instance, the coming of the Lord is mentioned in both. In the Old, He is the Sun of righteousness; in the New, the bright Morning Star. When He arises as the Sun, it will be with healing in His wings. Many people today are emphatic on the healing power of sunlight, and I daresay they are right. When Jesus comes in His glory He will bring healing for the godly and those who fear His Name, as stated in verse 2. For the ungodly, as stated in verse 1, that day will burn as an oven. As you know, there are regions, such as Mesopotamia, where the sun can beat down with terrible heat, and the temperature sometimes rise to 120 degrees in the shade. So when Jesus comes as the Sun of righteousness it will be a burning oven for the wicked, who will be as stubble, though it will be healing for His saints. God will draw the line in that day between those that fear His Name and those that fear Him not. The coming of the Lord is equally spoken of in Revelation 22, though from a different aspect, and the line of demarcation between the godly and the ungodly is just as clearly drawn, particularly in verse 11.

Another thing that characterizes both endings is this: very great emphasis is laid upon the Word of God. In Malachi it is seen in verse 4. "Remember ye the law of Moses

My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." There were those that feared the Lord and thought upon His Name, and that spoke often one to the other, and these were the people upon whom the Lord set His eye. Here are the last words of instruction for these godly folk, left now for 400 years until the Dayspring from on high should visit them. Says the prophet, Remember the law given through Moses in all its parts, without omitting any details, and not some of it only: remember too it is for all Israel, and, therefore, for everyone who is of Israel. His message if summarized might read, **All the Word of God for all the people of God.**

These godly folk might have been tempted to think that the law had changed somewhat with the times. Their nation had been carried into captivity and they were grandchildren or great-grandchildren of those who came back in detachments under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah and other leaders whom God raised up. There they were, a comparatively broken and humble people in the land. They might easily have said, We hardly need to be concerned about **all** the law. Surely we need not bother our heads about this or that. We can slacken things a little bit there, and tighten up a little bit here. The prophet says, No! Remember the original word God gave you in all its details. It is all for you. It gives you light and guidance as to the mind of God, even if the mass of your nation is still in the lands of their captivity.

tween our position today and that of these people. Truly there have been immense changes in the world since the days of the Apostles but the New Testament has not changed. There is still all the Word of God for all the saints of God. There is no presumption in each of us saying, I am one of the saints of God, therefore, it is for me. Shall we slacken a little here, or tighten a little there? We shall suffer spiritually of we do, since it is not for us to tamper with the Word of God. You may depend upon it that God who gave the original revelation and instructions through the Apostles, knew all about the history of the church as it would develop in the next twenty centuries. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14: 37, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." Hence they stand for all of us today.

Now I turn to the passage in Revelation. Let me point out that again the Word of the Lord is greatly emphasized. In verse 7 we have, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." No doubt primarily the book of Revelation, but equally one cannot doubt it was God's design that Revelation should stand as the conclusion to the New Testament, and, therefore, that pronouncement applies secondarily to all Scripture, the New Testament in particular.

What sayings they are! What wonderful unfoldings! Not as previously God formulating His law, testing us by it and bringing home to us thereby our sinfulness and need, but sayings which reveal what

I think I can see an analogy be-

He has made known and accomplished in Christ—the Second Man and Last Adam. The first man fell in a garden of delights when everything was to his advantage. The Second stood in a wilderness, and in the face of every disadvantage. Then in the sayings of this book God unfolds the glorious consequences that flow from the triumph of Christ.

Blessed are we if we **keep**. How do we keep? Only by obeying, by putting into practice. We may store things mentally, and some of us do keep a crowd of things in our heads, yet we do not really have anything until we have used it in a practical and experimental way. A striking little verse has told us,

" For we must give, if we would keep
That good thing from above.
Ceasing to give, we cease to have;
Such is the law of love."

I may borrow those words, making a slight alteration, thus,

For we must **use**, if we would keep
That good thing from above;
Ceasing to **use**, we cease to have;
Such is the law of love.

Truly then, as the Lord Himself said, " Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it " (Luke 11: 28).

But verse 7 is not the only allusion to the Word of God in this chapter. The Book and its words of prophecy are spoken of again in verses 10 and 18, and in verse 19 they are twice referred to. So in all we have it five times. How careful God is of His very words, and what emphasis is laid upon their integrity and power.

But, in addition to this great emphasis, we get a beautiful presentation of the Lord Jesus Himself, who is coming. A figure is used, as in Malachi. There He was the Sun of righteousness, rising in splendour; here He is the bright Morning Star, the harbinger of the coming day. Still in verse 16 He presents Himself not only figuratively but also personally as " I Jesus," and this makes a special appeal to our hearts. He is still all that the figures indicate, but the reality is Jesus Himself. It is remarkable that in Malachi we do get Moses and Elijah mentioned in the last chapter along with the Sun of Righteousness, and again these two men were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. There Peter made the mistake, as you will remember, of putting them almost on a level with His Master. They were only servants, who pursued their course for God, each in his day and generation; but Jesus was One who had stepped out of eternity to be there. No name can stand beside His.

In Revelation we have come to the end of the story. Moses and Elijah have disappeared. Peter and Paul and all the great names of every epoch have disappeared, and there remains—" I Jesus." He stands before us in all His excellent beauty and glory. He is the coming One, and he is coming quickly. Perhaps we have understood this word a little too much as referring to time and centuries whereas its primary meaning here may be that of swiftness—no gradual unfolding when He comes but swift as the flash of lightning! When He comes all will be brought to a triumphant conclusion.

When the whole church of God

is introduced by Him into the glory of the Father, every eye will be on the One who has brought them there. We shall have nothing to boast in; for see what failure has marred our earthly pathways. All the inhabitants of heaven will turn their eyes upon Jesus and say, He has done it! Not one of them is lost. Everyone in his place, and everyone brought home to glory according to the Father's purpose. Wonderful, ten thousand times wonderful is JESUS! So while we wait for Him we would surely say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The better rendering of the last verse is, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints." The last word of Malachi is "curse," but there is no curse as we close Revelation. The curse of the Old Testament is supplanted by the grace of the New. The grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ will of course be with all the saints and never fail, since it is absolute grace that takes us all to glory. But that grace also is to be consciously realized by us.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be with us all as we travel on to His coming through the present scenes of toil and trouble, strife and desert life; resting upon our spirits, forming our characters, moulding our thoughts, entering our hearts, and coming into expression in our lives. The whole church of God needs it. Every little gathering of the Lord's people needs it. The saints of God—you and I and all the rest of us—greatly need it. Blessed be God! it rests upon us, and is available for us in every conceivable emergency.

Oh! may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this fashion, indeed be with all the saints. Amen.

The Christian cannot desire that an individual enemy come under judgment; but he does desire that evil be set aside, and that the adversaries of good be made ashamed. He loves and desires righteousness, and that the oppressor of righteousness, and of the lowly and meek and just be put down, and put to shame.

Is it any comfort to you that the wisdom of God will soon be seen in the world, to the destruction of all that oppose it? Would you like to have the world thus sifted, and all iniquity purged out?

Would it rejoice your heart to hear Jesus was now coming? In fact, would you like Him to come now? Oh! how sad, how very sad it is, that, when He is just about to come, and His saints about to be made entirely like Him, they should be mixed up in any way with the workers of iniquity, practising their habits, pursuits, or satisfactions.

The Holy Ghost is not the earnest of love. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us. God loves us as He will love us in heaven. Of the inheritance the Holy Ghost is but an earnest. We do not yet possess anything of the inheritance. Then we shall be to the praise of His glory. The glory of His grace is already revealed.

THE ENERGY OF FAITH.

A. J. Pollock

IN three almost consecutive chapters we read of Abraham rising up early in the morning. This is indicative of the energy of faith, for his actions had to do with God's dealings with him.

He got up early in the morning when God called him to offer up his son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. He rose up early in the morning to view the ruined and smoking cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He rose up early in the morning when he turned Hagar and her son, Ishmael, out of doors.

The first instance is a figure of that which is **positive** in character; the second and third of that which is **negative**. The first speaks of that which is most thankfully to be received; the second and third of that which should be judged and refused.

The first brings before us in type and figure the great foundation fact of all our blessings being in the once-for-all, atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The second sets forth how the knowledge of this alters the believer's relation to the world. The third indicates in figure the rejection of the flesh, that sinful nature, which every believer carries within his own breast as long as he is in the body, or till the Lord comes.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning" (Gen. 22: 3). Was there ever in all the history of the world a more poignant sorrow than Abraham was called upon to endure? Not only the slaying of a son, but of one who stood in a very peculiar and unique relation with him. For

Isaac was the son miraculously born and divinely given, and in whose line lay the promised seed, which had as its glorious objective the coming into the world of the Son of God, in whom alone the hope of a sinful world is centred.

From the beginning Scripture furnishes impressive instances of sacrifices being offered as the only way of approach to God. The instance before us is very remarkable for it indicates that only a **human** sacrifice will suffice. If death is the penalty of sin then nothing short of death will meet it. And no sufficient sacrifice could be found among Adam's fallen race for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). There must be found one upon whom death had no claim. There was but One, God's eternal Son, His Only Begotten, who took upon Himself Manhood, so that as the sinless One He could undertake our case.

See the aged Abraham, his son, Isaac, bound on the sacrificial altar, the keen knife raised aloft to strike the fatal blow! What torrents of anguish would flow through the father's heart at that moment. Torn between obedience to God's command on the one hand, and deep, devoted love to his son on the other hand, we can but feebly conceive Abraham's feelings. Was there ever such a poignant position?

It foreshadowed, however, though dimly, a far more wonderful scene. Centuries later on the very spot where Abraham bound his son on the altar—Mount Moriah—Solomon

erected the gorgeous temple to Jehovah's praise. That temple in time was destroyed by the Babylonians, another rose in its place, and yet a third built by Herod, the Idumean king. Within sight of that temple on a hill called Calvary hung the Son of God on a cross of shame. The love of the Father to the Son from all eternity was far more wonderful than the love of Abraham to Isaac. Isaac went, not realizing what lay before him, for he asked his father a question, which must have torn his heart with exquisite anguish, "Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen. 22: 7). In the case of our Lord He knew full well what lay before Him. Witness His anticipation of the cross when in the Garden of Gethsemane, "He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" Luke 22: 44). Abraham was commanded by God to slay his son, and who was he to withstand such a call on his obedience? God **voluntarily** gave HIS Son to the death of the cross.

Vivid and pathetic to the last degree is the picture of Abraham travelling three days' journey on such an errand, yet it pales into utter insignificance before the scene of Calvary's cross. When at the last moment God held Abraham's uplifted hand, and stayed the actual slaying of Isaac, providing the ram, caught in the thicket by its horns as a substitute, Abraham rose to some understanding of its meaning for he called the place Jehovah-jireh (the Lord will provide).

Far down the centuries the answer came. "The Father loveth the Son,

and hath given all things into His hand" (John 3: 35). "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4: 14). "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3: 18). Witness in this scene of all scenes the answer to "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering"—to Jehovah-jireh. How true were our Lord's words to the cavilling Pharisees, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8: 56).

We receive with adoring thankfulness the atoning sacrifice of our Lord on the cross as the only means by which our sins can be forgiven and, wonder of wonders, we ourselves be brought to God in all His holiness and truth.

"Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (Gen. 19: 27, 28). These cities were so wicked that God in righteous government rained fire and brimstone upon them to their utter destruction. It is believed that their ruins lie many fathoms deep below the supersalted waters of that sea of desolation — the Dead Sea — still called by the local Arabs, the Sea of Lot.

Is this not a picture of what the world is coming to? What are the deserts of the world that crucified with contumely and shame the Divine Messenger of God's love and grace? Nay, further, look at Ger-

many today, which has cast itself loose from the Gospel Martin Luther preached and turned its back upon God's commandments, giving itself up to an orgy of bestial wickedness, of vaulting ambition, of the faithless breaking of the plighted word. Do not its cities smoke like a furnace today? Is not its proud capital a mass of shapeless rubble? If this is the reaping of the shameless sowing **today**, is it not a picture of what is yet to overtake a world that has cast out God's Son?

Just as Abraham rose up early in the morning to look on the smoking remains of the guilty cities of the plain, so should Christians arise in the energy of faith and see that this world-system has nothing in it for God, nor for themselves. May it be ours whole-heartedly to take up the position the Lord gives to His own when He twice affirmed, "They are not of the world, even as I am **not of the world**" (John 17: 14, 16). Say to yourself, Christian, again and again, "I am not of the world, even as my Lord is not." It is a good thing when from the outset the young Christian takes the definite stand of judging the world-system as doomed, and of himself as not belonging to it. When its doom comes we shall see how great has been our deliverance.

"Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away" (Gen. 21: 14). He did it not only at the bidding of his wife but with the sanction of God Himself, for He bid Abraham to hearken to his wife's voice. We can read the domestic

situation pretty clearly. The birth of Isaac caused special rejoicing in that household. The day came when Isaac was to be weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the occasion. Hagar must have known perfectly well the peculiar relationship in which Isaac stood to Abraham, and how he was miraculously given to the aged couple, so that in their seed through him all the nations of the world in due time should be blessed. Had she taught this to Ishmael all might have been well. Evidently she had not done so and Ishmael drank in his mother's spirit. Consequently there was no room in **Abraham's establishment for both Isaac and Ishmael**. So Ishmael with Hagar had to go. God in His wonderful goodness cared for mother and child, little though they deserved His goodness.

What then is meant to be conveyed to us by this incident? The answer is furnished in Galatians 4:28-31, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." Here in verse 30 the Spirit of God quotes Sarah's advice to Abraham as being Scripture; meaning, I suppose, that it was right in this case and had God's endorsement. It teaches us as to the energy of faith that refuses the flesh. It is possible to hold that the flesh is altogether evil and should be refused, and yet allow it a good

deal of place in our lives. We have known brethren give much place to the flesh in endeavouring to uphold what they think is the truth. It is when we are tested that we find whether we do really judge and refuse the flesh.

God promised Abraham a child. Because the fulfilment was delayed somewhat Sarah got impatient and sought to get the blessing by natural means, and so Hagar became the mother of Ishmael. Similar conduct is rampant today in Christendom as men seek to get the blessing of the Lord by the cultivation of the flesh, only ending in failure and disappointment. There is the flesh—the old sinful nature—born in every one of us, and the new nature—that inner man with spiritual life—communicated by the Spirit of God; and it has often been said that neither of these natures can be improved, but from very different reasons.

The old nature is so bad that it cannot be improved; it is judged

and set aside by God Himself in the death of Christ. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3). The new nature cannot be improved because it is so perfect. So we find it is said of the believer looked at in relation to this new nature, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3: 9). We know how believers alas! do sin, but sin proceeds from the flesh. The new nature cannot sin, for every activity of that life is pleasing to God.

So we may well learn this lesson. Though Abraham turned Hagar and Ishmael out of doors, we carry the flesh within us as long as we are in these mortal bodies. We shall answer to this lesson by having a judgment as to the incorrigible nature of the flesh, in the light of the cross of Christ, and then seeking so to walk in the power of the Spirit of God as to know practical deliverance from its bondage.

Perhaps we have been often surprised at grievous falls in ourselves or others; but if we fail to watch against the flesh, it is not really at all surprising such should be the result. Habitual faithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of not falling.

Paul was not puffed up when he was in God's presence, caught up to the third heaven; but, after he had been there, he needed a thorn in the flesh lest he should be exalted above measure. He is never proud in God's presence, and, only when it is really there, is it really in its right place, for when out of it the flesh turns everything into mischief.

We get into mischief just when we get into independence of God. And, therefore, it is that we so often see a Christian have a fall, after a season of great joy. Why? Because his joy has taken him away from dependence upon God.

FAITH OR CIRCUMSTANCES —WHICH?

J. Houston

MANY young Christians have been called away from godly homes, and from assemblies in which they have had happy fellowship, to face the temptations and hardships of life in the Forces. Others, taken from the same congenial surroundings, have been dispersed in various parts of the country, in order to give their time and talent to war-work. This change has come to all as a great trial of faith. To some, it has proved fatal, in that they have drifted into the world, having failed to bear witness to their Lord and Master. To others, it has turned out beneficial, a kind of blessing in disguise, for they have been strengthened to bear a bold front to the devil's wiles and assaults, and have signally overcome.

Why should some fail, and others triumph, when all are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, and are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit? Is it that some have the smile of fortune upon them, while others have the frown of adversity upon them? In speaking of God's children, and what belongs to faith, we cannot admit, not even in thought, the idea of smiling fortune, or frowning adversity. We have to view things in an entirely different way from the blind, unbelieving and superstitious world.

Environment plays a large part in the formation of character. Young Christians may be so congenially circumstanced, that they are shut off from the outside world, and have little, or nothing, of its temptations

and hardships to face. This does not tend to fit them for the world's onslaught and deceit when these come upon them. Like hot-house plants, when transplanted outside, they are in great danger of succumbing to the rigours of wind and storm.

On the other hand, when young Christians are brought up in surroundings that are uncongenial and hard to bear, where they have learned lessons of self-sacrifice and care for others, and where hardship and toil have been their daily lot, they have the advantage of an education that may well fit them to face the world and its evil, and triumph in their witness for Christ. Rough seas make good sailors; and self-sacrifice and hardship make good Christians.

While this is true, viewed in the ordinary and natural way of judging the problem, there is another consideration which completely changes the outlook, and brings in a principle that rises above circumstances, as the sun above the clouds. It is the principle of faith, the Christian's only true principle of life. "The just," says Scripture, "shall live by his faith," and not by his circumstances. It matters nothing whether a Christian is born and reared in a palace, or a cave; whether he possesses the riches and wisdom of a Solomon, or the poverty and illiteracy of a peasant, whether he is a king, or a subject; whether he is a master, or a slave. Everything that is in the sphere of mere circumstance counts for nothing, where

faith, as a principle of life, is concerned. We read of brilliant examples of faith in high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, masters and slaves. When this heavenly gem, priceless and precious, glorious and pure, is in the life as its inspiring, enlightening, strengthening and adorning principle, then all is well, come what may. Those who possess it will rise over circumstances, in whatever form life may present them, and triumph over death itself with the triumph of God.

When Daniel was transported from Jerusalem to Babylon, he was removed by a change of circumstances from all the outward protection he had as a godly Jew, and plunged into a new environment where all the horrors of a voluptuous, oriental court stood before him, presenting an almost irresistible temptation which might have carried him away from his integrity and piety. No saint could have been more effectually taken from one extreme, and cast into another extreme, than he was when taken captive. Jerusalem and Babylon stood apart from each other like the poles; that is, viewing the former as God's centre of blessing for His people, and the latter as a centre of idolatry and pagan orgies. Outward protection afforded him no security against temptation, for he was far beyond the reach of its beneficial influences. The memory of godly parents, saintly home, and wise counsellors may have been with him, but it was only their **memory**, and not their **presence**. He had, however, what stood him in good stead then, and has made him famous since, that was deep-rooted conviction of what was right and purpose af heart to carry

it out. This was simply his faith. He knew **by experience** what many only know **by doctrine**, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5: 4).

This faith did not simply strengthen him against the rude and subtle temptations he had before him in Babylon, it gave him clear light as to the will of God in his being there, so that he not only acted with fortitude in refusing the evil, but knew how to do that which would redound to God's glory, and that even in his captivity. He would not defile himself with Babylonian food. He was a Jew, and defilement to him meant the forfeiture of his privileges as a Jew. And though in the government of God he found himself in circumstances that made it impossible for him to enjoy the privileges of the temple at Jerusalem, he was determined he would not forfeit his purity of living by contaminating himself with pagan licentiousness. The principle, "When in Rome do as Rome does," did not operate in him. From the very beginning he made up his mind he would not, on any consideration whatsoever, accommodate himself by easy-going conventionality, or servile compromise, to the overtures of his captors. Full well he knew he was a captive of men, but he also knew he was a servant of God; and in the light of the former, he acted in the spirit of the latter—in other words, he rendered to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. A more illustrious example of unfeigned faith, excellency of character, purity of life, fidelity to truth, it would be difficult to find. We might well say, "Dare to be a Daniel!"

When Peter was about to be sifted in temptation, the Lord prayed for him that his faith might not fail. We do well today, if we would be of real service to our young brethren who

are in trial, to pray continually that their faith might not fail, but rather grow exceedingly under the trial as did the faith of the early believers in Thessalonica.

YOUNG TIMOTHY.

Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity (I Tim. 4: 12).

TIMOTHY'S youth is the subject of frequent comment, and it may be both interesting and profitable if we glean from the writings of Paul some idea as to what kind of youth he was. Writing to the Corinthians the apostle says of him "He worketh the work of the Lord as I also do" (I Cor. 16: 10), and to the Philippians he says of him "As a son with the father he hath served with me in the gospel" and, "I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:20-22). What zeal in the gospel, and what care for the saints! Then, writing to Timothy himself, Paul addresses him as "Servant of the Lord," and "Man of God," a term found frequently in the Old Testament, but applied specifically to Timothy alone in the New. Further, he associates Timothy with himself in the writing of six of his epistles, and also refers to his tears; tears, let it be said, not because of his own hard lot, but occasioned by his devotedness to the Lord, and His interests.

To this man, then, who is marked by such zeal, care, and devotedness, are the words written "Let no man despise thy youth." The passage

clearly means, not that Timothy was to resent any affront or slight that might be offered him, but rather that his whole deportment was to be such that no one should be able to despise him, young man though he was. What Timothy's age was when Paul wrote those words to him, we are not told, but he certainly was not a youth in the sense in which the term is commonly used. The above description is more that of the veteran than the recruit. Moreover, the instructions given to Timothy could not apply to the years of his life that were past, but naturally to those that were yet to come, so that while the epistles written to him must ever have a special voice to young men, even the most advanced will find great profit from a close study of them.

What a comfort this young man, who had mingled his tears with those of Paul, must have been to the aged apostle, the more so as being his own child in the faith, and with what terms of affection he addresses him; and how natural that, having finished his course, and being on the eve of departing to be with Christ, he should write to him his last epistle. And what a soul-stirring epistle it is! Failure had come in,

and still greater failure was predicted, but Timothy is referred to the eternal purpose and sovereign grace of God, which had been made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has annulled death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel, so that His heart might be strengthened, and filled with absolute confidence in God, knowing that not one thought of His could by any means fail, or fall to the ground, but that all should be realized and brought to perfect fruition.

Would this lead to inactivity? No, indeed. The apostle says "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2: 10), and he exhorts Timothy to stir up the gift which is in him, and not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. The testimony and the gospel seemed to be one and the same thing, so that the subject of the testimony was Christ, of whom no one need be ashamed. By His death on the cross for us, he has met all the righteous claims of God's throne, and thus gives peace to the guilty conscience, and personally he is the joy and rejoicing of the heart of God, and if He fills God's heart, surely He is infinitely more than enough to satisfy all the deep longings of ours. "I am not ashamed" says the apostle, and Onesiphorus was not ashamed. "Be not thou, therefore, ashamed . . . but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God."

As to the many forms of evil in Christendom, the instructions are clear and emphatic, "Flee,"

"Shun," "Avoid," "Withdraw," "Turn away," "Depart from," "Purge himself from." Thank God, young men at least are not called on to rise up and do battle against every form of evil, but rather to give them a wide berth, and to concentrate on the preaching. Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Leave the strife to them. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." Gentleness, patience, and meekness. How this reminds us of the Lord Himself, "He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench" (Matt. 12: 20-20).

With what a solemn charge does the last chapter open. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." Sunday and week day, in meeting room and market place, whenever and wherever opportunity occurs—"Preach the word." "Do the work of an evangelist"—where? In the midst of this corrupt profession that has sprung up, and is found all around. What a place the preaching had in the mind of the Apostle when writing this, his farewell epistle. Finally, he tells us that when all had forsaken him, the Lord stood by and strengthened him. Why? "That by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear," but, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole.

(Chapter 20: 1-20)

IN our Gospel Mary Magdalene only appears in connection with the closing scenes. She was amongst the last standing by the cross and amongst the first at the sepulchre on the resurrection day. It is not easy to piece together the records of the four Evangelists so as to make out the historic sequence of events, but it would almost appear that, having come with other women very early in the morning, she ran off by herself to inform Peter and John that the sepulchre was open and empty and then returned to its vicinity.

The other women are not mentioned here at all. Our thoughts are concentrated on her, to lead us up to the spiritual instruction conveyed through her actions and by means of her lips.

That the Lord was the supreme and absorbing Object before her is quite evident from her words to the Apostles, as recorded in verse 2. Her choice of the two to whom she went is remarkable for Peter had so grievously sinned just before. Still, he did love the Lord, as the next chapter records, and John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. On their side love may have been somewhat eclipsed for the moment, but it was there, and Mary, in whom it was burning brightly, knew it.

It was declared, moreover, by the way they responded to the announcement Mary brought. It set their hearts and feet in motion. They ran with eager haste and John outran Peter. The natural explanation

doubtless was that he was the younger man; but there was also a spiritual explanation. John was more deeply impressed by the Lord's love for him, as he showed by the way he spoke of himself, whilst Peter was under the cloud of having trusted in his own love for the Lord, which, when tested, broke down in such a scandalous and public way. He who is most drawn by the love of Christ, runs the fastest. It was a case of, "Draw me, we will run after Thee" (Song of Sol. 1: 4).

Still Peter, in spite of his disgraceful failure, did run and, arrived at the sepulchre, was the bolder of the two and went right inside. This led John to join him and thus there were two witnesses to the fact that the linen clothes in which the sacred body had been enfolded were not lying in disorder but rather in such fashion as to suggest that, far from the body having been removed by others, Jesus had risen from death in such a condition that the grave clothes were wholly undisturbed. Verse 19 of our chapter shows that in His resurrection body closed doors were no impediment to our Lord, so doubtless the clothes similarly were left just as they were.

In verse 8, John speaks for himself—he believed, though it was only accepting the evidence of his eyes. Peter is not mentioned, for faith, though it may be there, is not active when he soul is under the dark cloud of failure and sin, and is as yet un-restored. But though John believed his faith was of an unintelligent kind,

for he, as much as the rest, was not yet illuminated by an understanding of the Scripture. Had he been he would have known the Christ must rise from the dead (see, Acts 17: 3), which would have explained everything. So though there was faith there was also ignorance, and this accounts for what we read in verse 10. The example set by Peter and John early in the morning of the resurrection day was followed in the afternoon by Cleopas and his companion as recorded in Luke 24.

The conduct of Mary stands out in bright contrast to all the rest. The two disciples had left for their home convinced that the body of Jesus was not there. Mary was equally convinced but she left her home to linger at the sepulchre, weeping in her sense of utter desolation. They knew the Lord as One who had called them from boats and nets. She knew Him as One who had delivered her from the grip of seven demons. It had been a mighty deliverance and she loved much. To her two angels appeared and there is no record of her having been afraid of their presence.

This is remarkable since in the other Gospels fear is mentioned in connection with each appearance. Her case evidently illustrates how an overpowering affection can drive out of the heart every other emotion. Her reply to the question of the angels showed how Jesus, whom she called "My Lord," monopolized the whole range of her thoughts. She answered as though meeting with angels were an everyday occurrence. In seeking her Lord she had lost the trail, and she seems to have taken it for granted that they were as much

preoccupied with the matter as she was herself. But evidently as yet no thought of His resurrection had crossed her mind. She only thought of others removing His body. She was seeking a dead Christ.

At that moment the risen Lord intervened and she turned herself back from the angels to find Him standing there, yet she did not recognize Him. The same feature characterized His meeting with the two disciples going to Emmaus that afternoon, and the rest of the disciples in the upper room that evening. It was the same Jesus but with a difference owing to His being clothed in a risen body—risen, though not yet glorified—hence they did not identify Him at once. She mistook Him for the gardener. He, the Great Shepherd risen from the dead, knew well that here was one of His sheep thoroughly devoted to Him, seeking only Himself and weeping because she knew not where to find Him.

In the simple utterance of her name He revealed Himself to her and she instantly responded to Him as her Master. All that is recorded, however, in verses 11-15, shows that she was seeking His body as dead, and hence her first thought on finding Him alive was doubtless that of a resumption of associations on the old basis, which had prevailed in "the days of His flesh." This it is which accounts for the Lord's opening word to her, "Touch Me not." In view of the new relationship which He was about to announce to her, and through her to the other disciples, He showed her in this decisive way that relations could not be resumed just as they were before. His death and resurrec-

tion had changed everything. He was no less a Man than he was before He died, yet having laid down His life, He had taken it again in a new state and condition suited to the heavens into which He was about to ascend. Hence relations with Him must be on a new basis.

The Lord added the words, "for I am not yet ascended to My Father," to His prohibition. Thus He evidently implied that when He was ascended to His Father Mary was to be in "touch" with Him. His ascension to the Father involved the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost on the disciples, as has been made abundantly clear in this Gospel—see, 7: 39; 14: 16; 15: 26; 16: 13. When, at Pentecost, Mary, along with the others, was filled with the Holy Spirit, she found herself in her spirit brought into a far more intimate touch with her risen Lord than she had ever experienced in the days of His flesh.

Doubtless the Apostles were privileged far beyond ourselves in the way they "heard," "saw," "looked upon," "handled of the Word of life" (1 John 1: 1). Yet while they were walking with Him in Palestine the real significance of what they observed was obscure to them. As chapter 14: 17, 20, has shown us, it was only when they had the indwelling of the Spirit that they knew that they were in Him and He in them—His life theirs and a new relationship established. Now we too have the Spirit of God, so though the objective manifestation has reached us not directly as it did with the Apostles but only through their inspired writings, the subjective realization may be ours in full meas-

ure. We do well to ponder this matter very deeply.

A further thing lies in this great verse. Jesus calls the disciples, "My brethren." They had previously been designated, "His own," (13: 1), and He had called them, "My friends" (15: 14), but neither of these indicates **relationship** in the same way as "My brethren." We should learn from this that He has established the relationship as the Risen One, who has passed through death and triumphed over it. It exists not by virtue of His incarnation but in the power of His resurrection. He truly took part in "flesh and blood," and laid hold on "the seed of Abraham," with a view to the suffering of death. Having tasted death for every man, and been made perfect through sufferings, He became the Captain of our salvation, and thus as the Sanctifier He acknowledges those whom He sanctifies as His brethren. This is brought before us in Hebrews 2: 9-16. By incarnation He came to our side, that in His perfect and spotless Manhood He might take up our case. Having taken it up, and by His death and resurrection wrought deliverance for us, He lifts us to His side in identification with Him in risen life. Thus it is that the relationship lies not in incarnation but in resurrection. This, too, is a deeply important point to remember.

The message Mary was to convey to the other disciples announced to them their new relationship with God and not only in regard to Himself. His Father is our Father, His God is our God. He places us in His own relation to God but of course in a subsidiary way. Our relation-

ship with God springs out of His, and out of our relations with Him. He did not say, "our" Father and God, as though He and we were on the same level. This we must carefully note, for His full pre-eminence must always be acknowledged with thankfulness. Though He speaks of us as, "My brethren," we never find Him spoken of as "our Brother," nor even as, "our Elder Brother," in the Scriptures. Such terms would tend to our thinking of Him as though He came down to our side rather than His lifting us to His side. They would also obscure His pre-eminent position.

In His wonderful earthly life the Lord Jesus had revealed the Father, for the Father had dwelt in Him, so that He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." This we saw when we considered chapter 14. He had also taught the disciples to look up to God as their "Heavenly Father," in connection with all their needs and circumstances in this world, as the other Gospels show, but a fuller revelation comes to light here. We do not lose the blessing and benefit of the earlier revelation, any more than we do of the revelation of Him as the Almighty or as Jehovah; but we need to understand and rejoice in the knowledge of God as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1: 3 and 1 Pet. 1: 3). Our Lord's words to Mary were the first intimation of this fuller and higher relationship, and once it had come to light the epistles of the New Testament present God to us in that way. He is indeed a "Heavenly Father"

to us in all the vicissitudes of this life but let us not treat this as though it were everything. Our proper relationship with God as Christians is on this higher basis.

Mary Magdalene — the woman with the loving responsive heart — was the first to hear these wonderful things, and she became the messenger of them to all of us. She could testify that she had seen the Lord and that He had made these communications to her, and through her to the rest.

Later in the day the Lord appeared to Simon Peter and to Cleopas and his companion journeying to Emmaus, though John makes no mention of these manifestations. It is clear, however, from the other Gospels that as the resurrection day advanced the disciples had two witnesses to His resurrection — Mary and Peter — and that their testimony brought them together in Jerusalem as the eventide drew on. When assembled, Cleopas and his friend came amongst them, thus furnishing them with a third and fourth witness. Then, when the doors were shut, Jesus Himself stood in their midst, identifying Himself by His pierced hands and side, and filling their hearts with gladness.

The doors had been shut for fear of the Jews. His presence as risen caused joy to intervene on their fear. Even so an element was still lacking, which could only be supplied by the filling of the Spirit of God. On the day of Pentecost fear was swallowed up entirely, and they were filled with boldness coupled with power.

When modern infidelity would exalt man, it simply exalts self. Christianity exalts man even to divine glory, and divine excellency, but it sets aside self wholly.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON.

(I Corinthians 1: 9)

WE have all been called into one fellowship, and that fellowship is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Epistle that unfolds it for us is the second of Paul's Epistles as given to us in the Scriptures. There is divine ordering in that. In Romans we are put right with God, and following on that comes Christian fellowship, we are put right with one another. First, the basis of everything laid in righteousness, that is Romans, and then each one of us brought upon that righteous basis to be together in holy, happy fellowship, according to the truth.

This fellowship is the fellowship of God's Son. We shall not understand its character and blessedness unless we consider and understand Him, for being His fellowship it must take its character from Him.

This fellowship could not be in Old Testament days, for God's Son had not been revealed, and men, even men of God, broke down and failed; there were none of them who could be the centre of a fellowship according to God's mind. We often turn back and think of them, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon—all of them broke down somewhere. God could form no fellowship out of what they were. But when God's Son came, there was a Person here who was altogether for God, who never broke down, fulfilling the will of God in all His ways. In Him the Father's will was done on earth; and if we would know what man is according to the thought of God, we must study Him.

But our Lord was alone on this earth. In His lifetime He trod a solitary path. Nobody shared His delight in His Father's will. There was no one to enter into His feelings. Nor could there be, unless He imparted His own life to them. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He went into death that we might live in His life, and that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, and found a fellowship, the life and power and principles of which are heavenly and not of the world. What could be greater than this? It is not the fellowship of the noble, or the wise or the great. We are lifted above men as we know them, and above angels also, up into the fellowship of God's Son.

We cannot enter into it in its power and blessedness unless we come under His influence. So often do we make it an ecclesiastical system and thereby spoil it, and hedge it round with our rules and regulations, and limit it to our own poor notions. It is not our fellowship, but the fellowship of God's Son, and, therefore, the first thought is that of **relationship**. We are brought into that blessed relationship He stands in, and the first thought in that relationship is **love**. The Father loveth the Son, and the Son responds to the love without reserve. That, we should all most readily accept. But is there not another thought in it? You get it illustrated in the way Paul speaks of Timothy. He spoke of Timothy as "My son," and then you remem-

ber he said of him, "As a son with the father he hath served with me in the Gospel." Timothy was in full accord with Paul, there was oneness of mind and thought, so that Paul's service could be continued by him.

Now it is God's purpose that Christ should be continued here, and He has called us to be in this fellowship so that here on earth now, there should be something in accord with the mind of God. Grace has wrought in us with this end in view, and we have been sanctified in Christ Jesus. But we must come under subjection to Him. Unless we are subject to Him, of course, we are going our own way—each doing what he thinks right, and there will be no unity or fellowship but if we know what it is to be subject to the Lord, each one of us, then everything becomes simple.

It is instructive, in this epistle to the Corinthians, to see how the Lordship of Christ is pressed. We have the Lord's Table in chapter 10. We have the Lord's Supper in chapter 11. We have the Lord as the one Administrator in the 12th, and the 14th closes with, "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." We must own His Lordship. But how may we know where and how He will direct us? We get it in the Word, the things written therein are the commandments of the Lord. Also, having received the Spirit and the divine nature, we have spiritual sensibilities which answer to the Word of the Lord, if we are in a good spiritual state and not carnal like the

Corinthians. Blessed indeed it is when we find ourselves desiring, not only to hear the Word, but to do it. From Him we may draw all grace and guidance we need in this fellowship which is His.

The first three chapters of 1 Corinthians are helpful. In chapter 1 towards the end, we get the cross of Christ, the basis upon which we stand in this blessed fellowship to which God has called us. The cross removes all antagonistic to this fellowship. The cross is the condemnation and removal of all that will not do for God. So we find no flesh should glory in His presence. Flesh brings in discord, for its root principle is self-exaltation, it glories in its own distinctions and powers, every man against another. It does not give glory to God, it wants it all for itself. But we are to glory in the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is that in which we see the power and wisdom of God, and by the cross God has brought to an end the wisdom of the wise and everything in which man can boast. One way in which the flesh showed itself at Corinth was in the formation of parties and the boasting in leaders, and this is a subtle snare, more destructive to the fellowship than what is more flagrant and gross.

We must glory in the Lord: then, with one heart and voice, we show what fellowship is. And that we might glory in Him, we are told what He is made unto us. God has made Him to be to us, who are in Him and are of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Everything we need is in Christ. Blessed things these are, they cover everything we need as

before God. The cross of Christ is the basis of it all. It brings us together on common ground. Suppose the most learned man in the land comes into this fellowship, he comes in the same way as the most illiterate man, and the cross is the end of all he can boast in as of the flesh. And he gets something better than he can bring. We are now in something greater and better and more glorious than the best man has got. It is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and He is the Administrator to us of what God is as well as the pattern to us of what the fellowship is.

Then the power comes out in chapter 2. The Spirit has been given, and in connection with the Spirit of God, we have the subject matter of our fellowship — the Spirit of God has come to show unto us the things of God; these things are not understood by the natural man, the natural man understandeth not the things of God. He cannot enter into this fellowship. That is why we have so much modernism today. It is the natural man boastfully claiming that he can find out the things of God. Man thinks he can, by searching, find out God, so does not receive God's revelation. He will not take the place of a little child and acknowledge that God must reveal Himself, if he is to know God.

It is not here man's mind investigating. He has his own sphere in which he may pursue his investigations, but in the sphere of God's things there must be revelation, and the Spirit of God reveals to us what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and what has never entered into the heart of man. But these things, the

things that God hath prepared for those that love Him He reveals to us by His Spirit, for "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And the power of the fellowship, and the intelligence by which we understand the substance of it, is in the Spirit of God, while the cross of Christ is the basis of it.

When we come to chapter 3, we find it is all for God. Ye are God's building: Ye are God's husbandry: Ye are God's temple. Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's. What a blessed thing to know that the Son of God was here and He was all for God! What joy, what delight, what wealth for God in that blessed life! And the devil was determined to get rid of it and he worked upon men until they crucified Him. Did the devil think he had banished from this world everything for God? I Corinthians 3 shows us there is now a continuation in the saints of God, brought into this fellowship that God might have His delight in us. "Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

A spiritual condition is necessary on our part if we are to live and act together in this fellowship, as partners together in the things of God. We cannot be in concert with one another unless we are in concert with God, and we cannot be in concert with God unless we are subject to the Lord. His mind must control us. As subject to the Lord we shall know the blessedness and the joy of the fellowship into which we have been called.

We look on Christendom and see numberless fellowships and much failure, and we are apt to get dis-

couraged, to have the heart taken out of us, and say, Well, is it any use any longer seeking to walk in fellowship according to the truth? But we have this for our confidence and encouragement that GOD IS FAITHFUL. We have failed: we have broken down, and with shame of face we have to confess that breakdown is everywhere, but God is faithful, and He abides today with

His mighty resources in Jesus Christ our Lord. We may turn to Him and find His resources to be enough for us. He has not abandoned His present purpose for us, and we should not abandon it either.

The Lord grant that we may be content to learn of Him, God's Son, and be subject to Him, Jesus Christ our Lord, and then we shall walk together in His fellowship.

AIMING HIGH.

J. Houston

THE world is a place in which ambition plays an important part. Men generally are ambitious, if they are energetic and industrious at all. From the youngest to the oldest, this spirit of aiming high possesses them, and they are, to a large extent, governed by it. They are like mountaineers. They scale heights, only to find others before them, and others still higher after these, and so they mount up. The rich are ambitious for more riches; the learned for more learning; the powerful for more power. Never do they seem to arrive at that point, where they can say, "It is enough."

One is reminded of the Book of Ecclesiastes, in which this spirit is strikingly portrayed. The writer produces glowing pictures of man's ambition in riches, learning and power, and entertains the reader with charming examples of his achievements. When, however, what seems to be the summit of this ambition is reached, he cries out, in a spirit of disappointment, and perhaps even disgust, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." If the writer had been a failure in this race of life,

a kind of candidate who would have been, but could not be, a hero amongst his fellow-men, the reader might have thought that he was like the fox with the sour grapes. It is a subtlety of the human heart for one to decry in word, what one cannot achieve with merit. This was not so with the writer. He was the richest, wisest and most powerful man that ever lived. Such was king Solomon.

There is an expression in the book which gives the clue. The king wrote of all that is done "under the sun." He evidently did not know anything "above the sun." His ambition was confined to the lower sphere. In it, he found all things in a sort of entanglement which defied disentanglement—problems that had no solution, worries that had no end, hopes that had no fulfilment. Things, we may observe, have not changed in this year of grace from what they were when Solomon wrote his book. Hence the application.

"Under the sun" describes a sphere in which ambition ends in vanity. We read of rich fools, and

wise fools, and those that assume power to their own destruction. And if man's ambitions, his aiming high, does not go out of this sphere, then he might think, like others, including Solomon, that an untimely birth would have been more desirable. Why come into the world, where nothing is gained and all is left? Naked man comes into it, and naked he goes out of it. His brief span of years is swifter than the weaver's shuttle. His riches, learning, power, all flee from him, "forgotten as a dream at break of day." Even his thoughts perish the day he expires. The place where he lived "shall know him no more." Such is man's life "under the sun."

There is a sphere "above the sun," a heavenly one, and happy are they who aim at it, and reach out toward it. From the beginning of the world, till the present time, there have been those, who have forsaken all on earth, riches, learning and power, and have aimed at this goal, namely, their calling to heaven. They have confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, and that heaven was their home. They looked above the fleeting things of time, cared nothing for this world's goods and ambitious projects, and were content to take the outside place as despised and rejected of men. They form a great cloud of witnesses, and we have their example to stimulate us in that same path of faith (See, Heb. 11).

Over and above their illustrious example, we have the life of our blessed Lord. He came from heaven, and went back to heaven. He lived His life on earth a heavenly Man—He was "the Son of Man which is

in heaven" (John 3: 13). He told us what is in heaven, and the way to heaven. And in order that we might be in heaven with Him, in all His glory, He died for us on Calvary, to take all our sins away, sins that would for ever have kept us out of heaven. What love was His!

Now that He is in heaven, on the Father's throne, our hearts go out to Him, and we long to be with Him. The world gave Him a manger for His birth, and a cross for His death, and hated Him in His pure and holy life, and that without a cause. Can we stoop to this world's vain pleasures, pursuits, riches and glory, when Christ was put to death in it, so ignominiously? The world is guilty of His death, stained with His blood, and has to answer for all this to God in the great day of reckoning. This ponderous fact ought to weigh with us in our decision as to leaving the world, and making heaven the object of our pursuit, where Christ is now, to whom we are going, and with whom we are to spend all eternity. How fitting and stimulating are the words, "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12: 1, 2). This is our aim, our goal, our end, and how high it is!

When the Apostle Paul was converted, on the way to Damascus, he saw "a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun" (See,

Acts 26). It was from Jesus, the One whom he was persecuting, in his blind unbelief. We speak of having our eyes opened to certain realities in life. Was there ever an eye-opener to any man, like that to Paul, to see for himself a "light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun"? The effect was instant conversion—a complete turning round from darkness to light, from death to life, from earth to heaven. From the day of his conversion till the day of his death, his life was one long devoted pursuit of the object he saw in heaven, namely, his Lord and Saviour, in heavenly glory. "That I may win Christ"

were his own words, and words that show the object of his life. This is aiming high, and it is what we all, as Christians, should aim at. Everything under this aim, short of this purpose, is unworthy of a Christian, for we are all called to glory with Christ where He is. And, mark it well, our aim will determine everything as to our walk. Oh, to be right in our aim! We have not reached the goal, but we are aiming at it, and going to it.

"That way is upward still,
Where life and glory are;
Our rest's above, in perfect love
The glory we shall share."

A PROVISION FOR THE WILDERNESS

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE instructions given by Moses for the slaying of the Red Heifer, as recorded in Numbers 19, are essentially a provision for the wilderness, and as such are typically full of instruction to Christians in this dispensation. The wilderness is where we contract defilement, and God makes gracious provision for this.

A red heifer, a female, without spot, with no blemish, and upon which never came yoke was to be chosen. This sets forth our adorable Lord in a remarkable way. When it is a sacrifice setting forth directly the death of Christ in an immediate sacrificial sense, we generally find the offering is a male. When it is a female it has more a subsidiary aspect, and not the bold, broad aspect such as is presented by the burnt offering and sin offering.

Its colour was to be red, as if to

say, Do not forget that every blessing whether it be the great atonement itself or the consequences flowing therefrom, is the result of **the death of Christ**—His atoning death, with which we have to do.

Further it had to be without spot and without blemish—no outward or inward deficiency. How true this is of our Lord, "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2: 22). No one could accuse Him of sin in deed or word. Many a man sins in word, where he may refrain from sinful deed, many a man refrains from outward acts of sin, whose mind and thoughts, held from being translated into action, are sinful and evil. "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3: 5); "Who knew no sin;" (2 Cor. 5: 21), proves that our Lord was as pure inwardly as He was irreproachable outwardly. If there had been any flaw in Him outwardly

or inwardly He could not have been our Saviour, nor, in the way we are considering, furnish any provision **and help for His people as they travel** in their wilderness journey.

This red heifer had to be taken outside the camp and slain in the presence of Eleazar, the High Priest. The great sacrifices detailed to us in **Leviticus 1-7** were all slain at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, but here it is slain outside the camp. This shows that what we are considering flows from and is in virtue of, the atoning death of Christ yet at the same time, the blood of the red heifer is sprinkled **seven times** before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, identifying it in measure with the great offerings of **Leviticus 1-7**. We can differentiate between offering and offering, but we cannot divorce one from the other, because in the Antitype we have the one grand sacrifice of our Lord on the cross, fulfilling all the great types of Exodus and Leviticus, which we have just touched on.

The heifer was burned sacrificially—her skin, her flesh, her blood, with her dung. In other words, the judgment on our Lord, all His deep unfathomable sufferings on the cross, fell upon Him not of His own account, for He “offered Himself **without spot to God**,” “through the eternal Spirit” (**Heb. 9: 14**). Never did He stand higher in the favour of God, than when He took our place on the cross. The judgment passed upon Him was that which the sinner merited. That the sinner might have the offer of pardon and forgiveness, He endured the cross, He made full atonement for sin.

The skin stands for the outward

adornment and beauty of the animal, and sets forth that the best of man in the flesh, that which men boast in, comes under the stern judgment of sin.

All had to come under judgment, for not only the skin, the outward beauty, but the flesh and blood, standing for the sinner in his sins, and the dung, typifying the worst of man as the skin typifies the best—all has to come under the judgment of God at the cross.

Cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet were flung into the burning—cedar wood, the noblest tree in creation, the hyssop, the meanest of weeds, setting forth that man at his best estate must come to an end in the cross of Christ, as well as man in his lowest estate. Solomon “spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall” (**I Kings 4: 33**), thus ranging from the loftiest to the meanest. Scarlet, too was flung into the burning—scarlet, the kingly colour, speaking of worldly pomp and glory.

It reminds us of that great Christian lady, Countess de Crudener, who dared to deal faithfully with the soul of the Czar Alexander, saying, “Sire, if you come to God as the Czar of all the Russians, you will get nothing, but if you come as a guilty undeserving sinner, trusting the Saviour, who died for you, you will get all the blessings of the Gospel.”

Once the red heifer was thus burned, its ashes were kept in a clean place. The holiness of God is thus emphasised. The priest, who superintended the burning; the man, who

did the actual burning; the man who gathered up the ashes, had all to wash their clothes, and be unclean till the even. God would thus impress His holiness upon all who had to do with Himself through sacrifice.

Now the ashes were available for uncleanness. If any man touched a dead body, or a death occurred in a tent all in the tent became unclean, and even open vessels were unclean. Touching a dead body slain by the sword in the open fields, or a bone of a man, or a grave, would render a person unclean for seven days.

In order that there might be cleansing for such the ashes of the burnt heifer were to be put in a vessel with running water. Water typically is ever a symbol of the Word of God, **running** water, of the Word of God applied in **living power** to the soul. This in conjunction with the ashes typically sets forth the Spirit of God, applying the meaning of the death of Christ under the judgment of God in living power through the Word of God, thus effecting cleansing from wilderness defilement.

A clean person had to take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the person or thing

that was to be cleansed. This had to be repeated on the third day, and again on the seventh day. Then on the seventh day the defiled person had to purify himself, wash his clothes, bathe himself in water, and in the even he would be ceremonially clean.

The hyssop, the meanest of herbs, sets forth **repentance**. To come to the Scriptures with pride, clad as it were in scarlet, will never do. There must be **humility**. Further, this type shows that defilement, is not so easily removed, when the first sprinkling does not suffice, nor the second on the third day, but only the third on the seventh day, and that not without washing of clothes, and bathing in water and then not till the even was reached. Meditating on this chapter we get a striking lesson as to the holiness needed with those who have to do with God. We get also a deep sense of the value of the atoning death of our adorable Lord, whether in its primary effects when we first came to the Lord as guilty sinners seeking forgiveness of sins; or in this secondary way when as saints we seek to answer to God's holiness in our practical everyday life in this defiling world.

From broken alabaster
Was deathless fragrance shed,
The spikenard flowed the faster
Upon the Saviour's head.
No shattered box of ointment
We ever need regret,
For out of disappointment,
Flowed sweetest odours yet.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED, GLORIFIED, SATISFIED, MAGNIFIED.

I. Fleming

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

THE cross of Christ is our great lesson-book. There the glory of God has been maintained, while His heart of love has been manifested. There the perfect obedience of Christ, even unto the death of the cross has been shown. There the malice of Satan has been declared and his defeat determined. There the wickedness of fallen man, urged on by Satan, has been brought to light. There the world, Satan's **subtle snare and system**, has been judged. Truly there "the thoughts of many hearts" have been revealed. The cross measures all, revealing in fullest light the nature of each and all.

Generally the first view of the cross by the awakened sinner, who turns in faith to Christ, is that He, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2: 24). Blessed indeed is that view. The danger to be feared is that the believer should limit his thoughts of the cross to this.

All is **infinite** where the **infinite God** is concerned. Yet, remembering this, we may look at the subject relatively. So doing, we may come to see that our blessing is perhaps the smallest measure of the work of our Lord Jesus at Calvary.

Some of us have seen the nests of measures for cereals, fruits and vegetables, used by farmers and others. The bushel measure is the largest. The half-bushel fits into the bushel, the peck into the half-bushel and so

on with the quart and the pint and the half-pint and the gill. Using that as an illustration we may think of the **glory of God** as the greatest measure of the cross. There God has been expressed in all His righteousness, His judgment of sin, His holiness, His faithfulness, His love, His grace, His mercy and His kindness. Every attribute of His holy being has been declared. Every claim of His righteous throne and of the law has been upheld. It was in anticipation of the cross that our Lord could say to His Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17: 4).

The importance of Christ and His cross was such with the Apostle Paul that he determined to know nothing else among the boastful Corinthians. "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" was his theme among them setting aside fleshly wisdom and boasting. It was the same in his ministry to the Galatian believers. They were in danger of putting themselves under the law for salvation. To them he cried, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 19, 20). And again he exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6: 14).

The cross of Christ is the great foundation for the maintenance of

the majesty of the throne of God, for the fulfilment of His purposes to glorify Christ, for our rich blessing in this day of His grace, and for the ultimate deliverance of a broken, groaning creation.

CHRIST GLORIFIED

The shame of the cross is past. No longer is our Lord upon the tree of dishonour for He rose in triumph over the power of death. Then from Bethany He ascended while blessing His disciples. Now He is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high.

It is there that faith sees "Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour." In prospect of His exaltation He had cried, at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7: 37, 38). He spoke this in view of the Holy Spirit coming from Him when He was glorified. Those who believe on Him would receive the Spirit as their power for witness and service. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7: 39). Now that He is glorified the Holy Spirit has come. He indwells the bodies of all believers. He is "the anointing," "the seal," "the earnest," "the firstfruits." He empowers for worship and work and witness.

From Him and Him alone the living water flows. "He that believeth on Me" are the words. It was not "He who is My apostle." It was not "He who has especial tal-

ent or gift." It was not "He who is wealthy or scholarly or wise." No! the word of promise and privilege was to the **believer**. Mark that well!

The Lord is still on the throne. The place of power and pre-eminence is His. The **believer** is in living touch with Him and His omnipotence, and is left here so that as a channel from Christ there may be rivers (not rills or rivulets only) of living water flowing from His inmost affections and being.

We who profess to be believers do well to ask ourselves the questions—How far has this been true of my life? How far have I been made a blessing to others? If we have to confess and mourn our past failure to respond to our Lord's desire (and who has not?) shall we not pause, and in our hearts cry, "Lord make it good in me!"

Our time for service here is short. "The Lord as at hand." The honour of being channels of blessing in the "dry and thirsty land" of the world will soon be past. Shall we not seek earnestly for grace to buy up our opportunities and so redeem the time? It is as we behold "the glory of the Lord" that "we are changed into the same image," even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Let us judge ourselves in everything contrary to our calling as Christians, keep in touch with our glorified Lord and walk in the power of an ungrieved Holy Spirit. Then the promised rivers of living water will flow from us for the blessing of all around.

CHRIST SATISFIED

Every true Christian is glad of heart as he contemplates the prospect of the fulfilment of that part of Isaiah's prophecy of Christ, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53: 11). His sorrows and sufferings portrayed so graphically in the Scripture are past. They shall have their outcome. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." And He, Himself will exult in the full accomplishment of the good pleasure of God.

Coming unto Manhood He had said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalm 40: 8). This had been the joy set before Him which led Him to endure the cross, despising the shame. With the accomplishment of that in prospect, He had uttered the words already referred to, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

"He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be SATISFIED," in having glorified His Father and carried out His holy will.

"He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be SATISFIED" in having His church, His bride with Him in His cloudless glory.

And so too shall He be SATISFIED, in beholding the present groaning creation enjoying the liberty of the glory of the sons of God, and in His kingdom when He reigns in righteousness and peace, and has "dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of

the earth," for then men shall be happy under His gracious sway and "all nations shall call Him blessed."

And finally He shall be SATISFIED, "when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power . . . when all things shall be subdued unto Him," and then "shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 24-28).

CHRIST MAGNIFIED

"Christ crucified" is past. "Christ glorified" is present. "Christ satisfied" is future. These are all effected without our aid. But in "Christ magnified" we may have a share. To be magnified is to be made more of; made greater. Christ cannot be made greater than He is personally, but He may be made greater **in us**. He may be better expressed in our lives and more honoured in our testimony.

It was this which the Apostle Paul as a bondman of Jesus Christ longed for. This was his earnest expectation and his hope, "that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1: 20, 21).

He wrote this when he was about to appear before Nero. His fate was in the balance. The emperor's decision might mean Paul's martyrdom. This was, however, a matter of no consequence with him. It

mattered everything that Christ should be magnified. If that might be brought about by his life in service for Christ it was well. If that would be effected better by his death that was equally well. To him to live was "Christ," to be **for** His glory where he was on earth. To him to die was "gain," to be **with** Christ where He is in glory.

It is said that years ago the Moravian Missionaries had a remarkable seal. In its centre was engraved an **ox**. On one side of the ox was a **plough**. On the other side of the ox was an **altar**. And the words inscribed above were "**Ready for either.**" Those who went forth to

proclaim the gospel were to be prepared to **live** a life of sacrifice as the ox at the plough, or to **die** a death of sacrifice on an altar of suffering.

Shall we ask ourselves,—Am I ready for either? Is it with us, as with Paul, a consuming desire that Christ may be magnified in our bodies. "**The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**" was enough for him to effect the fulfilment of his wish. That supply is sufficient for us to-day.

May it be ours to seek that the once **crucified**, now **glorified** and soon to be **satisfied** Christ, may be **magnified** in our lives to-day.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL

F. B. Hole.

(Chapter 20: 19-31)

TH E Lord Jesus Christ of necessity always takes the central place. He did so in death, as recorded in verse 18 of the previous chapter. Here He does so in resurrection, and thus there was a fulfilment of His word recorded in Matthew 18: 20. On the evening of the resurrection day the disciples were gathered together in His Name, though only half believing the witnesses to His resurrection. He came into their midst in visible form. The main difference for us today is that He takes His place in invisible form where disciples are gathered in His Name. When His presence is realized the effect is as here—peace and gladness. The word of peace came from His lips. The gladness followed as their eyes corroborated the evidence furnished by their ears.

Luke tells us, in Acts 1, that He showed Himself alive "by many infallible proofs," and prominent among these was the display to His disciples of His pierced hands and side. These sacred marks identified Him beyond all dispute. Death and resurrection had both been accomplished, and they were like twin pillars on which the peace He announced was firmly established. Twice did the Lord salute them with peace on His lips for He knew full well that until that was realized in their hearts they would have little ability to receive the further things that He had to convey to them. It is just so with us today. Until we have the enjoyment of settled peace with God we can make no spiritual progress.

Having announced peace for the

second time the risen Lord commissioned His disciples in words which, though very brief, are full of profound significance. Each Gospel records a commission, though with characteristic differences. Matthew records it in terms that would specially strike a Jewish reader. They were no longer to make disciples from the very limited sphere indicated earlier in that Gospel (10: 5-11), but from all nations, and they were to baptize in the Name that had come to light in Christ, and not with John's baptism or one akin to that. The commission there is so worded as to have an application to those who may make disciples after the church is gone. In Mark also the universal aspect of the Apostolic preaching and service is emphasized. This is the case also in Luke, where the fulness of grace seems to be the point; grace which could begin at Jerusalem, the worst spot, and extend to all nations. The three synoptic Gospels have this in common however; the commission in each is concerned with the apostle's preaching and service.

But in John, as befits that Gospel, a deeper note is struck. The Lord Jesus had been sent forth from the Father, that in Him the Father might be made known. As the fourteenth chapter made so plain, He was in the Father as to His being, His life, His nature, and consequently the Father was in Him, and so was fully made known. Now, having died and risen again He was going to the Father, but He was leaving in the world disciples, whom now He sent that they might be for Him after the pattern of the way He had been sent forth to be for the Father. If, therefore we are to understand their mis-

sion we must first understand the Lord's own mission as sent of the Father.

It is remarkable how many times in this Gospel the Lord is referred to as the One who had been sent of the Father into the world. In slightly varying words this is referred to upwards of forty times, and we can see how relevant it is to the fact that He is presented to us as One who was God, and was with God. He was, therefore, not indigenous to the world, as though he sprang out of it. He came from above and all that He was He brought with Him. His words and His works were all the Father's. Now a new thing is brought to pass, and in its institution the Lord was fulfilling His own statement in His prayer to the Father—see, 17: 18. He was departing, and they now were to be sent as from Him.

What lay behind this sending was the fact that they too were not of the world as He had not been. This is also stated in chapter 17—see, verse 16. There was this difference, however; once they had been indigenous to the world, so in their case there was a link that had to be broken, and there were new links that had to be formed. This at once leads us to that which is set forth in verse 22 of our chapter.

The words of commission were followed by words of impartation, coupled with a peculiar action. He breathed on—or, more correctly, *into*—them, and said, “Receive ye Holy Ghost,” for the definite article “the” is lacking in the original. We must observe the connection between this and what is recorded as

to the creation of Adam in Genesis 2: 7. As to his body, he was formed of the dust of the ground but the spiritual part of him came into being by the Lord God breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, and thus it was he became a living soul. Now our Lord, who is the last Adam, is a quickening or life-giving spirit, as we read in I Corinthians 15: 45, and here we see Him breathing into His disciples His own risen life.

But this being so, why did He say, "Receive ye Holy Ghost"? Because His own life as the risen Man is in the energy of the Holy Ghost. He was, "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3: 18). On the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, the disciples did indeed receive **the** Holy Ghost, as a Divine Person indwelling their very bodies, but here we have something preliminary to that. On the very day that Jesus entered upon His risen life as quickened in and by the Spirit of God, He imparted it to His own.

We must connect this great act with both what precedes and what follows. How could they be sent into the world, to be for Him as He had been sent of the Father, except they possessed His risen life? The natural life which they had from Adam gave them no competency for such a mission. They did not have **power** till the Holy Ghost was shed forth abundantly at Pentecost, but they now had the **life** and **nature** that rendered the mission possible. We do not read of this action in the other Gospels but we do read in Luke 24, "then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (verse 45).

This opening of their understandings was, we judge, the result of the in-breathing of His risen life.

In our Gospel, however, there are the two things connected with it: first, it gave them capacity to be witnesses in the world as sent of Him; and second, to be entrusted with administrative powers as to remitting or retaining sins, not eternally of course, but governmentally. In Matthew's Gospel we see that the Lord before His death and resurrection had indicated that such powers should be conferred upon Peter (16: 19), and upon the Apostles as a whole (18: 18), on each occasion looking forward to the future. Here the power is actually conferred. Primarily, no doubt, the power was apostolic, and we see Peter wielding the power in Acts 5: 1-11, and the Holy Ghost ratifying it in no uncertain way. But in I Corinthians 5: 3-5, 12, 13, we have Paul wielding it and calling upon the church to act with him in retaining the evil-doer's sin. In 2 Corinthians 2: 4-8, we find him calling upon the church to reverse the action as the evil-doer had repented. They were to remit, or forgive; and verse 10 of that chapter is very instructive in connection with it.

In the other Gospels the name of Thomas only appears in the list of the apostles: all that we know of him is contained in our Gospel. This is significant. He is mentioned in chapters 11 and 14 and his words on those occasions prepare us for the light in which his character appears here. He was evidently a man of plain, unimaginative, matter-of-fact mind, too inclined to be materialistic, and, therefore, hard to con-

vince of anything lying off the plane of ordinary human experience. We are now very close to the verse which avows the goal to which this Gospel is designed to conduct us, and we are considering the last and greatest of the signs that John has brought before us. Hence the case of Thomas is of particular value in this Gospel.

He was not present on the evening of the resurrection day, and hence when he heard the testimony of the other disciples, which they condensed into five words of deepest import, "We have seen the Lord," he was not prepared to accept it. In a spirit of stubborn doubt he declared that except he had visible and tangible evidence of a most indubitable sort, evidence that most clearly identified the One who appeared with the One who died upon the cross, he would not believe. In thus challenging the disciple's testimony, he was really flinging down a challenge to his risen Lord, which, if accepted, would place His resurrection beyond all question as far as he was concerned.

The Lord in condescending grace did accept it a week later. Again He appeared in their midst though the doors were shut. Again he saluted them with the words, "Peace unto you." Then He bade Thomas do exactly as he had said, that he might have not only the visible but also the tangible evidence he desired. And not only this, for He gave a spiritual sign also. His words to Thomas revealed that the challenge flung down when He was not visibly present was perfectly known to the risen Lord. At the end of chapter I, we had a similar incident. Jesus showed Nathanael that He had seen

him when he thought himself unobserved under the fig tree, and Nathanael was convinced and confessed Him as the Son of God and the King of Israel.

That was in the days of His flesh yet He revealed Himself as **the all-seeing One**. Here the days of His flesh are over and He is risen, but He is revealed as **the all-hearing One**. The effect on Thomas of all this was overwhelming. The stubborn doubter, when he is convinced, is convinced indeed! A few minutes go he was dragging far behind the other disciples, now in his rapturous confession he goes at one bound definitely beyond them. Nathanael had been explicit in his confession at the outset: Thomas at the close is even more explicit. Only five words again! But what words they were—"My Lord and my God."

Deniers of our Lord's deity have sought to avoid the force of this by treating this as a mere exclamation, addressed to no one in particular, but the record distinctly states that the words were said to the Lord, the form of them in the original being very emphatic. The risen Jesus was **the Lord and the God** to him. And what is more significant still, the Lord replied, "Thomas . . . thou hast **believed**." Beyond all question then He treated Thomas' joyful exclamation as **faith** laying hold of FACT. In other words, He accepted the confession as being true. There is no greater sin than for a mere man to accept Divine honours or adulation, as witness the drastic smiting of Herod, recorded in Acts 12. When John fell down before a holy angel as about to worship him,

the instant reply was, " See thou do it not " (Rev. 22: 9). Instead of rebuking Thomas, Jesus approved of his confession and called it faith.

The full Deity of Jesus thus being acknowledged, we have reached the end to which this Gospel is designed to conduct us. Very appropriately, therefore, do verses 30 and 31 close this chapter. We are reminded that all the miraculous signs put on record are but a tiny fraction of the whole. Those that are recorded are quite sufficient however, and in this Gospel they are specially selected to afford ample ground for faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, for it is the faith of this which brings life through His Name.

Note that the last and conclusive proof of Jesus being the Son of God is that He accepted the ascription of Deity to Himself. We may say that if He is God, He is the Son of God; and conversely, that if He is the Son of God, He is God. Note also that His Sonship is the great point in the Gospel which traces Him back into the unfathomable depths of a past eternity, and gives no details of the Virgin Birth. If we really embrace this Gospel in faith we shall have no doubt that His Sonship is eternal, and not something assumed in time.

Before leaving this chapter we have only to remark the significance of the Lord's words in verse 29. There is something better than accepting ocular and tangible evidence, and that is **believing the word** without any such demonstration. Thomas doubtless illustrates the way in which a godly remnant of Israel will discover the truth in a coming day.

The word of the prophet shall be fulfilled, " They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced " (Zech. 12: 10), and then it is that they will cry, " My God, we know Thee " (Hosea 8: 2). The greater blessedness, of those who believe without seeing, is the portion of all who receive in faith the Gospel today, whether Jew or Gentile.

We can render to God no tribute that is more grateful to Him than that of taking Him fully and simply at His word without asking any corroboration by sight or by feeling. As light may be resolved into the colours of the rainbow so the Divine Name comprises many features of equal value and importance, yet He specially emphasizes the verity and reliability of His Word—" Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name " (Psa. 138: 2). Seeing that at the outset sin came in through disbelief of the Divine Word, how fitting this is! The present Gospel epoch is peculiarly the time when men believe without seeing— " Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls " (1 Pet. 1: 8, 9).

This scripture gives us a glimpse of the special blessedness of which the Lord spoke to Thomas. It may be ours, and the keener and more simple our faith the deeper the measure in which it will be ours. May the full blessedness of it be known by each reader of these lines, and by the writer too!

WARNING AND REBUKE.

F. B. HOLE

(From Notes of an Address on Luke 22: 31-34; 10; 38-42).

IT is a matter of deep interest to trace in the Gospels how the Lord dealt with one and another of His disciples in His perfect love and wisdom. We have often dwelt upon the remarkable words He spoke to Mary when He revealed Himself to her on the resurrection day. She was just in a condition to receive those very exalted communications from His lips. But I am afraid we are not always in a condition that suits such communications, and if your experience is anything like mine you would say that all too frequently what we really need is a communication of another kind; more like, perhaps, the words spoken by the Lord to Peter and to Martha, which we have just read.

When the Lord repeated the name of anyone, He intended it to impart urgency to what He had to say. So there was something very urgent and emphatic in what He said to these two disciples, Simon Peter on the one hand, and Martha on the other. We sing sometimes—perhaps without sufficient thought and care—a verse which begins:

"Our hearts by Thee are set,
On brighter things above."

But they are not always set in that direction, are they? Mine is not, I must sorrowfully confess. It gets sadly deflected. Instead of remaining true, as the needle of the compass is true to the pole, I find my heart is like the compass when it gets violently jerked about and the needle vibrates in all directions. Counter-attractions come upon the scene and instead of the heart turn-

ing steadily upward it begins to turn world-ward. Then we find ourselves in need of a word of warning. How very good it is of our Lord to give us just that word of warning when it is needed.

Simon Peter was a great Apostle, but it was this that he needed—a word of warning against self-confidence. The trouble with him was that he was unconscious of his own self-confidence. He thought that he really was very devoted and very courageous indeed. He forgot that though he might be very impulsive, and withal keen and devoted, yet there was a spiritual foe a great deal keener and sharper than he, and if once he got into the hands of the devil he would stand no chance. Hence the Lord's word of warning, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."

We do well, I am sure, to recognise that the spiritual forces arrayed against us are very great. Realizing this, we shall never speak lightly or slightly of the devil. The very archangel, Michael, would not do that, and he is evidently the greatest of the heavenly dignities. I suppose the reason of it was that the devil, though now a fallen potentate, was in his original condition one step higher than Michael himself. It is generally believed that in Ezekiel 28: 11-17, under the type of the king of Tyre, there is an allusion to the devil in his unfallen condition. If he was "the anointed cherub that covereth," he was in the very nearest position to God Himself. He

aspired to be as God, and then he fell. In the presence of such power as this, what was Simon Peter?

The Lord knew all this, and that nothing but His more powerful intercession would prevail to save him. Hence He added, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Faith is the link between the soul and God, and if that is maintained the situation is saved. Faith was what the devil struck at in the Garden of Eden. His object was to shake the creature's confidence in his Creator, and he succeeded. Hence the exceeding fitness of what we have in the Gospel—that you and I by faith get put into right relations with God. When God recovers the faith of His creature for Himself, blessing ensues; and faith being maintained the blessing abides.

We know what happened to Peter. Satan went forth and by a skilful combination of circumstances, adroitly led Peter into a position for which he had no real grace nor grit nor anything else. We know how he fell; denied his Master, got angry, prevaricated, cursed and swore. If it had not been that his Master was faithful and prayed for him, what would have happened to Simon? It was the intercession and action of the Lord that kept him from an end like that of Judas Iscariot.

So let us also accept this warning. Let us remember that the power of Satan is very great; and let us earnestly beware of self-confidence, which I suspect has something to do with nine-tenths of the falls that we suffer. Does someone say, "I do not think I am self-confident"? Wait a bit: do not settle that too quickly. If you are a young

believer there is nothing that is more likely to be a snare. The very fact that you are earnest and enthusiastic after a bright conversion may lead you to feel you have a bright future, carrying all before you. But the Lord in His holy government, and in His kindness which teaches us lessons, removes His hand from us for a moment, and down we go! Self confidence is at the bottom of the mischief.

If we are older, let us not think that we are done with this terrible tendency of our hearts. We greatly need the warning still. There is nothing more easy than to be like those Jews, to whom the Apostle speaks in Romans 2. They took it for granted that they were, "A guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes." In our case the "babes" might be other Christians who do not know as much of the truth as in God's mercy we happen to know. How very easily we get self-confident as to our abilities and knowledge and the position we hold. If we do not walk in humility, and faith is not in active exercise, the devil can make fools of us. Indeed we know only too well how he has done it in times past, in the midst of Christendom. So I want this warning to ring in your ears as well as mine; but coupled with it the assurance of the intercession and power of our Lord.

The case of Martha was very different, for she was doing what was right. The house was hers and the Lord was her Guest, so had she not hustled about in the service of her house she would have failed in what was plainly her duty. The trouble was her getting burdened and dis-

tracted by "much serving." And what lay at the root of this? Evidently a self-centred spirit. She began to be annoyed with her sister, Mary, because she did not join in this excess of preparation, but rather sat at the feet of Jesus, enraptured with His word. Appealing to the Lord against her sister, the answer came, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." This was most clearly a word of rebuke because of self-centredness.

Being self-centred, Martha misjudged her sister. This was bad, but it was even worse that she misjudged her Lord. What did she say? "**Lord, dost Thou not care?**" Evidently there was a veiled complaint, just as when the disciples in the ship said, "**Master, carest Thou not that we perish?**" It was really an insult to suppose that He did not care. It was doubting His affection, His sympathy, His grace. No wonder that the Lord repeated her name, thus making His reply one of extreme urgency.

We do well to take this Scripture very much to heart. When people become self-centred they make their service, because it is **their** service, the centre of their thoughts. A great many of the troubles we find among the saints and servants of God are caused in this way. We say, "This is **my** service, **my** work. I want **my** work to prosper." I begin to think this good brother does not give sufficient consideration to **me** and **my** work. Self in a very subtle way is the bottom of it all, and then I get querulous and

quarrelsome, inclined to complain about other folk. Then, like Martha, I get careful and troubled about many things. Defects and difficulties seem to spring up in all directions. What is the cure for such a state of things?

Well, we must not miss the contrast between the "many things" and the "one thing." In this world we are bound to be confronted by many troublesome things. The real trouble is not that, but in the inward disposition that leads us to be troubled by the many troublesome things. We get anxious and troubled about many things because we are so self-centred. What is the desirable thing? To be Christ-centred. If Christ is the great Object before our hearts, if He is the Centre of all our thoughts and projects and undertakings and expectations, the many things become simplified and lose their power to worry. We should of course be prayerful and diligent, but having His will as our objective and His word for our guidance, we should have but **one thing** before us.

Mary realized that He had much more to give her by His word than she could possibly give Him by her service, so she chose the good part and sat at His feet. It does not say, as so often mis-quoted, "the better part." A comparison is not instituted here; it is just "that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." By hearing His word we get to know Himself, and that intimacy with Him and His mind will abide to eternity. It is a thing which may be known on earth, but which will only extend and deepen and ripen in heaven. That is the one thing needful, and the Christ-

centred spirit will deliver us from Martha's failing.

There is another place in Luke where you find the Lord repeating a name. He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I . . . and ye would not!" (13: 34). As to this, I only say in closing that here we see the spirit of our Master, when at the end of that dispensation He had to predict the doom of those who refused Him. Into this spirit we need to drink. Our lot is cast in the closing days of another dispensation. The world-system is dying. We need to keep very clear of the world which is under judgment. We shall not stay its

doom by mixing ourselves in its pursuits and politics. Our business is to win out of the world, and that we shall not accomplish unless we begin by keeping ourselves clear of it and its spirit, and go on to acquire the beautiful spirit of compassion, which shone to perfection in our Master.

Let us remember these things. I do want to sound this note of warning, so that we may be delivered from self-confidence, and be free from self-occupation which leads to the living of a self-centred life, and then enter more into the spirit and mind of our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Approval of Christ.

The especial danger which belongs to such a state of things (when the common course of the church is not straight)—is each according to his own will, chalking out a path for himself, because of the unfaithfulness and disobedient walk of the professing body.

What faith has to do in such circumstances is to lay hold intelligently, soberly and solemnly on the Lord's mind, and to walk according to it, strengthened by the promises which He has attached to such a path as He can own.

But, beloved, are we really content to have an approval which Christ only knows? Let us try ourselves a little. Are we not too desirous of man's commendation of our conduct? or, at least, that he should know and give us credit for the motives which actuate it? Are we content, so long as good is done, that nobody should know anything about us?—even in the church to be thought nothing of? that Christ alone should give us the "white stone" of His approval, and the "new name, which no man knoweth save only he that receiveth it"? Are we content, I say, to seek nothing else?

Oh, to think what the terrible evil and treachery of the heart must be that is not satisfied with Christ's special favour but seeks honour (as we do) one of another instead!

“BEFORE YE ASK HIM.”

A. J. Pollock

“**Y**OUR Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him” (Matt. 6: 8). What wonderful words are these! “**Y**OUR Father!” If God is our Father, we are blessed indeed, One with infinite wisdom, love and power. One who knows what we **need**. What we **want** is another matter. A child in a family gets its needs supplied, but if the young hopeful of three years of age wants his father’s sharp razor to play with he is refused. God is as loving in His refusals as in His answers.

He is marked by wisdom, love and power—a perfect combination. For instance a mother might bend in tenderest love over her sick and dying child. She loves the child but she lacks the power to raise the child to health again. Again a father may have an only son. He is rich, and can give his son every luxury, and gratify every whim the youth may have, and in the end spoil the child for life. He has love and power, but lacks wisdom. But in the case of our heavenly Father there is love, power and wisdom.

Have we a **need**? We can go into the presence of our Father with the assurance that before we tell Him our need, He knows it. Such knowledge seems too wonderful for us to understand. Yet it is true in a fulness beyond our grasping.

We look up at the heavens, and see the glittering stars in their multitudes. Their number is beyond human calculation. Sir James Jeans says they are as the sands of the seashore for multitude, and this is

but the echo of Scripture. “He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names” (Psalm 147: 4). Yet it puts the immensely great beside the sorrows of the insignificant individual, for the previous verse says, “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.”

In nature it is the immensely great things that man cannot encompass, and equally so the very little. Man can build the Great Pyramid, but what is that, but a mere speck of dust compared to the globe on which we find ourselves. And our globe is a mere speck of dust beside the sun from which we derive our heat and light and material blessings. On the other hand one has looked at a tiny midge, so easily crushed between finger and thumb, and marvelled at the mighty God endowing it with the powers of reproduction, and giving it every organ that is necessary for life. Man cannot do that. Take the finest steel needle ever made. Put it under a powerful microscope, and it will look a rough, jagged piece of metal. Telescope and microscope can only reveal fresh glories in God’s handiwork.

It is a wonderful fact, that the God who can create in a word the universe, is the God, who calls Himself Father to His own blood-redeemed people.

We are told in Matthew 10: 29 that two sparrows are sold for a farthing. Again in Luke 12: 6 we find that five sparrows are sold for two farthings showing how worthless a sparrow is, yet we are told that not

one of them is forgotten before God. Then we are told that we are of more value than many sparrows, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered.

Is it any wonder then, after all, that God knows our petitions before we ask of Him? It is to our blessing to meditate on such love and care, to enter the presence of God with joy and confidence, and place before Him our needs, knowing that He knows our needs before we ask Him. "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (I Peter 5: 7). "**HE careth for you.**" What a solace!

In the earlier days of the revolution a Bolshevik scornfully boasted

to a Russian believer that the Government had removed every trace of God from the land. It was true that churches were destroyed, or so defaced as to have no resemblance to what they once had been, and other things reminding of religion had been effaced, indeed all that man could put his hand on. The believer pointed at the stars, and said, "You have not removed those." Aye, and remember, behind the stars there is God, the mighty Spirit and Source of every good gift. And that God is your Father. "**The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble: and HE KNOWETH THEM THAT TRUST IN HIM**" (Nahum 1: 7).

Jesus Stood on the Shore.

It was an earthly morning when the Lord stood on the earthly shore, but He stood there in resurrection life. The setting of the verse, "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore" (John 21: 4), is easily grasped as the chapter is read down.

But though Scripture has but one interpretation it may have more than one application. This verse was certainly beautifully applied when an aged Christian lady gave instructions that these words should be carved on her tombstone. This is the night for the Christian. He is a child of the day, and does not walk in darkness for he has the light of the Scripture and the unction of the Holy Spirit, but still he walks in the night. The morning comes. It comes for believers one by one as they fall asleep in Jesus, or we may all go together at the summoning shout. But when we reach the heavenly shore we shall find the blessed Lord there, ready to give us a greeting the like of which we have never experienced. It comes with great sweetness. "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore." What a morning and what a welcome! We may well look forward to it with great anticipation. We believe that day is not far off. Any day, any night, any moment, and He may call us, and we shall find Him on the heavenly shore, and that will make the day to be day, and the place heaven.

A.J.P.

PETER'S RESTORATION.

J. HOUSTON

TH E Lord has His own way in dealing with His servants. He knows where they are spiritually, and how they are in reference to their state. Nothing escapes His eye. He sees all, and can deal with all, according to His unerring wisdom and infinite grace (see John 21).

Peter had denied Him, and that in shameful circumstances of weakness and failure. To deny his Lord and Master, and even curse when pressed by witnesses as to the truth, was a sin that scarcely could be surpassed. He might have been cut off for ever, as an apostate, had he been dealt with on the ground of his deserts. His sin of vehement denial and cursing, when pressed to speak the truth, called for judgment. But the Lord had other thoughts towards His weak and erring servant. And we can safely add that he has other thoughts towards us when we fail in this, or other ways. Where would we have been had we received our deserts, in reference to all our weakness and failure, in testimony to Him? We would have been miserably cut off and left to our own sin and wretchedness. Thank God for restoring grace! Peter received it, and we have received it. This calls for our worship and praise.

It was after Peter had dined with the Lord that the question of his sin was gone into, and not before he had dined. Had man been acting here, he would have had the whole thing settled before he dined with the sinning one. Such are man's ways; but they are not God's ways. Christ invites Peter to dine with Him,

before He says one word about the subject of Peter's denial. This is beautiful! simply beautiful! We believe Peter's heart would be won before the question of his sin was brought up. What a tender display we see here of precious grace in Christ! Grace wins the heart before it deals with the sin. To deal with the sin before the heart is won is to drive the erring one away in despair. The heart must be won before the sin is discovered, and dealt with in righteousness.

Peter's heart was surely won, when he partook of the fish and bread provided by the Lord. To eat with one is to commune with one, for eating is the expression of communion. And mark, Peter had not slipped in unnoticed with the others; he and they were invited by the Lord. "Come and dine" was an invitation to all, **Peter** included! (see verse 12).

It was after dinner, then, when the question of Peter's denial of His Master was gone into. And, as we have observed, Peter's heart was won by His Master's kindness; consequently he was able to face the ordeal of the trial.

The Lord goes to the root of the trouble, and does not simply deal with the fruit. He did not say to Peter, "Why did you deny me?" This would be dealing with the fruit. But He does say, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" When He said "these" he was referring to the other disciples, for Peter had given himself credit for loving more than they.

Now it is never safe for any child of God to give himself credit for loving the Lord more than his brethren love Him. The enemy can easily use this to fill the heart with a certain complacency and vain confidence, which can lead to a downfall. It is best and safest always not to think of self at all, and if we have to think of others we can think of them as being better than ourselves. We can hear Peter say, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matt. 26: 33). He was referring to his fellow-disciples. It was as if he said, "They may easily fail, but I could never fail." He was self-confident. Let a saint think **he** has strength for this or that: let him compare himself with others, and think **he** is better than **they** are; then he is in the enemy's hands. Solemn lesson!

We must notice before going further, how the Lord addressed Peter. He said to him, "Simon, son of Jonas." He mentioned this three times.

Suggestively it comes to us the Lord is reminding Peter of his stock, his origin. He was **son** of Jonas, and Simon, **not Peter**. It is good for us to be reminded of our stock—whence we came. It humbles us. We are from a sinful stock, and this ought to keep up humble. Israel was reminded that their father was a Syrian, ready to perish (Dent. 26: 5). God reminded His people that they were "Sons of Jacob" (Mal. 3: 6). If Simon is a "son of Jonas," then that would remind him of his parentage, the inference being

he was of sinful stock. Whether it be a "Syrian" or "Jacob" or "Jonas," all speak of pedigree, and this reminds us that we are of sinful origin.

How important it is that we should get to the origin of sin, and not simply deal with it in its course; get to the root, and not simply be occupied with the fruit. This would keep us always humble and dependent on God, and consequently safe from being assailed by the enemy. The enemy can work when we think something of ourselves; but he cannot find the same point of vantage when we think **nothing** of ourselves!

Peter said he loved the Lord. Of course he did! As to this there was no doubt. But there was a proof—a practical one—which he would give of his love to the Lord, namely, he would feed the Lord's sheep. In this practical way we show our love to Christ. Service for Christ is just service to His people. And to lay down one's life for Christ is just to lay down one's life for His people. He loved us and laid down his life for us. We love Him, and lay down our lives for the brethren.

So Peter, happily restored, was entrusted with Christ's sheep. What a charge! The dearest objects Christ has on earth He committed to Peter's care; and so He does to us. We are all to seek one another's welfare. No service could be higher than that of caring for Christ's sheep and lambs, for they are dear to Him, more than anything else besides. May we then show our love to Him in this way.

IN LAODICEAN DAYS.

J. F. ENGLISH

THREE is great profit to be gained in meditating on the Lord's messages to the seven Churches, as recorded for us in Revelation 2 and 3, especially when we recognise that in these two chapters we have an inspired forecast of church history.

If we are today in that stage of the Church's history, which answers to the Church of Laodicea, then the message to the Church must be of very particular interest, and have much instruction for us. Although it would seem that the moral characteristics of the last four Churches, namely, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea, go on together until the coming of the Lord, nevertheless the message to the Church of Laodicea seems to be of great importance to us today, when everything bears so distinctly the marks of that Church.

In contrast, however, to the faithless and failing Church, the Lord brings Himself before us in His character as "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." He is **the Amen**, as the One in and by whom all that is in the mind and purpose of God is accomplished. He is **the faithful and true witness**, for there is no breakdown with Him, and He is the truth of God. He is **the beginning of the Creation of God**, for all that is, and ever will be, for God has its beginning and takes character from Him.

How the heart rejoices to know that in Him God has secured everything for His glory. Nothing

is missing, nothing lost, but all the glory of God maintained at its fullest and highest height. Well might we adore His blessed Name!

He it is who says, "I know thy works." Seven times do we hear this from Him in the course of the two chapters, and it is by our works He judges, for our works are the outcome of the condition of our heart. To the Church of Ephesus He traces all failure to the defection of the heart from Himself. "Thou hast left thy first love." Now to the Laodiceans it is, "Thou art neither cold nor hot." Lukewarmness is most distasteful to Him, so much so, that He adds, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." That which began with leaving first love has now become perfect indifference; no enthusiasm for Him, but resting and glorying in self-assessed imaginary prosperity, which in His sight is miserable poverty. There is no appreciation of His great love; nothing but mere cold formality and dead profession. "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

This is the condition in His eyes of Christendom as a whole today; that which has the place of the Church of God on earth and of which we form a part. May it be, however, that the reader, although outwardly a part of this great profession, inwardly and in secret with the Lord, as well as in separation of walk, is amongst those who take heed to **His counsel**.

He speaks to all, "I counsel thee," that is to the Church as one, but the question comes to each of us, Have I heard, and responded?

His counsel is, "Buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." What does the Lord mean when He says, "Buy of Me"? Similar words are in Isaiah 55, "Come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." How have we found this to work out in practice? Have we bought from Him? Surely this is a searching question for each of us, for it means each one of us having a very personal transaction with Him—coming to Him as those who have no righteousness of our own, but receiving Him as our righteousness. He has stood the test of the fire of the righteous judgment of GOD and has been found to be without a flaw, nay the fire did but serve to bring to light His absolute perfection. He abides, the true riches both for God and for His saints.

The white raiment is symbolic of all that is our life, in walking in the path of righteousness in which He leads. We read, "for the fine linen is the righteousness [or righteous acts] of saints" (Rev. 19: 8). This can only be as walking in close communion with Him, in the path of holy separation from evil.

Eye salve leads to that singleness of eye which has only the glory of the Lord for its light. Then and then alone do we truly see. And such is His love for His own that,

in order to keep them for Himself, He chastens according to His wisdom and for our greatest blessing. He would lead us to be zealous and repent, keen to judge ourselves rightly in His sight, that we might answer to Him who is the Faithful and True Witness.

Because of the offensive character of the professing Church, He has taken a position outside the door and knocks. He appeals to **any man** to hear **His voice**—not merely His knock. It is to Himself; the one whose Voice stirs the affections of our hearts, we open the door, and He promises to come in and sup with us. What a Guest to entertain! How He longs to come in and help us and support us in our circumstances, and then having strengthened us by His presence, He would have us sup with **Him**. What a privilege! There can be nothing more precious than this. May it be the portion of each of us to know increasingly more of this. It will only be surpassed when faith gives place to sight and we are in His eternal presence.

And in the coming day what a portion is to be that of the Overcomer; the one who hears His Voice, heeds His counsel and opens the door to **Him**. "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

May this stimulate us to gird up our loins and earnestly seek **Him**, and then in the power of the Spirit to move on from day to day as overcomers in His Name.

So, brethren, let us redeem the time, for the days are evil.

BIBLE STUDY—JOHN'S GOSPEL.

F. B. HOLE

Chapter 21)

THE closing verses of chapter 20 indicate that the evidence furnished, showing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is now complete. This is therefore taken for granted in chapter 21, which puts on record dealings with certain of His disciples wholly unrecorded in the other Gospels. It may be considered in two ways: first, as having a figurative or typical meaning; second, as showing His gracious dealings with them in view of their future.

Verse 14 gives us a key to its special significance from the typical view-point. We may remember that at the opening of this Gospel the Evangelist calls our attention to certain days, and at the beginning of chapter 2 there was a manifestation of the glory of Jesus on the third day, typical of the millennial age. Now here we have before us what is noted as the **third** manifestation of Jesus as risen from the dead, and again we discover it has a millennial significance.

The first manifestation, as we saw in the last chapter, was on the actual resurrection day, and all recorded in connection with it spoke of the portion of the **Church** in association with the risen Lord. The second, in the same chapter, gave us the awakening of faith in the **remnant of Israel**, when at last they look upon Him whom they have pierced. That was set forth in Thomas. Now we come to the third, when the **millennial morning** will break and the Lord be revealed as the Master of every circumstance and the

Supplier of every need. The three days pointed out in chapters 1 and 2, had in each case the same significance.

The main drift of this Gospel has been the revelation of the Father in the Person of the Son, and the certifying to us that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, so that we may have no doubt as to the revelation but the light of it shine with undimmed radiance into our souls. It is very remarkable, therefore, that it should both open and close with these figurative reminders of dispensational distinctions, though the burden of the Gospel is that which abides eternally above all dispensational distinctions. Differences of dispensation may impose different measures upon the apprehensions of saints, but that which is to be apprehended is eternally the same.

John has given us an account of Peter's downfall, but has said no word as to his bitter tears immediately after as the result of the Lord's look, nor of the personal interview with his risen Lord in the latter part of the resurrection day. We open this chapter to find him reverting to his fishing and taking six of the other disciples with him. It was not for this kind of fishing that the Lord had originally called him, and it looks as if, though knowing that the Lord had forgiven him, he was assuming that his commission to service would have to lapse. The risen Shepherd, however, was about to restore his soul fully and lead the feet of all of them

into the paths of righteousness.

Their expedition on the lake was a failure. Verse 3 sums it up as "night" and "nothing." When the morning was come everything was reversed for Jesus was there—net full, great fishes—and no broken net or sinking ship, as in Luke 5. Nor was there Peter falling down to confess himself a sinful man, though his sad fall had been so recent. Instead he flung himself into the sea to get to Jesus with all possible speed. Again we see how he is prominent when the **action** of love is in question, just as John displays more prominently the **discernment** of love.

Arrived on the shore, the disciples found themselves forestalled though their catch had been so great. The Lord had fire and fish and bread ready for them; the provision was all His own. Viewed typically, we may see a figure of disciples going forth and bringing in, under the Lord's direction, a great harvest from the sea of nations, which will mark the opening of the millennial age. It was surely intended, too, as a lesson to Peter and the rest, showing them that their reversion to their ordinary occupation was unnecessary, even if specially blessed by Him. Their food was already prepared by His hand. The disciples knew it was their risen Lord, not by the sight of their eyes, but by His actions, which were unique.

Then began the Lord's special dealings with Simon Peter. His fall had taken place when he was warming himself at the world's fire in the company of the servants of the high priest, who was utterly hostile to his Master. He now finds himself by

the fire that had been kindled by his Lord, not only warmed but also fed by Him, and in the company of fellow-servants as devoted to his Master as himself. Thrice had Peter been tested and each time with increasing emphasis he had denied His Lord. Thrice on this occasion does the Lord probe Peter's conscience and heart, each time increasing the severity of the test.

We can more fully appreciate verses 15-17 if we observe that two different words are used for "love." The first is one which, we are told, is not used for "love" outside the New Testament and Septuagint: the Spirit of God laid hold of it and consecrated it to express the love of God. The second is one based upon the word for friend, and signifying rather the love of the feelings or warm affection; or, as it has been put, "it indicates less of insight and more of emotion." We will quote from Darby's New Translation where the distinction is carefully observed.

The Lord addressed Peter not by that new name, which He had given him, but by his old name in nature, "Simon son of Jonas," and asked him, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" This is just what he had claimed for himself in saying, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I," as Mark tells us. This must have been a very painful question, for judging by his performance it appeared that he loved Him far less. What could he say? Only this, "Yea, Lord: Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee." He used the lower word, showing he had already come down in his own esteem.

A second time Jesus asked the

question, using the same word as before but not instituting any comparison between Peter and the other disciples. It was simply, " Lovest thou Me? " It was as though He had said, " Do you really love Me at all? " This probed the wound in still deeper fashion. Peter was again unable to accept the challenge and adhered to his own word, " Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee."

The third question was a still deeper thrust, for this time Jesus adopted Peter's own word and asked, " Art thou attached to Me? " Thus He challenged Peter's right to go so far as saying he was even attached to Him. This cut him to the quick and probed him to the bottom. He realised that he could not claim to love, and that his conduct had belied even a friendly attachment. He therefore cast himself wholly upon his omniscient Lord, saying, " Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee." This virtually acknowledged that his attachment was of such faint and microscopical proportions that only Divine omniscience would perceive it. Still it was there! Peter knew it, and he knew his Lord would know it.

In all this Peter was being most graciously yet very pointedly conducted to self-judgment—the judgment of the state that had led to the sin and disaster. It is one thing to confess the sin committed, and another to confess the wrong state that led to it. This is the point which is so instructive and salutary for us. Self-esteem with its twin evil, self-confidence, was the bottom of the mischief and full restoration

before the Lord was not perfected till Peter reached this point. Moreover his sin had taken place with considerable publicity, and the other disciples must have had their confidence in him sadly shaken. How gracious then of the Lord to deal with Peter to his restoration in the presence of a number of the disciples.

And this was not all. Each affirmation by Peter that he really was attached to the Lord in spite of his cowardly denial, was followed by a response which indicated that a very important service was to be entrusted to him. The Lord used three different expressions, which are not entirely clear in our excellent Authorised Version. They were, " Feed My lambs," " Shepherd My sheep," " Feed My sheep." The shepherding of sheep would involve seeing that they were fed, but it would go beyond that and cover many activities in the way of oversight, leading, protecting.

It is very evident that Peter was entrusted with a pastoral ministry, and the way in which he urges upon others a similar pastoral care, in the opening verses of chapter 5 of his first Epistle, is very striking. Therein he warns against the very abuses of such a ministry as have come in like a flood in the history of the church. These abuses reach their greatest development in the imposing religious body that claims their Roman Pontiff as the successor of Peter, and they are just the outgrowth of fallen human nature, for exactly similar things happened in Israel, and are denounced by the Lord through Ezekiel in chapter 34 of his prophecy. Today " Peter's-pence " means money extracted

from the flock for the support of the supposed successor of Peter, instead of anything **ministered to** the flock. A grim perversion and parody indeed!

The under shepherds who served after Peter's departure soon forgot that the lambs and sheep belonged to the Lord. The word to Peter was not "Feed **your** sheep," but "**My** sheep," and that makes all the difference. It is noticeable further that the Lord spoke **once** of shepherding and **twice** of feeding. That is where the emphasis lies. Shepherding means a certain amount of authoritative handling and directing, and there are not a few who love wielding authority, even in the church of God. To be a dispenser of spiritual food is another matter, and a far deeper one. He who can give spiritual food will not have much difficulty in exercising some measure of spiritual control.

One other thing we might note. When Peter was thus commissioned he was a broken and humbled man. To such an one, when fully restored, the Lord entrusted His lambs and sheep. We may remember the Apostolic injunction, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6: 1). It is assumed that a spiritual man will be meek and have a wholesome sense of his own liability to fall. Here Peter had fallen and, humbled now and restored, he had reached that tender and meek spirit which marks the spiritual man. To men of that type the Lord entrusts His lambs and sheep.

Having recommissioned Peter and indicated the special character of the service he was to render, the Lord now showed him that what he had boasted he would do in the energy of youth, he should actually do when his natural energy had abated. "I will lay down my life for Thy sake," had been his words, yet he miserably failed. His desire had been right, though his self-confidence was wrong and had to be rebuked. So his desire should be fulfilled, but in power other than his own. The Lord's words in verse 18 not only indicated that he should glorify God by a martyr's death, but also the character of that death. The allusion was to crucifixion. He was to follow the Lord in caring for His sheep and, up to a certain point, in the manner of his death. What amazing grace was this to the disciple who had so failed! And what instruction for us! The case of John Mark also furnishes us with an example of how what is begun in the flesh may yet be made perfect by the Spirit: the exact opposite of Galatians 3: 3.

For the moment Peter turned his eye from his Master and fixed it upon a fellow-disciple, none other than the writer of this Gospel. John was evidently a younger man but had already been closely linked with Peter on several occasions. It was probably genuine interest and not merely curiosity that made him enquire as to his future. The reply appears to have a twofold bearing.

First, it emphasised the fact that for each disciple—whether Peter or ourselves—our great business is not with our brethren but with our Lord. What the Lord ordained for John was not Peter's concern, but to

follow the Lord for himself. There are not very many today who point to their brother and say, "What shall this man do?" but plenty there are who say, "Look what this man has done!" To be exercised about somebody else's doings is a cheap and easy thing, whereas to be exercised about oneself is a costly business. To each of us, as to Peter, does the Lord say, "Follow thou Me."

In the second place there was something cryptic or hidden in this saying about John, just as there had been in the saying of verse 18 about Peter. It did not indicate that he should not die and so remain till the second advent, but rather that his ministry should have a special character. The word here, translated, "tarry" is one that occurs in John's writings as often as in all the rest of the New Testament put together. It is variously translated as "abide," "continue," "dwell," "remain." Now John's ministry, as exemplified in his Gospel and Epistles, did specially deal with the abiding things of the revelation of God which nothing can touch or tarnish. In the Revelation we find he was the last of the Apostles to see the Lord in His glorious majesty, and to receive from Him through His angel the fullest unfolding of things to come, which things lead us up to the second advent, and even to the eternal state.

Verse 23 is a warning to us of the danger of drawing inferences from the Word of God, and then elevating those inferences into dogmatic

assertions. If a saying had gone forth among the brethren that John might not die, in view of what the Lord had said, it perhaps would not have been worthy of remark. But they said he **should** not, rather than he **might** not. Inspired words stand in a class by themselves, and we must be careful how we draw inferences from them.

The last verse of our Gospel is very characteristic. It reminds us that what is recorded of the doings of the Lord on earth is but a tiny fraction of the whole, and this is true if we put all four Gospels together. It is also as true of His words as of His works. This is a fact that helps to explain things that are sometimes quoted as apparent discrepancies. For instance, the Lord must have done and said similar things scores of times during the years of His incessant service in various parts of Judea and Galilee. And lastly, there is no picturesque exaggeration in what is said about the world and the books. John has traced for us the matchless words and works of the Word become flesh—at least, a selection of them, which though small is ample to convince us that in Him we have the Christ, the Son of God. Though He assumed a finite form the Word who assumed it is **infinite**. He put therefore the stamp of **infinity** on all He did and said, and the world and books cannot contain that.

We shall never get to the end of all the things which Jesus did. On this most appropriate note our Gospel ends.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Will sorrow be experienced at the Judgment Seat of Christ by the saint whose work is burned, and thereby he suffers loss? (1 Cor. 3: 15). If so, will this form of sorrow be done away when Revelation 21: 4 is fulfilled?—LEEDS.

We shall not stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ until 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17 has been fulfilled, and therefore the saints will then be in a glorified condition. Bearing this in mind, it is not easy to conceive that sorrow, such as we know in our present condition, will be experienced then. If convicted of sin or error today, “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of,” but then it will be too late for sorrow to have that beneficial effect.

The saint whose works are bad will certainly suffer loss, as Scripture declares plainly, but we venture to think that in our glorified condition

we shall be so thankful to have our Lord's verdict on all our works, even when He has to pass sentence of condemnation on much that we have done, and that we shall be so wholly in accord with His judgment that we shall accept the loss as being altogether right, with a peaceful and thankful mind. As Scripture is silent on this point, however, it would be foolish to dogmatize and we can only state how things appear to us.

It is very certain that when Revelation 21: 4 is fulfilled sorrow of every kind will be wholly done away.

The Power of Intercession.

Joshua was a great leader of men and a valiant soldier; but a striking feature of his warfare was that he was only successful as intercession was made for him. In his fight with Amalek (Exod. 17) it is recorded that “when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.”

This great need on Joshua's part is equally notable when the leadership of the nation was transferred from Moses to him; the Lord said to Moses, “Take thee Joshua the son of Nun . . . and set him before Eleazar the priest . . . and he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord . . . and Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation” (Numbers 27). It is evident that Joshua needed the service of the High Priest, part of whose office it was to make intercession for him in the conflicts that lay ahead in the land and to instruct him in the mind and will of God.

These things were written for our learning. Eleazar means “God is helper,” and in his priestly office he was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ.