

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

*“ For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled
in Heaven ”*

(Psalm 119: 89)

THIRTY-EIGHTH VOLUME

COMPRISING THE YEARS

1953, 1954, 1955

*“ The entrance of Thy words
giveth light ”*

(Psalm 119: 130)

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THE WORD AND THE THRONE

F. B. HOLE

(HEBREWS 4: 11-16)

As we enter upon another year we are reminded that the pilgrimage of the church is going to end in the rest of God, and we do well to listen to the exhortation, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." And the more so, since the exhortation leads us to the great High Priest, who is on high, and connected with Him we find the word of God on the one hand, and the throne of grace on the other.

The word of God is indeed profitable for doctrine and instruction in righteousness, as we learn in another scripture, but here it is its living, powerful, piercing, discerning character that is emphasized. As we are conscious of these features, we become aware of how much we need the ministry that flows from the great High Priest, who is in the seat of supreme power and yet is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It is because of what He is that the throne has become to us a throne of grace, whatever it may be to others.

When we read the word we are listening to God speaking to us, but to the throne we are to come with boldness, for here we have the privilege of addressing ourselves to God. We must however in our minds lay as much emphasis on the fact that it is a **throne** as upon the fact that it is a throne of **grace**.

If we rightly appreciate the fact that it is a throne we shall at once be impressed by His **majesty**, and gain a sense of our own **littleness**. Grace indicates that those who receive the favour are undeserving,

and we are therefore awakened to the fact of our **sinfulness** and His **mercy**. We do indeed need that all these things become increasingly real to us.

Let us exhort one another to give the word of God a larger and more authoritative place in our thoughts and lives. Thus we may more clearly judge our own motives, and give a more simple obedience to God's will and way for our steps.

Let us also have more recourse to the throne of grace, that we may obtain the mercy and seasonable help that we need. Only, let us maintain in our hearts, and express in word and attitude, a due sense of the majesty of the One to whom we come, so that in our prayers, and more especially in public prayer, we avoid all undue familiarity of address, while maintaining a sense of that nearness in which grace has set us.

Let no one think that this brief word of exhortation is unnecessary. Bibles indeed are multiplied, but the consistent and prayerful study of them seems to be less frequent. Consequently the need of prayer, and the desire for it, seems to be less felt. If God in His mercy granted to us some reviving in both these directions, a benefit to the whole church of God would soon be manifested. And not only so, for we believe there would be an overflow, which would produce an out-gathering from the world. So may it be to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessing of many.

THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES

J. N. DARBY.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” (1 Timothy 3: 16).

I HAVE a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of God by it, to adore His perfections — of Jesus, — the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God, to ministers of that Gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work, which is ever God's, was wrought in me through the means of the written word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is, will know what the Bible will be to such a one. If I have, alas, failed it, in nearly thirty years' arduous and varied life and labour — at least such, as far as the service of an unknown and feeble individual usually leads, I have never found it fail me: if it has not for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity. “The Word of the Lord abideth for ever.” If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it comes thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so; none but God could, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God and went to God, so does the book that divinely reveals Him come from and elevate to Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in

itself. The sun needs no light to see it by . . .

I beg to avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely-taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. That is, while of course allowing if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as God's Word. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself . . .

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength for near thirty years, have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the Word of God. In the beginning of that period, I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible church, and man himself crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such. I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before it was so. And here I will add, that although it requires the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it quickening power, yet divine truth, God's Word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the “breaker-up,” though he may

hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it — adapted in grace (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny the truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace

and love, who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, deeply, intimately, truly know Him — and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in His love, in such a way, is perfect joy. The Word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels. . . .

Let me add to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the Word is to read the Word itself.

PRAYER

A. J. POLLOCK.

"They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." (Acts 2: 42).

SUCH was the happy condition of things in the freshness of the early history of the Church of God. Centuries of its chequered story have rolled by, and today we are undoubtedly in its very closing phase upon earth; soon, we believe, to be brought to a close for believers by the second coming of our Lord to translate His Church to glory "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15: 52).

Scripture warns us what to expect at a time like the present. This is indicated in the Spirit's address to the assembly in Laodicea; the last of the seven churches in Asia to be so addressed (Rev. 3: 14-22). This address applied to the assembly then in Laodicea, and is likewise proph-

etic of what will obtain in the last days.

The Laodicean assembly was marked by the most appalling self-complacency, of such a nature as to completely blind them to their actual state before God. Their boast was, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." And what was the answer of Him, who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, whose eyes were as a flame of fire? Listen to His devastating words, "Thou . . . knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." No wonder that such a condition drew from His lips the words, "I will spue thee out of My mouth."

When we look around at the conditions prevailing today, we see Christendom characterized by just this same complacency and lukewarmness. This being so, is it not incumbent upon every true believer to listen earnestly to "what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22)? Seven times over are we exhorted to be overcomers by the grace of God in the power of the Spirit of God. Things are not what they were. There is much room for godly exercise before the Lord.

We make bold to say that one of the prime causes of spiritual feebleness, either in our private lives as believers, or as gathered in assemblies, is **prayerlessness**. There is the root of much of the sad state of things spiritually. We heard of a Christian who visited an assembly where about four hundred were at the breaking of bread. He was asked how many were in fellowship? His answer was, "Exactly twenty-seven." He had attended the assembly prayer meeting, and this was the number present. Tragic, was it not? A visitor was being shown over a large building in which Christians held their meetings. Being of a practical turn of mind, he asked how such a large place was heated. In reply he was shown a room where a number of Christians were on bended knee in earnest prayer to God. He was told this was where **spiritual** warmth was generated. Sad indeed, when this is lacking.

It will be helpful, if we consider briefly the whole setting of the Scripture, that heads this article, in relation to prayer. To pray aright

needs spiritual education, which the Holy Spirit can alone furnish. Prayer may be offered in much ignorance of God and His ways. Our text most notably links up prayer with the apostles' doctrine. The apostles declared, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6: 4).

It has been foolishly urged, that it does not matter what we believe, that what matters is conduct. But that is not so. We are governed by what we believe. The Apostle Paul could say, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, **manner of life**" (2 Tim. 3: 10). In the Scripture that heads this article, we find the apostles' doctrine leading to Christian conduct and fellowship.

What then was the apostles' doctrine in which the early believers continued so steadfastly? It is found in the apostolic, inspired writings. If every Christian answered to the apostolic teaching, what a mighty change would occur in Christendom! To note only one thing, that obtains in Christendom today, viz., the dividing of believers into two classes: (1) of priests as a distinct class in contra-distinction to (2) laymen. For this assumption, there is no Scriptural warrant whatsoever. Scripture affirms without reservation the priesthood of **all** believers. We read, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2: 5). Again, **all** believers join in saying, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us **kings and priests unto**

God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1: 5, 6). Again we read, "Blessed and holy is He that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be **priests of God and of Christ**, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20: 6). The setting aside of a special class as priests is to limit the action of the Spirit of God to **one** class, and plainly contradicts the Scripture, "But **all** these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, **dividing to EVERY man severally as HE will**" (1 Cor. 12: 11).

The early saints "continued **steadfastly . . . in breaking of bread and in prayers**. What a rebuke to many of us. We too often go by fits and starts, sometimes on the mountain top of spiritual exaltation, and sometimes in the valley of spiritual sloth and lukewarmness. And those, who resent plain speaking, are just the people, who need it; for earnest souls will ever welcome being brought face to face with facts, and will seek to adjust themselves by the help of the Holy Spirit to the needful exhortations of Scripture.

These early Christians "continued steadfastly . . . **in breaking of bread**." If we have a circumference of Christian privileges, surely the very central place must be given to "the breaking of bread." Our Scripture gives it great prominence. The way in which it was instituted by the Lord Himself, "the same night in which He was betrayed" (1 Cor. 11: 23); the simple unritualistic emblems on the table, the

loaf speaking of our Lord's body, given in sacrifice for us; the cup speaking of His precious blood shed for us, all this makes a great appeal to the affection of the Lord's people. Our Lord, realizing the broken state that Christian testimony would arrive at, assures us that "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20). This shows how much our Lord desires our remembrance. When so gathered, we find ourselves in our Lord's presence, and by the Spirit's leading we remember our Lord **in His death**, to whom and to which we owe everything.

Finally Scripture leads to what is most important. The early disciples "continued steadfastly . . . **in prayers**." Note very carefully this significant ending. It does not say, that they continued steadfastly . . . in breaking of bread and **in Bible readings**. No, it says, "In breaking of bread and **in prayers**." We surely ought to have full fellowship with Bible readings. Happy is it to see saints studying the word of God together! God bless the Bible readings! But it is worthy of special note to see the significant way our Scripture ends, emphasising the great place prayer has in the Christian economy.

As to private prayer we get the exhortation, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 17). Again, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ

Jesus" (Phil. 4: 6, 7). Even the very food we eat is "sanctified by the word of God **and prayer**" (1 Tim. 4: 5). That is why we should gratefully acknowledge the food given to us, and ask God's blessing upon it. Saints are exhorted 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" (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2).

This verse — Acts 2: 42 — refers to **assembly** prayer. There we are privileged to join with our fellow-Christians to pray, not so much for our personal and private and family needs, but rather for the Lord's interests in this world. What manifold needs there are! The needs of the gospel of the grace of God, the need for the ministry of the word among the saints, the state of the world, the condition of the church, and much more beside.

Each individual saint can be a help to the prayer meeting or a hindrance. To be in the Spirit, and give utterance to petitions under the Spirit's leading will bring real help to the prayer meeting. How many prayers we have listened to which were but a weariness to the flesh. We have heard prayers when we wondered whenever would the good brother come to a finish. The long-

est prayer recorded in the Bible, that of King Solomon's at the dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem, a very special occasion (2 Chron. 6: 14-42), only takes six or seven minutes to read. Lengthy prayers often kill a prayer meeting. Prayers composed of exposition of Scripture are surely out of place. God is not to be informed what is the meaning of His own inspired word. We heard of a very famous preacher in America, who was said to have given utterance to "the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a **Boston audience.**" What a rebuke! We pray to God. The wise man said, "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccles. 5: 2).

God be thanked for the faithful few, who regularly meet for prayer, counting on the Lord's presence, vouchsafed even to two or three. Let them pray on, for God answers prayer. There may yet be a fresh interest in the prayer meeting. There may yet be felt a fresh breath of the Spirit of God in their midst. Pray on! Pray on!! Pray on!!!

**“ Revive Thy work, O Lord:
Exalt Thy precious name;
And by the Holy Ghost our love
For Thee and Thine inflame.**

**Revive Thy work, O Lord:
And give refreshing showers,
The glory shall all Thine own,
The blessing, Lord, be ours.”**

Obedience is the only rightful state for the creature, or God would cease to be supreme — would cease to be God.

The spring of all evil from the beginning has been independence of will. Wherever there is independence, there is always sin.

THE LIVING GRACE OF CHRIST

(JOHN 21).

EXTRACTED.

THE great subject of John 21 is the living grace of the risen Saviour — grace, which having met our need **as sinners** in the blood shed upon the cross, now meets all our necessities **as saints** in the fulness here seen to reside in Jesus as risen from the dead. . . . Who can fail to be touched by the tenderness, the sympathy of Jesus in all His relations to His disciples till the hour of His death? But death and resurrection might have been supposed to change all this. How blessed, that when, as here, we find the risen Jesus in the midst of His disciples, it is the same Jesus — tender, compassionate, full of sympathy and love, which, if it wield the arm of omnipotence, can yet enter into the most minute circumstances of the disciples' conditions and wants!

(Vv. 1-3). At the opening of the chapter, we find a cluster of the disciples gathered together. On the night of His betrayal they had all forsaken Him and fled; and they all needed the restorings of His living grace as risen from the dead. Peter had, it is true, by his rashness, placed himself in circumstances which had made his fall more conspicuous than that of the rest; but all had forsaken their dying Lord and Master, and had proved, that though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. And though Jesus had already appeared to them once and again after His resurrection, we find them here, in verse 2, in such a state of soul as readily to respond to the proposal of one always the most forward to act — “I go a

fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.” They go, and spend the whole night in fruitless toil.

(Vv. 4-6). Three years and a half before, they had been called from that very employment by the Lord Himself. Jesus called them to follow Him, and to such of them as forsook their nets He said, “I will make you fishers of men.” From that time they had either accompanied Him, or gone at His bidding to preach the Gospel and cast out devils, He caring for all their wants, so that they lacked nothing. Now they supposed that His care over them was at an end, and that they had become dependent upon their own resources and endeavours. They go a fishing: but to what purpose was their toil? “That night they caught nothing.” In the morning, however, Jesus, who was cognizant of all their need, though they knew it not, stood on the shore, and said, “Children, have ye any meat?” They knew not that it was Jesus, for such was the manner of His intercourse with them after the resurrection; but there He was, with all the interest in their minutest cares which He had been wont to manifest in the days of His flesh. He bids them cast the net on the right side of the ship, and now they are not able to draw it for the multitude of the fishes.

In all this there was, no doubt, instruction both for them and for us, beyond the circumstances of the moment. It is surely the happy

privilege of all who know Jesus to testify of Him far and near; setting Him forth, according to the ability given, to poor perishing sinners, as their only hope and refuge. But while it is happy, and of all importance, that the heart be ready for this service anywhere and at all times, let us not forget that success depends entirely on our being in the current of God's workings. The disciples might spread the net, and cast it in the sea, but if not in the current where the fishes were, what advantage in it all? It is only in proportion as we individually walk with God, depending entirely upon Christ, and guided by Him, that blessing will attend our labours. It is not on the amount of labour that success depends, but on our being near enough to Christ to have His directions in casting the net on the right side of the ship.

(Vv. 7, 8). Nor is the same service assigned to all. . . . The vessels, moreover, of the several gifts differ from each other, according to the wisdom of Him who doeth all things after the counsel of His own will. All have not the promptitude of Peter, or the tenderness of John. We, in the narrowness of our hearts, would often seek to have every vessel cast in the same mould, while, as has been said by another, "Unity in diversity is God's principle, both in creation and in the church." In the chapter before us, we find in John the tenderness and delicacy of spiritual affection which was the first to perceive that it was the Lord Himself that stood on the shore; while in Peter there is the promptitude in action, in which he no sooner understands that it is the Lord, than he girds his fisher's coat

about him, and casts himself into the sea. What is recorded of each is beautifully characteristic. It was for the disciple who lay in Jesus' bosom to be the first to discern who He was, and cry, "It is the Lord!" while it was for Peter, forward, energetic, and impetuous, to plunge into the sea and swim to shore. Neither the Johns nor the Peters can be spared; each has his place and service; and we do well to remember that "all things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

(Vv. 9-14). It was not only that after they had spent their night in fruitless labour Jesus appeared to them, and directed them so to cast their net as to find a full supply, but when they reach the shore, what awaits them there? A repast ready prepared to their hands! "As soon, then, as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." Who was it that had thus been caring for them while they were toiling hard and without result? True, indeed, we are not told who it was that kindled the fire and dressed the food; but the silence of Scripture is often as impressive as its language, and the heart needs no testimony as to whose service of love this was! But how could so touching a proof have been afforded of the Saviour's changeless, living love and care? To guide the unconscious tribes of the deep to the disciples' net was an act of almighty power, which might well impress them as it did; but for their risen Lord to be thus personally the servant of their humblest wants, was an answer to their unbelieving fears which none but He

could give! And what a testimony to us that nothing which concerns us can be beneath His notice! "The very hairs of our heads are all numbered."

(Vv. 15-17). When, at their Lord's invitation, they had dined on what was prepared to their hand, and on some of the fish they had caught, the Lord addressed Himself to Peter. But if we are to understand the bearings of the conversation which ensued, we must glance for a moment at what had previously occurred. Nothing can be more important than the restoration of a soul which has fallen into sin; and in Peter's case this precious work may be traced from beginning to end. His restoration was provided for, indeed, before he fell. Else how could he have been restored? Jesus knew the danger which awaited all His disciples, and to which Peter, by his impetuosity and self-confidence, was peculiarly exposed. "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: and when thou art converted [or restored] strengthen thy brethren." Peter knew not his danger; but the Lord knew it, and thus graciously interceded for him, even before his fall was consummated. What a comfort that we have One who ever lives to make intercession for us! One who intercedes in anticipation of our failing; and not only when we have actually failed!

The circumstances of Peter's fall are well known, and need not be retraced. When self-confidence had betrayed him into rash zeal, distance from his Lord, and companionship

with His enemies, warming himself at their fire, the last step, the outward fall, was but the natural result of all that had occurred. Alas! what poor nothings we are when left to our own strength. There may be life—divine life; but if we do not realise that we have no strength to follow out the impulses and tendencies of this life, and so lean entirely on the strength of Jesus, we may be left, like Peter, to learn by experience the bitter but wholesome and needed truth. But the Lord remembers His unfaithful disciple. "The cock crew, and the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." That look broke Peter's heart. He "went out, and wept bitterly." Such is the first stage in the restoration of a soul. To be broken-hearted under the look of Jesus, recalling to the conscience of Peter the words by which he had been forewarned of the very sin which he thought it impossible he could commit, but in which the eye of Jesus now rests upon him — to taste the bitterness of sin in the presence of the very grace which had thus forewarned, and which now reminds — and penetrated with shame and grief, to go out and weep bitterly, such is the commencement in a lapsed soul of the work by which, in the grace of Christ, that soul is to be restored.

In John 20, we find Peter in company with the disciple whom Jesus loved. Mary informs them that she has been to the sepulchre, and that the body of Jesus has been removed. "Peter, therefore, went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre . . . But between this journey to the sepulchre and the events of our chapter, an interview — a

personal interview — had taken place between Peter and his risen Lord. In Mark 16: 7, the angel says to the women, while announcing the resurrection of Jesus, "But go your way, tell his disciples **and Peter** that He goeth before you into Galilee." Lest Peter in his despondency should deem himself excluded from a general message to the disciples, his name is thus specifically mentioned. But in Luke 24: 34, the two, on their return from Emmaus, find the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, "saying, The Lord is risen indeed, **and hath appeared** to Simon." In 1 Corinthians 15: 5, moreover, Paul, witnessing of Christ's resurrection, says, "He was seen of Cephas." Need it be asked what the object of this separate interview with Peter can have been? Ah! there are questions in the soul of a saint who has fallen as Peter did, which can only be settled between that soul and Christ. There can be no third party present at such a moment. The presence of a third party would be felt to be an intrusion. The soul needs to hear from Christ's own mouth the assurance of His unchanged and unchanging love, and to receive from Himself the seal of forgiveness. This is needed, not because of any change in the blessed Saviour, but to re-assure the soul of His repentant disciple, restoring thus the confidence which sets the heart free and at ease in His presence. Such had evidently been the result of this interview of Peter with his risen Lord. At the sea of Tiberias there is none of the shrinking back which we have noticed on his way to the sepulchre. No, as soon as John says, "It is the Lord," Peter plunges into the sea,

that he may the more quickly be at His feet, or by His side.

Was, then, the restoration of his soul complete when he thus swam to shore on hearing that it was the Lord? No, there needed a further process still. Bitterly had he mourned his sin in denying the Lord: fully was he now assured of his Lord's forgiveness and unchanged affection; but he had not yet been led to discern and judge in himself the secret root of the evil into which he had fallen. The process of restoration is not complete as long as this is unaccomplished; and it was to this, accordingly, that the Lord now addressed Himself. Most tenderly, yet unsparingly, does Jesus go to work with His disciple. Not when they were hungry and faint, but "when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" . . . "You said, though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I. Are you still of the same mind? Lovest thou Me more than these do?" But Peter understands Him not. His confidence, indeed, in the love of Him who was thus probing him was not at all disturbed, nor did Jesus wish that it should be. Nay, He does everything to encourage and strengthen it. He confides to his care the precious lambs of His flock as the most tender pledge of His confidence and love; but still the probing must be completed. A second time the question is proposed; then a third; and now, as though the number recalled the thrice-repeated denial of his Lord, and the warning which his self-confidence had previously received, all seems to flash upon his conscience. He is "grieved," not surely with his

Lord, but with himself; while his third answer evinces that the probe had reached the bottom of the wound. The root of his sin was now laid bare to his conscience; and in appealing, as he does, to Christ's omniscience, he makes plain that he bows entirely to the warning called forth, not by his sin, but by the self-confidence which was sure to betray him into sin. Instead of protesting now that his love to Christ is greater than that of any one besides, he, in effect, acknowledges, that anyone judging by his conduct would not suppose that he loved Christ at all; but, as the Lord knew his heart, he could appeal to Him. "Lord, **Thou** knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." He can be trusted now; for he has learned his own weakness, and the only secret of real strength; and he is again commanded, "Feed My sheep."

(Vv. 18, 19). Nor was this the whole. As has been remarked elsewhere by another, there might still have remained one sting — one subject of bitter reproach — in the review by Peter of this epoch in his history. One can well understand how he might have said, "Ah! I once had the opportunity of dying for my Master — of actually sharing His cross — but now that opportunity is gone. In my weakness and wilfulness, I have thrown it away, and it can never be restored." "Yes," it is as though the Saviour said, "it can and shall be restored." Grace can restore what sin has forfeited; and surely this is what was implied in the words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be

old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Once the Apostle had been within view of death, **with** and **for** his Master, and in the energy of his own will he had vowed to go though it. He girded himself and walked **whither he would** — and, alas! as we all know, he failed. To will was present; but how to perform required a strength, the lack of which Peter had now fully proved. But still he was to have the honour and privilege of being crucified for Christ. Not, as before, through any energy of his own will, but in the complete renunciation of himself, and meek submission to the will of another, he should by death, and that too, the death of the cross, glorify God! "And when He had spoken this, He said unto him, Follow Me."

Is not this grace, beloved? What can compare with this living grace of our risen, living Lord? And it is He who says to us, as He said to Peter, "Follow Me." Not in the restless endeavour to live up to a certain standard of attainment; but the heart drawn onward by the attraction of this perfect grace, this living love! A love which, while it reaches to the lowest depths of our saddest failures, pardoning, probing, restoring us, sets us again on our feet in the path which He Himself has trod, and says, "Follow me." Shall we not follow Him indeed? Can we decline to follow, if His grace, as thus made known, has really touched our hearts?

— *Extracted from "The Present Testimony," 1856. Author believed to be W. Trotter.*

BIBLE STUDY—LEVITICUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 6: 8 — 10: 7)

FROM verse 8 of chapter 6 to the end of chapter 7 we have the law of the various offerings. In each case the "law" furnishes further details as to how the offering was to be presented to the Lord and, more particularly, how the priests were to deal with the parts that were not burned before Him.

Again the burnt offering comes first. Since all was consumed on the altar, the law concerning it was simple. Every morning the wood was to be laid on the altar and the burnt offering consumed upon it; but so it was to be in the evening and all the night the fire on the altar was to be kept burning. Never was the fire to go out, and the very ashes were to be dealt with in a reverent manner.

In this we may learn two things. First, that the sweet savour of the sacrifice of Christ is ever before God. In the value and fragrance of His work propitiation has been effected, and so God still goes forward with an erring people. But second, that the fire was never to go out because it typified the consuming judgment of God, the claims of which could never be satisfied by the shadow sacrifices demanded by the law. Only when the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ had been accomplished could the words be written, "There is no more offering for sin" (Heb. 10: 18). Today we may rejoice that "the fire upon the altar" has indeed gone out, though the fire of God's wrath will yet burn against sinful men, who have rejected His grace, when they reach a lost

eternity.

The law of the meat offering occupies verses 14-18, and is mainly concerned with that part of the offering which was not burnt as a sweet savour, and so was to be eaten by Aaron and his sons. It was food for the priestly family only; that is, for the males who would normally officiate as priests. It was to be treated as a most holy thing. Leaven was to be completely excluded, and it was to be eaten in the tabernacle precincts. In the next chapter we find that those who were permitted to eat of the peace offerings had to be ceremonially clean, and this doubtless applied to the priests who partook of the meat offerings. Today every saint is constituted a priest, but we need to be morally clean to digest inwardly the excellencies of the life of our blessed Lord, which were so wholly offered to God.

Verses 19-23 deal with the special meat offering of Aaron and his sons in the day of his anointing. This was to be offered half in the morning and half at night, but all was to be burnt as a sweet savour and none was to be eaten. Not till the priest was anointed and fully qualified was he permitted to partake, but in his anointing the sweet savour was to go up to God.

The remainder of the chapter is occupied with the law of the sin offering. Verse 25 shows how closely it was linked with the burnt offering, and just because it had definite reference to sin its holiness is specially emphasized. Both offerings

found their fulfilment in the sacrificial death of Christ, but the burnt offering typified the Godward side of it, more connected with propitiation, while the sin offering typified the manward side, connected with substitution.

Parts of the sin offering were to be eaten by the males of the priestly families, but only in the tabernacle and its court and not in their homes. But to this there was an exception. If the blood had been brought into the holy place for reconciliation, as was to be the case when the priest himself sinned or the whole congregation was involved in sin, then none of it was to be eaten. The body of the animal was to be burned without the camp, as we saw in chapter 4. In ordinary cases the priests did eat, and this may remind us today that though the sin may be on the part of another the saint in priestly condition may take it home to himself, while helping the other. We find something in the spirit of this when we read Galatians 6: 1, 2.

Chapter 7: 1-7 records the law of the trespass offering, which is the same as for the sin offering. As verse 7 says, "there is one law for them." In verses 8-10 we have a supplementary detail, first as to the skin of the burnt offering, which was to be for the offering priest, who was permitted to have the externals of the sacrifice, the inwards of which were wholly for God. We may apply this by reminding ourselves that though we may be allowed to share in the sweet savour of the death of Christ, we only touch the externals. The inward excellence, as known to God, must ever be beyond us.

Then all of the meat offerings

which was left for the consumption of the priests, if baked or fried was to be the portion of the offering priest. If mingled with oil and dry, it was to be shared equally among all the sons of Aaron. Thus a distinction was made between priests who were passive in any given matter and the priest who was active. All believers are priests but not all priests are in action.

The law of the peace offering extends from verse 11 to verse 34. The order of the offerings is changed, and here it comes last, the reason being, we suppose, that, while in the other cases the participators were only the priests, here the common person, who brought the offering was permitted to have a share. A peace offering might be brought for a thanksgiving (verse 12), or in connection with a vow or voluntary offering (verse 16), and in the latter case the time for eating was extended to two days. There was the portion for God, a portion for the priest and a portion for the offerer, but the communion based upon a voluntary offering endures longer than that based upon thankfulness for some benefit conferred.

Here again the holiness of the offering is enforced. The partaker must himself be clean, and that which he eats must be preserved from contamination. Hereby we are reminded that we must be clean not only in ourselves but also in our ways and associations. No communion with God is possible apart from that. In this connection too we are told that both fat and blood were prohibited. The life and excellence of the victims was wholly for the Lord.

The special portion of the officiating priest was to be the right shoulder of the victim. The breast that was waved before the Lord was also to be the portion of the priests. We find an allusion to this in 1 Corinthians 10: 18. Even in Israel those who did eat of the sacrifices were identified with the altar. It imposed at once special cleanliness in person and ways upon the common person who partook, as we have just seen, and the priests were all their lives set apart for God. Today every true believer is a priest and must never forget he is identified with the Christ who died.

The few verses that close the chapter give a summary of the things we have briefly considered, and enforce the fact that though many of the details laid down may at first sight seem to be of a rather trifling nature, they are nevertheless the things "which the Lord commanded Moses . . . in the day that He commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations." Similarly we may read 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14, and think that the instructions given through Paul for the order of the assemblings of the church of God, are some of them rather trifling; but let us not overlook verse 37 of chapter 14. The "commandments of the Lord" through the Apostle Paul are no less binding than the commandments of the Lord through Moses, though we are now under grace and not law.

Chapter 8 is occupied with the record of how Moses himself acted in complete obedience to the divine command when he came to the point of the consecration of Aaron and his sons. We saw how all was to be done when we read Exodus 29, we

now are permitted to see how carefully Moses obeyed, so that presently he received the commendation, "My servant Moses . . . is faithful in all Mine house" (Num. 12: 7). Thus, in the consecration of Aaron and his sons there was the bathing all over (verse 6), typical of the new birth; then the application of the blood of sacrifice (verses 23 and 24), typical of the redeeming blood of Christ; then the application of the oil (verse 30), typical of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Today no one becomes a priest except they are the subject of a work wrought in them — the new birth — and know the efficacy of the blood of Christ, shed for them, and have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed upon them.

But we notice of course that, as had been directed, Aaron had the anointing oil not merely sprinkled but poured upon his head (verse 12). Here he stands as a type of our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who needed no application of the blood but was anointed with the Spirit in His solitary perfection. We have an allusion to this in Psalm 138: 2, where the unity of brethren that is so good and pleasant, is likened to the "ointment" or oil that was poured so copiously upon Aaron's head that it ran down beard and garment even to the skirts of it. The outpouring of the Spirit upon the church today, and the effusion that is to mark the world to come, according to Joel 2: 28, are both in the nature of an overflow from our High Priest on high.

In our chapter we also learn that Moses applied both blood and oil to the tabernacle and altar and other vessels of the sanctuary, and this is

alluded to in Hebrews 9: 21, as far as the blood is concerned. It shows that the whole of this earthly system stood before God on that basis. For us it typified that the cross of Christ, coupled with the gift of the Spirit, forms the foundation of all our blessing. But all through this chapter it is not merely the blood **shed**, but also the blood **applied**. And that, not only to the tabernacle and its vessels, but also to the persons of the priests: right ear, right hand, right foot. The order is significant. By the ear we hear the word of God. By hand and foot we act and walk according to that which we hear. The movements of the priest are to be controlled by what he hears.

At the end of this chapter (verses 31-36), we see that Moses, who was the mediator of this earthly system, carefully instructed Aaron and his sons as to the seven days that followed their consecration. They were to eat the flesh of the ram of consecration, as had been made plain in Exodus 29, and also they were to abide in the tabernacle and its court for the seven days, until the atonement for themselves and the whole system was completed. In this way the claims of the holiness of God were to be pressed upon them.

All this having been carried out according to God's order, the eighth day arrived, and proved to be a very special occasion. With this chapter 9 is occupied. All is still under the direction of Moses, but, having been installed, Aaron is now the chief actor. He had to offer first for himself and then for the people, and it is to be noted that in both verses 2 and 3 the sin offering is mentioned

before the burnt offering. At the beginning of the Book the burnt offering came first, and the sin and trespass offerings came last, typifying Christ and His sacrifice as viewed by God. But here the application to us is typified, and until our sins are settled we can present nothing at all to God. Hence the sin offering must of necessity come first, and the others follow.

Verse 8 records the slaying of the sin offering which was for himself. Since he was now the anointed priest, and all the people were represented in him, the carcass of the victim was burned "without the camp" (verse 11), according to the instructions. Verse 15 records the sin offering for the people, and this was dealt with "as the first," since, when the whole people were in question, the procedure was to be the same as for the anointed priest.

In verses 12-14 we have the burnt offering for himself and in verse 16 the burnt offering for the people. These offerings were followed by both meat and peace offerings (verses 17-21), but no mention is made of a trespass offering, for as yet there had been no time for cases of actual trespass to have occurred.

When all this was accomplished, the great event of the eighth day came to pass. First, the newly installed priest lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them. Then both Moses and he went into the tabernacle, and coming out again gave a blessing, but this time as through the mediator as well as through the priest. Whatever the people might prove themselves to be, the attitude of God toward them was one of blessing. When we read

the four verses that close the Gospel of Luke, we at once feel how far more wonderful were the uplifted hands and the blessing of the Lord Jesus, just as He ascended into heaven, to take up His High Priestly work there, having accomplished on earth propitiation by His blood.

But second, an even greater event was the appearing of the glory of the Lord in the sight of all the people, and coupled with this fire came out from Him and consumed the burnt offering on the altar. The effect upon the people was instantaneous. No man can stand in the presence of the glory of God, for all have come short of it, as we read in Romans 3: 23.

The instructions as to how the various sacrifices were to be offered have already been before us, but not till the consecration of Aaron do we read of them actually being made, so we may say that at the start it was the hand of God that lit on the altar the fire to consume the burnt offering, which was never to go out, as we have already seen. It was God's fire and not man's fire which consumed the sacrifice, and the typical force of this is easily seen.

Thus far the hand of the faithful Moses had been on all the events of the day, but before it closed the two elder sons of Aaron broke away from under his direction and offered incense on "strange fire" before the Lord. The incense was right but the fire was wrong. As far as we know, the only instruction that had been given in this matter is found in Exodus 30: 7, 8, where the fire is connected with the lighting of the lamps in the holy place. They may have thought that if the incense was

right any fire would do to bring out its fragrance. But no, the fire must be God's fire and not man's. Let us learn from this that though in our worship the words we use are altogether right, if the energy behind their utterance is of the flesh, all is wrong. Worship must be by the Spirit of God, and we have indeed to say,

"Then let **Thy grace** mould every word

That meets Thy holy ear."

They used strange fire, and the fire of the Lord came out and consumed them. This may appear to us very drastic judgment, but it is evidently God's way at the beginning of any new movement to emphasize His holiness in a severe way. So it was with the first man who broke the sabbath; and with Achan, just as Israel entered the land; and with **A n a n i a s** and Sapphira at the beginning of the church. Many similar transgressions may have occurred in the respective histories without such a judgment.

We add the simple yet solemn reflection that everything that is committed to the hands of men breaks down at the outset. It was so in the Garden of Eden, and again when the law was given, in the episode of the golden calf, and so it is here. The priesthood having been established, on the very day on which they began to officiate failure supervened and Nadab and Abihu died, that so God might be sanctified before all the people. Though the people might mourn, the claim of God on the priests was such that no mourning became them. The claims of natural relationship were set aside.

THINGS THAT REMAIN

J. HOUSTON

THE apostle John survived all the other apostles. He lived to see the apostacy; if not in actual bloom, in bud, with all the essential elements for its full development. Already many antichrists had come; were actually present, when he wrote. So he could say: "Even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2: 18).

Being the last of the apostles, he closed the apostolic witness. His ministry deals with things that remain till the Lord's return. This is indicated in the Lord's word to Peter: "If I will that he [that is, John] tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me" (John 21: 22). Peter followed the Lord; not only in life, but also in death. He referred to his death: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me" (2 Peter 1: 14). Similarly, Paul spoke of his death: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. 4: 6). John remained; nothing is said of his death. He tarries till the Lord returns; that is, of course, in reference to his **ministry**, in its peculiar character, and not his **person**.

Peter and Paul, in their ministry, had to do with what was dispensational: the former was the apostle of the circumcision; the latter, of the uncircumcision. John has nothing to say of these national distinctions. He views the Jews as reprobate, that is, nationally; and brings in the believing Gentiles with the believing Jews, to form the one flock, and one

family of God (John 1: 11; 10: 16; 17: 20, 21). His ministry does not come within the limits of a dispensation which has a beginning and an end. He gives that which never began and never can end, even **eternal life**. "That eternal life, which was with the Father," was manifested unto the apostles, when Christ became incarnate. He was the Word; and the Word became flesh. It was audible; the apostle heard it. It was visible; they saw it. It was tangible; they handled it. It was **their personal witness** that they bore to it; they saw with **their eyes**, and handled with **their hands**, "of the Word of life." It was necessary to give clear and conclusive witness to the incarnation of Christ; for antichrist denied it, and the whole apostate movement has its origin in that denial. "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" (chap. 4: 3).

John gives us three reasons for writing his First Epistle: (1) "These things write we unto you, that **your joy may be full**"; (2) "These things have I written unto you, **concerning them that seduce you**"; and (3) "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that **ye have eternal life**" (chap. 1: 4; 2: 26; 5: 13). Since these three points comprehend, in the main, the general teaching of the Epistle, we shall concentrate briefly upon them.

Full joy is based upon a known relationship with the Father and the Son; and it flows from the Father's

love, filling the heart. This is perfect love; and perfect love casts out all fear. Full joy admits of no increase; and of no diminution. It is not intensified by ecstasy; nor weakened by depression. It never "ebbs and flows": low tide today; high tide tomorrow. The changing wind of circumstances never affects it. It runs deep into the heart, and rises high to its source. It is like the "well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4: 14). Mr. Darby aptly refers to it in one of his hymns:

"Yet deeper, if a calmer joy
The Father's love shall raise."

What a portion for our heart as apostasy increases in the professing Church, and unrest in the godless world!

When we look around and see the antichrists at work, we are apt to be **alarmed**, and **doubt**, as to the safety of God's people. John tells us there is no need for alarm; and no ground for doubt. Let the antichrists do their worst, they can but fulfil what is predetermined of them. Outside of their bounds they cannot go. God's people are safe in His hand. Precious security! Perfect safety in a world of evil!

In reference to their safety, John tells us two things about them: they know the truth; and they have an unction of the Holy One, and have no need that any man should teach them (chap. 2: 18-29). If they **know** the truth, they have obviously no need to be taught it. If they have the unction of the Holy One, that is, the Holy Spirit, who teaches them all things **from within**, they are not dependent upon teaching **from with-**

out, into which the venom of false doctrine can be introduced. "He that believeth on the Son of God **hath the witness in himself**" (chap. 5: 10). Speaking of the New Covenant, it is said by God: "And they [His people] shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for **all shall know Me**, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8: 11). John says of the very babes in God's family: "Ye have known the Father" (chap. 2: 13).

Antichrists abide not in the truth. The devil, himself "abode not in the truth" (John 8: 44). This is the meaning of apostasy — **not to abide in the truth**. Simple enough to understand! Nevertheless, how serious and far-reaching are the principles involved, **in not abiding in the truth!** In fact, the whole history of evil finds its source there. Doubtless false teachers will give specious reasoning about advancement, progress, further enlightenment, and such things; but all this shows they do not possess the object of their quest. In fact, they have departed from it, and are in the dark, groping in blindness, withal wilful, disobedient and proud. For God's dear people there is but one thing; it is this: "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (chap. 2: 24). Notice it **abides in us**; there is, therefore, no advancement or progress **towards it**. Notice too, it is **from the beginning**; there is, therefore, no "new light" in the sense of further revelation, for all is revealed, and remains revealed, un-

changingly the same. Hence the saying: "What is new is not true; what is true is not new." It is **from the beginning**. Oh, what comfort and untold bliss we have by abiding in the Son and in the Father!

Lastly, we have the full assurance by the witness of God that we have eternal life. "This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5: 11). Man forfeited life in Eden; consequently, death is upon him. He failed to obtain the life which was conditional under the law, such as it was, and came under the curse, the law pronounced. Through faith in the Son of God we have eternal life, which is the gift of God. God

bears witness that we have eternal life in the Son. No one can gainsay this. If it is true that "the wages of sin is death," it is equally true "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23). God gave it; it is His gift in the Son. He will never withdraw it, because He has given it! This is not mere reasoning; it is blessed fact!

"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (chap. 5: 20, 21).

THE SON OF MAN

A. J. POLLOCK

PSALM 8 is composed of nine short verses, containing intimations of most remarkable events of widest range and import, their fulfilment awaiting the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, the accomplishment of His atoning death on the cross of Calvary, and of His future glorious reign over the whole earth. One can imagine saints of Old Testament times pondering over this short Psalm, wondering what its full import might mean, yet deriving great comfort in the promise of a great and mighty Deliverer, "**The Son of Man.**"

The opening and closing verses of this beautiful Psalm are very much the same. The Psalm begins and ends with God. He is the Supreme, the Creator, the Saviour-God, to whom we owe every blessing,

earthly and spiritual, for time and for eternity. The Psalm begins and ends with the Lord's name being excellent in all the earth, His glory set by Him **above** the heavens.

We come then to a very vivid and startling contrast. The Psalmist passes from the contemplation of the vastness of creation with its myriad marvels of air and land and sea, to speak of "babes and sucklings." Babes are pictures of weakness and helplessness; sucklings are still more immature, **d e p e n d e n t** on their mother's breasts for sustenance. Yet we are told, that "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained **strength** because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger" (verse 2).

In the New Testament this was

quoted by our Lord in a new setting. We read: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He [Jesus] did, and the children crying in the Temple, and saying Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased . . . Jesus saith unto them, Yea: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected **praise?**" (Matt. 21: 15, 16). **Strength** is the word used in the Old Testament; **praise** in the New Testament. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty . . . and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1: 27-29). Wonder of wonders, the supreme display of God's victory over all His enemies and the presentation of His grace to sinful men, was all wrapped up in the Holy Babe, lying in His virgin-mother's arms in the stable at Bethlehem. How wonderfully this story is unfolded in the Scriptures of truth!

Psalm 8 is a **night** Psalm. Old Testament times were **spiritually** the night, gradually working up to the twilight before the dawning of the day. The Tabernacle and its ritual served as "**shadow** of heavenly things" (Heb. 8: 5); the law was "a **shadow** of good things to come" (Heb. 10: 1). How vastly different was it, when our Lord appeared on this earth in public testimony. He could say: "I AM **the light of the world**: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8: 12). The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2: 8). How glorious will it be when our Lord shall reign over this sadly troubled

world, when as **THE SUN of righteousness** He "shall arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4: 2). Lord, haste that blissful day!

The Psalmist looked up at the heavens, **the moon and the stars**, set in their ordained place by Divine command, truly an awe-inspiring sight, declaring God's "eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1: 20).

This led the Psalmist to contrast man's sad condition with the glories of creation. When he thought of God's work, its stability and permanence, and then of poor, frail, dying man, here today and gone tomorrow, his days "swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and one spent without hope" (Job 7: 6), a question was wrung from his troubled heart. Yet there came with it instantly the glorious answer of God's gracious provision of a Deliverer in the Person of **the Son of Man**. We read: "What is man [Hebrew, **enosh**], that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man [Hebrew, **adam**] that Thou visitest Him?" (verse 4).

There are at least ten different words in the Hebrew language translated as **man** in our English Bibles. The careful choice of the Hebrew word for man in Psalm 8 is most instructive, exhibiting the accuracy of the inspired word of God. The word "adam" stands for man as created by God. When there was only one man on the earth, there was no need to call our first parent by a distinguishing name.

The word "enosh" stands for poor, frail, sinful man, approaching

death as the penalty of sin. Doubtless you will remember where in Scripture we hear of **Enosh** for the first time. Abel was murdered by Cain, but God graciously gave our first parents another son, whom they called Seth. We read, "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name **Enosh**," and then is added very significantly, "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4: 26). How very cheering it is to see that there were those in the early days of the earth's history who recognized their fallen condition before God, and sought His mercy in prayer. Did God answer? Did God hear? Most surely He did.

The Son of Man is introduced in the Psalm as bringing in victory, dominion and peace. We may well ask, Who is this Son of Man? Ezekiel is described as **son of man** over eighty times in the prophecy that bears his name. The phrase, **son of man**, as applying to Ezekiel, is always **without** the definite article, and simply signifies that he was of the human race. On the other hand, the phrase, **THE Son of Man**, with the definite article, is always a title referring to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to no one else. Upon the Son of Man the hope of mankind rests alone.

There are only three places in the Old Testament where the Son of Man is prophetically alluded to. In Psalm 8 He was made to have dominion over the works of God's hands, all things are to be put under His feet. All flesh, whether on land, in the air, in the sea, will be happy under His beneficent rule. How sadly troubled is the world today!

We are surely in the last days. Events move like the rapids before the falls. The coming of the Lord draws blessedly nigh.

How happily has the Christian poet voiced the feelings of God's dear people at a time like this:

"Lord, Lord, Thy fair creation
groans,
The air, the earth, the sea,
In unison with all our hearts,
And calls aloud for Thee."

The prophet, Daniel, also drew attention to **the Son of Man** in a very descriptive passage. We read: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7: 13, 14). All this will be fulfilled to the letter in a future day.

The third place where the **Son of Man** is mentioned is in Psalm 80. There we have a pathetic picture of Israel privileged as a vineyard of Jehovah's planting, and a description given of the great attention He paid to the land of His choice. Israel alas! utterly failed. We read of "the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted," that "it is burned with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance" (verses 15, 16). Was God defeated? Had He no resource to fall back upon? Here is the imme-

diate response, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon **the Son of Man** whom Thou madest strong for Thyself."

When we come to the New Testament the Son of Man is mentioned about eighty times in the four gospels. The Lord repeatedly referred to Himself as the Son of Man. For example: "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day" (Luke 9: 22); "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. 9: 6); "The Son of Man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Luke 6: 5); "The Father . . . hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is **the Son of Man**" (John 5: 27).

In Psalm 8: 5, we come to a very central and vital statement: "Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour." If the Son of Man was made a little lower than the angels, He must have been previously higher than the angels. Angels are the highest creation of God, who "maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire" (Heb. 1: 7). There are none higher save God Himself. We take an infinite step from the created to the Creator, and learn that He, who was made a little lower than the angels, was none less than "GOD manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16). This is just what is taught in Isaiah 9: 6. The Child of **days**, as He lay in His virgin-mother's arms, was none less than the Father of **eternity**, THE MIGHTY GOD.

Here is a New Testament Scrip-

ture stating the same thing. "The Word was God [**Deity**] . . . the Word was made flesh [**man**], and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1: 1 and 14). There is a mystery that the ripest saint of God will never understand.

Then we are told that the One made lower than the angels is to be crowned with glory and honour. We know how our Lord, having made atonement for sin in His death at the cross of Calvary, rose triumphant from the dead, and was "received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16: 19). A New Testament Scripture, quoting Psalm 8: 5, throws great light on that verse. We read: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2: 9). Note carefully that the words, "**For the suffering of death,**" are not found in Psalm 8: 5, but serve to shed further light on that verse. Another scripture, Philip- pians 2: 8, 9, states the same thing. Our Lord was made lower than the angels with a view to His atoning death and then crowned with glory and honour as the consequence of it.

Blessed Saviour! It was not nails that bound Him to the cross of shame, but devotedness to the will of His Father, and His deep love for sinful man. Here is the secret of the **Son of Man**, destined to take the highest place, taking the lowest place. It was in order that He might associate with Himself in His

exaltation sinners saved by grace, and indwelt by God's Holy Spirit. There was no other way whereby

this might be our blissful portion. And He went that way, blessed be His holy name for ever!

“SUDDENLY” “IN A MOMENT”

T. D. BELL.

THE first of these expressions occurs in Acts 2: 2, at the commencement of the Church's history here. The second, from 1 Corinthians 15: 52, describes the manner of her translation to glory at the end of her earthly sojourn.

Slow and often painful development is usually the mark of man's work in the earth. After long building and testing, what he makes is seen functioning at last. God's work, as recorded in Acts 2, is suddenly formed and immediately active.

Up to that moment, the followers of the Lord, whether apostles or disciples, though greatly blessed and honoured, were disciples and apostles **only**. At that moment, “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1: 4), was fulfilled. The Holy Ghost appeared as, “cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” In result, “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” From that sudden event and onwards the church was here, and immediately in action.

The adding “to the church daily such as should be saved” which commenced then, goes on still, and will go on till the number is complete. It is true of course that one about to be so added — Paul the Apostle — was to be the minister of fresh revelations, even from the glory and to the Gentiles. Never-

theless in all that was vitally characteristic, the church was here from that moment, and “the apostles' doctrine and fellowship” the “breaking of bread,” and the “prayers,” which commenced then, continue still.

Long growth and slow development in man's things. The church suddenly formed, and immediately active! The first is of earth; the second from heaven.

That which is earthly reaches its end either by destruction or by growing old and decaying, when it is replaced by something new. The second expression, “in a moment,” is the way the word speaks of the approaching translation of the church to glory. Till then it is present and active in the earth, and the Lord's presence is guaranteed to the two or three who “gathered together” in His name, according to Matthew 18: 20. Still we have the Apostles' doctrine, though it is through the Scriptures now, and the fellowship. Still the breaking of bread and the prayers, until — one brief moment, and the church is translated to glory!

Gradual decline and decay! Suddenly in a moment removed to glory! The first is of earth; the second of heaven.

A third feature of earthly things is their constant changing. In contrast to this, the glory presents the

unchanging. Angels, as messengers of the glory, appeared to Abraham and Lot, just as to the wondering "men of Galilee" in Acts 1: 11, or to Peter in prison, as recorded in Acts 12. The angels still keep their first estate, and, may we not add, the conducting of Lot from Sodom, and of Peter from prison, might, as regards angelic action, have been done on the same day.

Again, we notice that the church is seen at the beginning of the coming millennial age, as "the bride, the Lamb's wife . . . the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21: 9, 10). But in verse 2 of that chapter, that age had passed, for the present earth and heaven had passed away, and yet John saw "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Thus the church enters the unchanging ages of eternity, still in the same character, with the beauty of her adorning still, as first seen in glory.

Above all, wearied overmuch by change and decay in the things of man's world, both religious and secular, how good it is to voice our Spirit-given desires to the One enthroned above, and find Him still, "the Same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13: 8).

Yes, heavenly things go on unchanged! At times we see that sight at which we stand ever wondering, and with spirits bowed, for God is at work, we watch a soul just coming to know the Saviour. Do we not remember then, that the self-same trembling, those tears, that dawning joy, were ours too, when we passed that way? With our hands clasped in those of a new found brother in Christ, do we not stretch those hands across the centuries — so to speak — one with the Philippian jailor, and with Lydia of Thyatira, whose heart and house too the Lord opened in the same way? Heavenly things change not!

Though man's ways, and our own hearts too, have brought this world's things in, to our damage, are not those saved ones still to be found, where the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, with the breaking of bread and prayers still continue? And this, even among two or three, who are found gathered together to His name, within, while without the atomic age is passing on, and presently to pass away.

So we may say that "suddenly" commencing, departing "in a moment," and "continuing steadfast" meanwhile, are all marks that stamp the church as heavenly.

PETER'S fall began by want of dependence, and by neglecting prayer. We must be watching "unto prayer"; not merely ready to pray when temptation comes, but walking with God, and so meeting it in the power of previous communion and prayer.

THE NEED FOR PRAYER

G. E. HOYLE

NO doubt many Christians deplore the lack of interest in prayer meetings, that is shown by some, but in considering the subject of prayer, one is not so much concerned about meetings as with the need for individual, private prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5: 16).

Let us first of all remember the example set by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Of Him it was written, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was;" and again, "When He prepared the heavens, I was there" (Prov. 8: 23, 27). In the New Testament we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1: 1). Yet, when here on earth, the Son of God, spotless, sinless, holy, undefiled, He found resource in prayer.

He was surrounded by sinful men, yet in truth was God manifested in the flesh. His every deed and word and step was challenged by His enemies. He was hated and despised by those He came to save. And we find Him spending all the night in prayer.

"And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6: 12). And then when the day came, He called His disciples to Him, and came down with them on to the plain, and when the multitude sought to touch Him, "there went virtue out of Him and healed them all."

What a lesson for us is found in this! If our Lord felt the need to go into His Father's presence in this way, how great indeed must our need be, seeing we still have the flesh in us, with all its perversity and weakness. Let us think this over very carefully.

There are three features in this incident in Luke 6, which we would like to emphasize. First, that when the day dawned He called the disciples up to Himself in the mountain. Waiting on the Lord, we renew our strength, and surely our Lord would have us commence our day by "going up the mountain" to Him, that we may do so. Nothing is more necessary for us than this.

Then secondly, He came down with His disciples and stood in the plain. This confirms to us the fact that then we may experience the comfort and joy of His presence with us when we are in the presence of men and of all the difficulties of the world. If we seek His face on the mountain, He will be with us on the plain.

Thirdly, what an amazing result there was! Power went out of Him for the healing of all. Wonderful power was available and blessing for others. The principle of this applies to us, though we are so imperfect.

Is it not the absence of real prayer that largely accounts for so little result when the Gospel is preached, and often so little blessing in Christian families, where brothers, sisters, or even parents, are still outside the blessing that we enjoy?

But let us take courage for prayer is the key, and it is in our hands. Read the Lord's words in Matthew 21: 21, 22, and remember also His words, just before He departed to the Father, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that

the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14: 13, 14).

May God give us grace to take Him at His word, and more earnestly give ourselves to prayer.

BIBLE STUDY—LEVITICUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 10: 8 — 15: 33)

WE notice that in verse 8 the Lord speaks directly to Aaron and not as previously to Moses. This is doubtless because the matter of which He spoke concerned only the priests, and was in view of the failure that had just supervened. To the priests ministering in the sanctuary wine and strong drink of any kind were forbidden, for such only excite the natural powers and feelings of men, to the point of clouding their memory and their judgment.

Now the priest was to draw near to God in strict conformity to the prescribed order and not as Nadab and Abihu had done. Moreover he was to put a difference between holy and unholy, between clean and unclean, as verse 10 says. He was also to teach the people all that God had ordained, and for this a clear mind was needed. The tendency of strong drink would be to disqualify him for all these things.

The application of this to ourselves is very clear. All who have come to the Lord, while He is still disallowed of men, are constituted priests, as we learn in 1 Peter 2: 3, 4, and all of us should be in right priestly condition. But the **position**

is one thing; and the **condition** which answers to it, is another. Hence that important word, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5: 18). When thus filled we can offer the sacrifice of praise, as the next verse indicates. The contrast is between what is fleshly and what is spiritual. We are to decline what excites the flesh that we may know the power of the Spirit.

The same thing of course is true not only of our praise but also as to our powers of spiritual discernment, and as to our ability to teach others that which we may have learned from God of His things.

The next paragraph (verses 12-15) shows how carefully Moses handed on to Aaron and his remaining sons the instructions as to their eating what remained of the meat and peace offerings. The last paragraph (verses 16-20) indicate that further failure supervened in the priestly family. Part of the sin offering was to be eaten by the priests but instead it had been burnt. This failure sprang out of human **weakness** and not out of human **wilfulness**, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, and

hence no summary judgment was executed. Herein lies a lesson for us.

The weakness of the Aaronic priesthood is twice stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews — 5: 2 and 7: 28 — they were men “compassed with infirmity.” Our High Priest is the Son of God, who has passed through the heavens, and though all-perfect and all-powerful, He is touched with the feeling of **our infirmities**. Hence the contrast, made so plain in Hebrews, since all the infirmities are ours and not His.

So we note how Moses, acting on God's behalf, was content with the confession of Aaron's weakness. We might summarize the chapter as, “Strange fire,” which was judged. “Strong drink,” which was forbidden. “Sin-offering mishandled,” which was passed over, as being the result of human infirmity.

The whole of chapter 11 is occupied with regulations as to the food of the people, whether in relation to beasts, fishes, birds or creeping things. Through the priest the people were to be instructed in what was to be regarded as clean, and what unclean. Among animals those only were clean that possessed the two marks: chewing the cud and the cloven hoof. Animals that chew the cud are classified as “ruminants,” and to “ruminate” has acquired “meditate” as a secondary meaning. The animals with cloven hoof are sure-footed and also in many cases light-footed. When Habakkuk wrote, “The Lord God . . . will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places,” he seemed to

indicate both these ideas. If the word of God is hid in our hearts by meditation, and if it affects our outward walk in this fashion, our way will be clean in the sight of God.

Similarly with the fishes; there had to be the scales, indicating protection from the waters without, and the fins that gave power of propulsion, and ability to swim against the stream. A spiritual application of this to ourselves is very obvious.

In general the creeping things were forbidden, though in verses 21 and 22 there are certain exceptions. So when John the Baptist made locusts his food he was strictly within the law.

The latter part of the chapter gives rules as to how unclean creatures might communicate defilement to other things or persons. Here we have foreshadowed what is plain in the New Testament. There is an infection or a contagion about what is evil, so that the Christian has to be on his guard as to his associations. Such scriptures as 1 Corinthians 5: 11; 1 Thessalonians 5: 22; 1 Timothy 5: 22; 2 Timothy 2: 19 are quite clear as to this.

One other thing we may remark in connection with this chapter: these distinctions were not made in Noah's day — see Genesis 9: 2, 3. This fact, we believe, lies behind Paul's statement, “there is nothing unclean of itself” (Rom. 14: 14); and again, “all things are lawful for me” (1 Cor. 10: 23). In Noah's day all men were in view. In Moses' day Israel only was in question, and these special laws were intended to impress them with the

holiness of God, on the one hand, and to help to keep them distinct and separate from the nations, on the other. The first council in Jerusalem recognized this distinction, as we see in Acts 15: 19-21.

So, while we see some spiritual instruction in this chapter and gladly accept it, we know that we are living in a dispensation when we "should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10: 28), as far as the Gospel is concerned. This was the lesson conveyed to Peter by the vision of the great sheet let down from heaven, wherein were all manner of creatures. All were embraced in the sheet, and, cleansed by God, all were taken up into heaven.

Chapter 12 is short, but its theme shows that sin having entered into the world, its defiling power extends over the very beginnings of human life. Both child and mother were unclean and had to be purified. If a man-child, purification was complete by circumcision on the eighth day, and the New Testament significance of that rite is "putting off the body of the flesh," as it should read in Colossians 2: 11; that is, the refusal of the flesh as having been condemned in the cross of Christ. When a daughter was born the period of the mother's defilement was twice as long as when a son was born; a reminder of the fact that sin came in through Eve. But whether son or daughter the offerings for purification were the same — a burnt offering and a sin offering had to be brought. If there was poverty, so small an offering as two young pigeons might be brought.

When we turn to the account of

the birth of our Lord, as recounted in Luke 2, we note that Mary brought this smallest of offerings; a testimony to the poverty of Joseph and herself. We also note that our Lord was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the law, though there was no sinful flesh in Him to be "put off." This is in keeping with the fact of His baptism at the hands of John, thus fulfilling all righteousness, though He had no sins to confess, as had the people: in keeping also with the fact that He was carried down into Egypt, so that, retracing Israel's history, it might be said of Him, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

Chapter 13 is lengthy, in contrast with chapter 12. This is easily understood when we say that the one deals with the defilement that marks the very start of man's life, the other with the working and development of that defilement all through the days of his life, involving such a variety of detail. There can be no doubt that leprosy is as striking a type of sin as the Bible affords. The instructions of this chapter are given to Aaron as well as Moses, for the detection and treatment of leprosy was the peculiar province of the priest. Be it noted that leprosy, as a type, lays stress not on the **guilt** of sin so much as on its **corrupting** and **defiling** power.

A large part of the chapter is occupied with instructions to the priest, which would enable him to diagnose the case and determine whether the sufferer was afflicted with leprosy or not. If leprosy was indicated the man was to be declared unclean. If only some skin trouble or inflammation was discerned, then

the man was to be pronounced clean.

One remarkable contingency is contemplated, as we see in verses 12 and 13, and again in verse 17. If the disease should come completely to the surface, so that the flesh is white and covered, and so further spreading became impossible, the man was to be pronounced **clean**. This may have seemed a remarkable ruling in Aaron's day, but its typical meaning for us is simple and striking. Sin defiles as long as it is working beneath the surface, but when it is brought completely to the surface by honest and thorough confession on the part of the sinner, it ceases to defile. In confession the sinner has judged himself and the spreading and defiling power of his sin is broken.

Apart from this exceptional case the poor leper had to dwell alone without the camp. He had to put a special mark upon himself and continually declare his uncleanness, so that others might not be defiled by him

In the latter part of this chapter we find that leprosy might also be discovered in garments of wool or linen or skin, and if so, the article was to be destroyed by fire. So leprosy might affect the surroundings of men and not only their bodies. Again care was to be taken that the trouble really was leprosy. It might be defilement of a different nature, which should have different treatment so that the whole garment was not destroyed. The instructions we have in Jude 22 and 23, give us in New Testament terms what is a counterpart of this. Indeed it is

possible that the last clause of verse 23 is an allusion to the verses we are considering. Under the Mosaic law the priests were to exercise care and discrimination in their dealings, and no less discrimination is demanded under grace. It would be much easier no doubt to have a rigid rule, applicable in all cases, which would eliminate all exercise of mind as to how things should be dealt with, but such is not God's way.

It is to be noted that time was allowed for the diagnosis to be made by the priest. The garment was shut up for seven days, and if then there was no certain indication, it should be washed and again shut up seven days, and then the true nature of the trouble would be revealed. If the trouble was other than leprosy, then only the affected part was to be torn out; if leprosy, all was to be destroyed in the fire. In the New Testament garments are used figuratively to express our associations and surroundings—see, for instance, Revelation 3: 4; 7: 14; 16: 15—and this helps us to see an application of these instructions to ourselves.

The leprous garment was to be destroyed. The leprous man was to dwell without the camp, and he could only be readmitted if and when he was cleansed. His cleansing was an elaborate process and the whole of chapter 14 is occupied with it, until we come to verse 33, when a similar plague in a house is in question. The ceremonies connected with his cleansing divide into two parts: first, those which took place without the camp, detailed in verses 3 to 8; second, those which took place on the seventh and eighth days after he had entered it.

We must carefully note that the ceremonies did not cleanse the leper, they only began when it was quite clear that he was cleansed. The healing that is contemplated is an act of God, which took place while the leper was still outside the camp. The priest had to go forth outside the camp and inspect him, and if he was cleansed it was the responsibility of the priest to pronounce him clean, and having done so to carry out the prescribed ceremony, which typified the ground and basis of his cleansing. In the two birds, one killed and the other set free, we see the death and resurrection of Christ set forth.

It may seem a strange regulation that one of the birds had to be, "killed in an earthen vessel over running water;" but in the light of the New Testament use both of "earthen vessel," and "running" or "living water," we begin to discern the significance. Dimly foreshadowed we see **incarnation** indicated as the necessary preliminary for the blood-shedding of our Lord, and also the fact that the offering of Himself to God was **in the power of the eternal Spirit**.

Then the bird that was released was first dipped in the blood of the slain bird, and thus identified with it. Two birds were needed in the type to set forth Christ in death and in resurrection. As the released bird soared into the heavens it carried the blood not into the sanctuary but into the heavens. This was the basis of all that followed.

But the blood had not only to be shed, and then carried on high to God's heaven, it had also to be applied to the cleansed leper. Seven

times was it sprinkled upon him; applied, that is, in a full and complete way. Then, and then only, was the cleansed leper pronounced to be clean. Here again we observe an important type, which agrees with what we saw in Exodus 12. The blood must be **applied** as well as **shed**. The precious blood of Jesus was indeed "**shed at Calvary**," but in order to share in the benefit thereof each of us has to be able to say, "**shed for me**."

Notice too, that into the blood of the slain bird were to be dipped the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop. The cedar is the most majestic of trees, hyssop is the humblest of herbs, and scarlet bespeaks the glory of men. The death of Christ has stained the pride of all human glory and of all that is natural to this first creation from the greatest things to the least.

Brought into the camp, the cleansed leper had to remain outside his tent for seven days, and then he had to divest himself of the hair that naturally characterized him, and thoroughly wash himself and his clothes. Then on the eighth day he submitted to further ceremonies, very similar to those which inaugurated the priests. Offerings of all kinds — save the peace offering — were presented to God, and then the blood and also the oil were applied to the leper; to his right ear, his right hand, his right foot. The significance of this we saw when reading chapter 8.

It seems to us remarkable that the cleansed leper should have been accorded treatment so similar to the priests, though he was not a priest. This type seems designed to "shew

forth all longsuffering" to use Paul's expression from 1 Timothy 1: 16. There we have Paul lifted from the leprosy of being "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," into the exceeding abundance of "the grace of our Lord." Here we find a loathsome leper cleansed and brought into the camp almost as if he had been a priest.

From verse 33 to the end of the chapter we have the law concerning leprosy in a house, which would apply when they entered the land. Again we notice that great care is enjoined to make sure that the trouble is leprosy, and if the evil can be stayed by the removal of affected parts, well and good. If not, the whole house had to be broken down and the rubbish deposited in an unclean place without the city. If cleansed, the procedure was very similar to that in connection with persons.

There is no record in Scripture of leprosy occurring in a house, but these instructions stand in Scripture and have a warning voice for us. The church today is "the house of God," and in its external character may be corrupted. Hence we read, "that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4: 17), and in Revelation 2 and 3 we find the churches of Asia scrutinized by the Lord, and in result the threat of a breaking down, and even a total repudiation.

Chapters 13 and 14 have been

occupied with the worst form of defilement; one which usually was life-long and entailed total exclusion from the camp of Israel, in the midst of which it was God's pleasure to dwell. Chapter 15 is occupied with a variety of lesser defilements, which entailed a temporary separation and diligent washings before readmission to the camp and its privileges was possible. These defilements sprang from the weakness of human nature and conditions as they exist today, as the result of the fall. Many of them were of an unavoidable nature but nevertheless they were to be recognized as being of a defiling nature and treated as such. Thus Israel was to be impressed with the holiness of their God and how everything of a defiling nature must be removed, if His presence was to be enjoyed.

We do well to remember that the fall has produced in us many a weakness affecting our spirits as well as our bodies. For instance, many of us have to say with sad feeling what a very true servant of God wrote in days gone by:

"Yet, Lord, alas! what weakness
Within myself I find,
No infant's changing pleasure
Is like my wandering mind."

It is because of this weakness, the more felt as the believer is marked by spirituality of mind, that defilement is so easily contracted, and consequently the "feet-washing," of which John 13 speaks, is so needed by us all.

IN prayer I have not only to ask for things, but to realize the presence of Him to whom I speak. The power of prayer is gone if I lose the sense of seeing Him by faith. Prayer is not only asking right things, but having the sense of the Person there.

CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

It was stimulating to read your esteemed correspondent's article on "Prayer" in your January issue. My mind at once recalled James 5: 16, "The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth **much**." We are not told **how** much, but the fact is plainly stated, **much**. Now if this be true of a single suppliant, what should be the result when a number of the Lord's people come together and unite in real earnest prayer?

Again the Apostle Paul when writing to the Philippians says, "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." God of course knows all that we may have laid upon our hearts for prayer, nevertheless we are told to make our requests **known** to Him, in order that we may be kept in an attitude of dependence. In this passage we are exhorted to supplicate God, but not only so, he says that thanksgiving should be mingled with our requests. We are so apt to ask for things quite right and proper in themselves, and yet forget the **thanksgiving**. May we not forget that when we pray.

As is pointed out in the article referred to we need to **continue** steadfastly in prayers. It is comparatively easy to pray spasmodically, but what about the **continuance**, the regular attendance at the prayer meeting? Those who had received the word "continued steadfastly", and we do not read that this was confined to the older be-

lievers, the young are not excluded; and it was "they that gladly received His word." I know of a small assembly where the younger members are most diligent in their attendance at the weekly prayer meeting; in fact they seldom miss, and they outnumber the older ones as a rule by two to one. May God grant that they go on as they have begun, and **continue**.

There is one thing I would plead for specially, and that is that prayers in public should not be too long, but brief and to the point. The reference which was made to Eccles. 5: 2, "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few," is very much to the point, but I fear more often than not is overlooked. Why do brethren pray for everything that comes to their mind on such occasions? Would it not be far better to quietly consider the matters for prayer in private and ask the Lord to lay upon our hearts some particular matter or matters to pray about? This would give an opportunity for a young brother, who is perhaps a little timid, to pray for something which is on his mind and which has not so far been mentioned in prayer. In this way all brethren present would be encouraged to pray. I would rather listen to two brief prayers if needs be from the same brother than a very long one, and I feel sure this would be in keeping with the word in Ecclesiastes 5: 2.

Yours in His service,

L. A. ANDERSON.

“THOU REMAINEST”

J. WILSON SMITH.

THE ALL-SUFFICIENT ONE

(Psalm 102: 26 and Hebrews 1: 11).

Two wonderful words indeed, and worthy of the deepest appreciation. They refer to One who is placed in connection with creation in its widest extent; the heavens and the earth, but which, while transitory and perishable, leaves Him unaffected by their removal. He “continues still,” and this is the signification of the word “remainest.” It is not exactly His essential and eternal existence, but it is that, while associated with that which passes away, He abides. The truth is that, while His hands had made these things, He was their Creator, and, by and by, He will fold them up and they shall be changed. He is “the same.” His years fail not.

But He is no distant Deity, no disinterested spectator of anything His hands have made. He regulates as truly as He created. If, for some good reason, He sees fit to dissolve His handiwork, He has most certainly the perfect right, as well as the power, to do so. Yet, He Himself remains! And, if so, shall not His continuance be the guarantee of something greater and better — of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? That He remains is the hope of that creation of God of which He is “the beginning” (Rev. 3: 14).

Hence His all-sufficiency. He can both build and destroy and then build again. He can occupy every moral sphere and fill every spiritual vacuum. In Him all fulness dwells. He who was in the form of God and

thought it no robbery to be equal with God, assumed, in wondrous grace, the form of a servant and the fashion of a man. Such was the extent of His incarnation. He was an actual Man, like ourselves in all things except sin, leading a true and perfect human life — a Man amongst men, in order to present God to us as He, the Son eternal, only could, and win our confidence toward God if such a thing could be done, but going down to death, so as to annul its power, remove its sting and gain a glorious victory over it — “death, even the death of the Cross!”

Mark the stages in His condescension. From Godhead to manhood, thence to servitude, thence to death, and that (O grace inconceivable!) the death of the Cross — the most ignominious, agonizing, shameful death of all! Well may we sing:—

“We love Thee for the glorious
worth,
Which in Thyself we see,
We love Thee for that shameful
Cross
Endured so patiently.”

But He is risen from the dead and highly exalted. We can sing “Thou remainest.” He “remaineth” in view of a ruined creation, and He “remaineth” in view of a disintegrated church. He is the hope of both and “the bright and morning star” of His assembly. He is her all-sufficiency — her resource, her centre today, as at all times. He is

“the Same” in days Laodicean as He was in those of Ephesus. He is God’s “Amen” today, maintaining in undiminished power all the counsel and purpose of God, spite of the fearful drop from the bright apostolic period to the present nauseous condition of the church’s faithless testimony. He is on the wrong side of the door of the profession of His name; so that He urges the purchasing of gold and clothing and eye-salve, to expel its dross, and cover its nakedness, and enlighten its blindness. Outside He knocks, and seeks admission to the willing heart; for spite of the church’s palpable degradation, He “remaineth” as “the Same.”

Conditions may possibly change outwardly, and “difficult times” characterize these closing days, but He changeth not. And hence the second Epistle to Timothy, foretelling, as it does, these very days, presents to us, not so much the House of God as a well-ordered system, but Christ Himself as the Foundation which stands steady, be the collapse of Christendom what it is. “Remember,” it tells us, “Jesus Christ . . . raised from the dead.” He remains as the **Head**, let us hold Him fast; as **Lord**, let us obey His word; as the only **Centre** of gathering, let us gather to His all-sufficient Name; as the still **Rejected Christ**, let us humbly cleave to Him and His Cross; as the soon-coming **Bridegroom**, let our hearts, in all the glowing affections of a faithful bride, cry: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

He “remaineth” as the **hope of Israel** — the nation of His choice and favour — but long driven out

of its land, scattered, peeled, persecuted, because of its sins, but never forgotten of Him, but rather “beloved for the fathers’ sakes,” to whom the promise of earthly blessing was made. The Deliverer will yet “come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob,” and reinstate the nation in the land promised it of old. For “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (see Rom. 11).

Then, finally, if we descend to the necessities and cares of the individual Christian, can we not say that when all else is gone, the hopes dashed, the chair vacant, the poor, feeble heart crushed, the eye dimmed with tears, and the soul desolated by waves of sorrow, He remaineth the Comforter, the Resource, the Peace-Giver, the abiding Friend, who Himself proved, in deep and true experience, all the sorrows of our pilgrim path, so that He is able to succour and sympathize with us.

That He remaineth “the Same yesterday, and today, and for ever,” may not be the highest of His many glories, but it is not the smallest of those great dignities which make His sacred Name precious to His saints in all generations — as their dwelling place, their hope, their refuge, their power and their victory.

As such, how worthy He is of all our gratitude, thanksgiving and praise. That pen is made of gold which writes of Him; the ministry which has the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether as Saviour, Lord or Head of His body, for its primary theme is assuredly the ministry of the Spirit of God.

His own closing command was: "Believe also in Me" — given just ere He went to the Father, suggesting, as it does, all that is contained in the fact that "He remaineth."

If that be true no change of passing conditions need agitate the spirit of His people, or affect the steady labour of His servants. His grace will not fail.

ACCEPTED, SIGNIFICANT AND SECURE

R. DAVIES

PSYCHOLOGISTS tell us that for happy family life three basic, emotional needs must be met; the members must feel that they are accepted, significant and secure. Is this not also true of the Christian circle? Does not God give His children to know that they are accepted, significant and secure? These are privileges to be enjoyed by those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ, for "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1: 11, 12, R.V.)

* * * *

The believer can rejoice in being "accepted in the Beloved;" "taken into favour" or "favour freely bestowed . . . in the Beloved" (Eph. 1: 6, New Trans.) "By whom we have also access by faith into this favour in which we stand . . ." (Romans 5: 2, New Trans.) To be a Christian is not only to trust the Saviour, but to be, in New Testament language, "in Christ." "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2: 10). "We are in Him that is true . . ." (1 John 5: 20). In this sphere of privilege there is "now no condemnation;" we are no longer "far off," but

"made nigh by the blood of Christ" (see Rom. 8: 1 and Eph. 2: 13).

The idea of acceptance has been illustrated in many ways, but the most comprehensive pictures are found in the Scriptures themselves. In the opening chapter of Leviticus, the basis of the position of favour into which the believer has now been brought is wonderfully foreshadowed in the burnt offering, namely, the finished work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who "loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5: 2). How important to realise that it is not what we are, or what we have done which secures our acceptance in God's sight, but the value of what Christ has done! All believers, therefore, stand in **one acceptance**. Degrees of enjoyment there undoubtedly are, but there can be no degrees of acceptance!

* * * *

In a large office or factory, a man may well feel that he is just a cog in the machine, but at home he has, or ought to have, his place as an individual. Father is not just the "provider" nor Mother nothing but cook and housekeeper! When we turn to the New Testament, the sig-

nificance of the individual is apparent. The frequent use of the singular pronoun "thou" in John's Gospel is worthy of note. Scholars have indicated that in the Greek this word occurs more frequently in the fourth Gospel than in the other three put together. How often did the Lord turn aside to meet an individual need! — to speak with the Samaritan woman at Sychar's well, to heal the sick man by the pool of Bethesda, to answer the call of a blind beggar outside Jericho, or, in resurrection, to reveal Himself to Mary Magdalene. "I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep, and am known of mine." "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them . . ." (John 10: 14, 27). In the Acts of the Apostles, in obedience to the Lord's word, Philip leaves the activity of Samaria to meet the Ethiopian on the desert road (Acts 8: 26). Entry into the blessing of the Gospel is individual, true repentance is essentially personal, and yet the repentance of **one** sinner brings joy in the presence of the angels of God. (Luke 15: 10).

It is important, then, that I should realise that I am of significance in the Christian family and, moreover, endowed with my own particular gift, "having different gifts according to the grace which has been given to us." To fail in the use of my gift is to impoverish not only myself but my brethren, for we are "each one members one of the other." The call is to diligence, ". . . he that teaches, in teaching; or he that exhorts, in exhortation; he that gives, in simplicity; . . . he that shews mercy, with cheerfulness" — characterized always by wisdom, and never by self-import-

ance (see Romans 12: 3-11, New Trans.)

* * * *

It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of a sense of security to a child — security in its parents' affection. How terrible a thing to feel unwanted and uncared for! For the Christian, we do well to take account of David's words to Abiathar after his escape from Saul's revenge, "Abide thou with me, fear not: . . . with me thou shalt be in safeguard" (1 Sam. 22: 23). The Christian's place of safety from the snares and temptations around is that of nearness to and dependence upon the Lord, the One who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory. (See Jude 24). The true child of God, one in whose heart there has been a work of the Spirit of God, has a justifiable sense of security. "I thank my God for my whole remembrance of you," writes the inspired Apostle to the Philippians, ". . . having confidence of this very thing, that He who has begun in you a good work will complete it unto Jesus Christ's day" (Phil. 1: 3, 6, New Trans.)

The believer is linked with a spiritual sphere, which unlike the world around us in all its phases, is marked by eternal stability. "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (signifying the removal of what can be shaken in order that the unshakeable may remain). "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence

and godly fear" (Heb. 12: 26-28).

* * * *

How great a provision has God made for every child of His — to rest upon the work of His beloved Son as the sole basis of his acceptance; to have a place to fill and a sphere in which to serve; and to have the Shepherd's promise, "I give unto them [My sheep] eternal life;

and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father . . . is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10: 28, 29). This, however briefly outlined, is the heritage of every Christian.

To what extent are we enjoying it here and now?

THE TRUTH AS TO HELL

A. J. POLLOCK.

THIS is truly a very solemn reality. The writer well remembers remarks, made over fifty years ago, by the editor of a well-known infidel paper. Commenting on an annual sermon, delivered by the President of a large dissenting body, he wrote that this sermon exhibited the trend of present-day thought, in that it spoke a good deal about heaven, and said nothing about hell. "For my part," he said, "I believe in neither, but, if I believed in either, I should believe in both; and spend the rest of my life earnestly beseeching sinners to flee from the wrath to come."

How do we know there is a heaven? The only answer is, By direct revelation from God, as given to us in the Holy Scriptures of truth. And do the same Scriptures tell us of the existence of an eternal hell? They do most emphatically! Men may believe that there is a heaven, because it suits them to believe it; and refuse to believe, that there is a hell, because they do not like to believe it, but the infidel editor had wits enough to see how utterly illogical it would be to maintain such a position.

If the Bible were partly true and partly false, how could we decide what to believe? The ground of faith would be completely swept from under our feet, leaving us no solid ground to stand upon. Nay, further, the solemn warning as to hell, a definite location, proceeded from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Did our Lord affirm as a fact again and again, that which had no existence? If so, we have a fallible Christ, who could not be our Saviour. That is the price we must pay, if we refuse our Lord's own testimony on this intensely solemn subject.

The Modernists tell us, that our Lord made mistakes in common with the people of His day. This is an utterly false statement, but in this matter it does not apply remotely. In this case of an eternal hell our Lord was speaking of something **quite outside the world's knowledge**, something that could only be known by divine revelation. In this our Lord and the divinely inspired Scriptures stand or fall together.

Before we quote the Scriptures where our Lord's warnings as to hell

are given, we point out, that we could have no higher authority than His, *nor one better qualified to testify on such a subject.*

Had He not a tender compassionate heart? Was this not pre-eminently seen in His short public life of three-and-a-half years, when He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil"? (Acts 10: 38). With sorrowful tears coursing down His cheeks did He not utter the touching lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"? (Matt. 23: 37, 38).

Yet more, infinitely more! Did not our Lord leave the glory, which He had with the Father "before the world was" (John 17: 5), to become a Man amongst men, in order that He might furnish a **righteous** ground, on which God could offer forgiveness and life to guilty sinners? Did He not die the death of the cross with its untold sufferings in order that this might be so? Can anyone accuse our Lord of want of divine love and tender compassion? And with His knowledge of what lies before an impenitent sinner, could He hold His peace, and leave men and women unwarned as to the terrible consequences of rejecting such love? That were unthinkable!

Surely the emphasis laid so largely in present-day testimony on the love of God, yet leaving out the truth of the utter ruin of man, his sinfulness and doom, apart from God's mercy,

is a travesty of the true Gospel. We get the balance of the two sides maintained throughout Scripture. For instance, we read in the Lord's own words, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). Note the sharp contrast — perishing on the one hand, receiving eternal life on the other.

What would you think of a man, who saw blind people walking unconsciously to the brink of a high precipice, and yet failed to warn them? You would find no words strong enough to denounce such conduct. Yet, alas! there are many so-called ministers of the Gospel today, who act in a far more culpable way, when they suppress the solemn warning of Scripture as to eternal punishment.

A harsh, unfeeling presentation of the awful doom of the unbelieving sinner is greatly to be deprecated. The late D. L. Moody used to insist that no man had a right to speak on these solemn realities, unless he testified with a tender heart and tears in his voice.

Our Lord's Testimony

In testifying of a future place of punishment, our Lord again and again used a word, **hell** (Greek, **Gehenna**), **never before used in Scripture.** To bring the truth of this vividly to the minds of his hearers, He employed an illustration in a parabolic setting. There was a gorge west and north-west of Jerusalem, the Valley of Hinnom, where in our Lord's time the filth and garbage of the city was burned.

Receiving fresh supplies, the fire never went out; and the worms continually fed on the filth. Our Lord used this as an illustration of a place of eternal punishment, "prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. 25: 41), truly a very solemn and graphic warning.

We now mention all the Scriptures, that make reference to Hell as a place (Greek, **Gehenna**), occurring twelve times, all but one recorded as falling from the lips of our Lord.

In the Gospel of Matthew we have:

- "In danger of **hell** fire" (5: 22).
- "thy whole body should be cast into **hell**" (5: 29 and 30).
- "able to destroy both soul and body in **hell**" (10: 28).
- "to be cast into **hell** fire" (18: 9).
- "twofold more the child of **hell** than yourselves" (23: 15).
- "how can ye escape the damnation of **hell**?" (23: 33).

In the Gospel of Mark the language is most importunate, and repeated three times,

- "**hell** . . . fire . . . where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (9: 43-48).

The Gospel according to Luke furnishes one record,

- "Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into **hell**; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12: 5).

Lastly, the only remaining reference to **Gehenna** in the Scriptures is found in James 3: 6, where an unrestrained tongue is described as

being "set on fire of **hell**."

These Scriptures present most vividly the fact that there is a locality in the eternal state where evil will be finally confined. We read, "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21: 8).

The Rich Man and Lazarus

In Luke 16, most vividly and unmistakably our Lord drew aside the veil, which hides the condition of things, that obtain once death has taken place. In doing so, He has been pleased to present these realities in parabolic form. That does not in the least lessen the seriousness of them. Our Lord plainly spoke of two classes, two localities, two conditions, and that in **Hades**, a condition that precedes **Gehenna**.

Two classes were represented by "a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day" and "a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores."

Two places were depicted, "the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom [**heaven**]: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in **hell** he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

Two conditions were plainly indicated. "Now he [**Lazarus**] is comforted, and thou [**the rich man**] art tormented."

But are there no indications that this state of torment was capable of

some alleviation, or of it ultimately ceasing? The rich man cried out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

And what was the fateful answer? We read, "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you

There is a Great Gulf Fixed:

so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." "The great gulf fixed" is clearly parabolic, but how starkly manifest is the truth behind it. There can be no intercourse whatsoever between heaven and hell. It sets forth most vividly the impossibility of alleviation, or the cessation of the state of torment when death has taken place.

The rich man then begged that Lazarus should be sent back to earth, to warn his brethren. The answer was most illuminating! "They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them;" and again, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Thus ends most solemnly our Lord's unfolding of the eternal future.

Moses and the prophets constituted the Holy Scriptures in the time of our Lord. Today we have the most wonderfully enlarged and fuller testimony of the New Testa-

ment. We read of the coming into this world, in fulfilment of many a prophecy in the Old Testament, of our Lord Jesus Christ; of His atoning sufferings on the cross; of the veil of the temple being rent from the top to the bottom, as our Lord cried out the triumphant words, "IT IS FINISHED;" of His glorious resurrection on the third day; and of His ascension to the right hand of God in glory.

The preacher of today may well lift high his Bible in the sight of his audience, and proclaim earnestly and importunately, "Behold God's great testimony! Here is God's last and final appeal to sinful mankind! Neglect it, and your doom is fixed for ever."

There is a most solemn and arresting Scripture, which says, "When I [God] say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; **but his blood will I require at thine hand**" (Ezek. 3: 18). This puts things in a very serious light. The Apostle Paul declared, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9: 16).

For long the writer of this article has felt deeply burdened in spirit, as he reflected on the Laodicean condition of things in the church of God at this present time, and he believes that one reason for this sad condition is that our Lord's warnings as to future punishment in hell for the unsaved are largely treated as a dead letter. There is in consequence the absence to a marked extent of the old-time activity in seeking to bring the unconverted

under the sound of the Gospel; the giving up of open-air Gospel meetings, and the diminishing number of Christians who feel constrained to scatter Gospel literature.

One has heard earnest prayer, that the preaching of the Gospel may be with power, that unconverted men and women may be eternally saved. Week after week these prayers go up. Months and even years may pass without a single answer apparently to these petitions. Even this does not shatter the complacency of saints, who are not moved by our Lord's most solemn warnings. Let us heed such Scriptures as the following, "These shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into life

eternal" (Matt. 25: 46). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; **but the wrath of God abideth on him**" (John 3: 36).

We may well hang our heads in shame, as we realize how little we have answered to these truths in their practical bearing. God stir us all up to more and more prayerfulness, more zeal, more fervency of spirit in aggressive evangelistic work, in the face of apathy and unconcern as to divine things, so largely on the increase at the present time. We are surely in the last days. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. May God bless His Word.

WHO TOLD HER ?

J. G. TURNBULL

"And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions." (I Kings 10: 1).

WHO told the Queen of Sheba of the fame of Solomon? We are not told, but it is evident that the testimonies she heard must have magnified the wisdom, the wealth and the ways of Solomon exceedingly. She must have heard glowing tales of his splendour, and particularly of his knowledge of the one true and living God, from those who doubtless were quite unaware of the increasing curiosity and wonder which was filling the heart of the Queen.

Someone greater, wiser, wealthier and with more knowledge of God than herself! It was an attraction indeed! But so great were the testimonies concerning this mighty one,

that she was compelled to see for herself. And when she had seen, "There was no more spirit in her."

Surely this is an excellent picture of present-day testimony. Our Lord said, "A greater than Solomon is here," but, "How shall they hear without a preacher?"

In these days the testimony is the same in pattern. Who told the Queen of Sheba? Who but those who had seen the majesty, the glory, the wisdom and the wealth of Solomon for themselves. Who can tell men today of the attractions of the Christ? Only those who have seen His beauty, experienced His power in saving grace and partaken of His bounty.

Every Christian can tell others of the attractions of Christ.

John the Baptist's testimony was powerful: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). But it was his words of adoration and worship in verse 36, which caused his two disciples to follow Jesus.

Andrew's simple statement to his brother, Simon, shortly after, must have been charged with tremendous conviction: "We have found the Christ," and "He brought him to Jesus."

When Philip's testimony to Nathaniel was questioned, the only satisfactory answer was given, "Come and see." The assured, heartfelt, adoring testimony of real experience prevails to bring souls to Jesus; and nothing but personal contact with Him can take the self-satisfaction from the heart of the sinner.

Are we preaching with our head or our heart? Is our daily testimony in shop or office, factory or workshop, a shame-faced admission or an adoration of the wonder of our Saviour?

After her talk with the stranger at Sychar's well, as recorded in John 4, the sinful Samaritan woman, who shunned crowds, went boldly to the

city and said: "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" The outcome of her plain, yet wondering testimony, was instantaneous. She had, in her own way, told out efficiently and effectively what she had found in Jesus.

Their resulting testimony is that which every Christian worker longs to hear from those whom he would bring to Jesus. "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (verse 42).

Does your testimony and mine stir up in those who hear it a desire to meet our Lord? We are here to be His witnesses to all men of what we have seen and heard.

As we see the needy souls around us daily it is our responsibility, as well as our privilege, to tell them that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher; and how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. 10: 13-15).

May our prayer be: "Here am I. Send me." (Isa. 6: 8).

A WORD OF EXPLANATION

THE remarks on page 17 of our last issue having been taken by some to mean that the inspired Epistles of Peter and Paul are for us today of less importance than the writings of John, both the Author of the article and the Editor wish to disclaim any such meaning, and express regret if it can be rightly deduced from the words used.

Years ago a servant of the Lord wrote, as to the ministries of Paul and John — "Paul gives the dispensation in which the display is: John gives that which is displayed." Dispensations pass, but the Person revealed and the eternal life displayed do not pass but remain.

Bearing this in mind, the third paragraph of the article in question makes plain the Author's meaning: at least, so we think.

BIBLE STUDY—LEVITICUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 16: 1 — 22: 33).

THE opening words of chapter 16 carry us back to the early verses of chapter 10, where the sin of Nadab and Abihu is recorded. Certain consequences flowing from that sin are mentioned in the rest of the 10th chapter, but now we find that it furnished the occasion for the ritual of the annual day of atonement to be revealed. Verse 29 of our chapter shows that it was the procedure to be observed on that day, and how it fitted into the succession of feasts that filled Israel's year we shall discover when we come to chapter 23: 26-32. For the moment we confine ourselves to what is contained in this chapter, viewing it in a twofold way.

In the first place then we have a type of the efficacy which in due time was to be found in the sacrificial "offering of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb. 10: 10). In the type **two** animals were needed, and each subjected to different treatment, so as to set forth the two aspects of the death of Christ, which we must carefully distinguish. When, however, we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and read the latter part of chapter 9, and the early part of chapter 10, we find the word, "**once**" or "**one**" used no less than six times in regard to the antitypical Sacrifice, which was one in its nature, and offered once for all. Just as two men — Moses and Aaron, Apostle and Priest — were needed to shadow forth the excellence and office of Christ personally, so two goats were needed to shadow forth the excellence of His work.

The details as to the two goats are given to us in verses 7-10 and again in 15-22. The one upon which the Lord's lot fell had to be slain and its blood carried within the veil and sprinkled upon the mercy seat and seven times before it; Aaron being enveloped in a cloud of incense as he did this. Here then is a type of Christ entering into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption. He entered once in the fragrance of His own perfection, and "by His own blood," as Hebrews 9: 12 tells us.

The blood sprinkled once only on the mercy seat sets forth the propitiatory value and perfection before God of the blood of Christ, the virtue of which lies in the infinitude and eternity of the Person who shed it. The cherubim were placed so that they gazed down upon the blood of the mercy seat, and that with complacency, since typically the claims of God on account of Israel's sins for the past year were satisfactorily met. While we have in the type that which is limited and temporal, we have in the Antitype that which is infinite and eternal.

The blood sprinkled seven times before the mercy seat sets forth rather the perfection of the sacrifice in its application to men. It is a glorious fact that the redemptive value of the work of Christ will be displayed in a variety of ways. We, who are the Church today, know its propitiatory value, for it has met the Divine claims against us. But the same thing will be true as to a

restored Israel, and as to the nations who will be blessed in the millennial age, and as to the eternal state which lies beyond that. But whether we think of the blood sprinkled once or as sprinkled seven times, all indicates the propitiatory efficacy of the blood of Christ; that is, its value as meeting all the righteous claims of the throne of God.

The second goat was treated in an entirely different way. Upon the first goat the lot fell "for the Lord." The other was the "scapegoat," or more literally, a "goat for going away." Upon its head Aaron had to put his hands, and, confessing over it the sins and transgressions of the people, put them all upon its head, and then send him away into an uninhabited land by the hand of a fit man. Here we see in type not propitiation but substitution — our side of the matter rather than God's. The actual word, "substitute," does not occur in the Bible, but what it signifies is there, and first comes clearly to light when we read that Abraham offered the ram "in the stead of his son" (Gen. 22: 13). Here the sins of the people in their condemning weight were placed on the head of the goat instead of resting on themselves. Their sins were typically borne away by their substitute.

When we turn to the Antitype the same truth meets us in the prediction of the prophet, "All we like sheep have gone astray; . . . and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53: 6). In this great verse two things strike us. First, it is "all we" and "us all." Who are the "we" and the "us"? The people of God who

confess their sins and believe in the Substitute. Exactly so; for while the propitiatory work of Christ opens the door in righteousness to whosoever will, its substitutionary effect is confined to **believers**.

But further, it is the Lord Himself who laid our sins on the Substitute. Aaron doubtless confessed and laid on the head of the goat all that he knew and remembered of the transgressions of the people, but how could he confess them all? A well-known hymn may say, "I lay my sins on Jesus," but we may well be thankful that it is not left for us to do it. It has been accomplished by an act of God, and hence done perfectly.

But now, having briefly considered this chapter as a type, let us note in the second place the contrasts that it presents. The second verse indicates what is stated in Hebrews 9: 8, 9, that, "the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest." And further, verse 4 shows that Aaron could no longer wear his garments "for glory and for beauty." The failure of the priesthood had supervened, and consequently he had to go in wearing holy garments of plain linen. The holiest was closed to all, save this one man on this one special yearly occasion. How great then the contrast with our Lord, who has entered the true holiest, even heaven itself, in virtue of His own blood, and who is there in perpetuity and "crowned with glory and honour."

Again, Aaron had first to offer the bullock for himself and for his house, since he was, as Hebrews 5: 1-3 points out, compassed with infirmity, and so had to offer for his

own sins. Our High Priest is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7: 26).

And further, there was no finality about these proceedings. They were to take place every year on the tenth day of the month, though we believe there is no record in the rest of the Scriptures of its being observed in Israel. Year by year it was to remind the people of their sins and give them in type a settlement of those sins, and a cleansing of the sanctuary and their earthly religious system. Hence, reminded of their sins, the day was to be one of affliction and mourning and cessation of work. Thus Israel was shown that in the work of atonement their works had no place.

Once more, we may note the contrast stated in Hebrews 10: 1-4. In those sacrifices there was a remembrance of sins made every year, for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. What happened was that in His forbearance God "passed over" (the words placed in the margin against Romans 3: 25) the sins that were committed before Christ died. Hence the word used so frequently in the Old Testament is "atonement," the literal meaning of which is "covering." In the New Testament that word does not occur — Romans 5: 11 being a mistranslation. The rather, we read in Hebrews 10: 18, that, "where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin." The word for "remission" means "a sending away," and not merely a covering. So in the Old Testament we find a provisional covering of sin in the

forbearance of God, awaiting the complete sending away of sin, which was only accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ.

Thus in Leviticus 16 we have a striking exemplification of the fact that the law had only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, and that consequently these yearly sacrifices could not "make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10: 1). Have we ever thanked God in adequate measure that we are in the favoured position of being once purged, and therefore having no more conscience of sins?

Chapter 17 gives us a kind of appendix to all this, guarding against abuses that might so easily creep in. If sacrifices were offered, the animal must be presented at the door of the tabernacle and not slain elsewhere in the camp or outside in the open field. The evil practice that this guarded against is revealed in verse 7, which verse also discloses that already the people had been infected with idolatry. We may remember how Stephen in his address — Acts 7: 42, 43 — charged the people with idolatry even in the wilderness. This shows how much the prohibition of verses 1-9, was needed, and how it was disregarded by some, though perhaps not in a public way. Verse 7 plainly says, "they shall **no more** offer their sacrifices unto devils;" and that "devils," or more correctly "demons," were the objects of such sacrifices is corroborated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10: 20.

The rest of chapter 17 is occupied with regulations as to eating. The

blood, neither of beast nor fowl, was to be eaten for it is the life of the creature, and life belongs to God. This enactment specially enforced for Israel what had been laid down in the time of Noah after the flood, as recorded in Genesis 9: 4. So when the apostles and elders gave this injunction to Gentile believers, as recorded in Acts 15: 20 and 29, they were not imposing upon them what was merely an item of the law of Moses, but rather a prohibition that applies to mankind generally. We do well to observe it, though we do not need to observe the extreme scruples of the Jews, as is shown by the instruction of 1 Corinthians 10: 25.

An important fact is stated in verse 11. The life of the flesh is in the blood, but atonement was only made when the blood was shed and "upon the altar." The blood in the veins of the living animal effected nothing. Men, who profess to be Christian teachers, have taken the words, "the life of the flesh is in the blood," and have made the attempt to prove from them the idea that the blood of Christ means the life of Christ, and that it is really His wonderful life that works salvation. But they only utter this falsity by ignoring what this verse states. It was not the blood of the living animal that made atonement in the type. It was only the blood "upon the altar."

Three chapters follow — 18, 19, and 20 — which in many respects make terrible reading, but which, if read quietly, as in the presence of God, are calculated to have a wholesome effect upon us. We are brought face to face, especially in chapters

18 and 20, with great depths of depravity, and it is a solemn and soul-searching thing to realize that we have within us that fallen, fleshly nature which is capable of such things as these. The sins prohibited have largely to do with the sexual nature of mankind, and it is today perfectly obvious that sins of that nature underlie a vast amount of the depravity and crime that fill every land.

The opening verses of chapter 18 show that the Lord was looking back on Egypt and forward to Canaan. Both these lands were in the grip of very degrading idolatry, and so Israel was exposed to the infection both before and after their wilderness journey. They were not to follow the evil but keep God's statutes and judgments, and so doing they should live in them. This is the statement that the Apostle quotes in Galatians 3: 12. This doing was not "of faith," and obedience would ensure not heaven but continued life on earth.

Chapter 19 contains sundry statutes, many of which were designed to regulate man's dealings with his neighbour, and at the same time display the gracious thought of God for those not easily able to protect themselves. In all this Jehovah asserted the glory of His name and manifested His own rights. This we see in such verses as 4, 12, 21, 26, 30, 37.

At the same time we delight in the care for the poor and the stranger manifested in verses 9 and 10. If Boaz had not observed this regulation the Book of Ruth had never been written. Again the hired serv-

ant is protected in verse 13, and the deaf and blind in verse 14. Towards the end of the chapter honour is demanded for the aged, though such may be getting feeble, and the stranger is specially protected. All this displays the kindness of God.

In the middle of the chapter what we may call social sins and errors are prohibited. It is well for us to observe these things for they are not unknown in Christian circles. Especially would we desire to emphasize verse 16. Who can estimate the trouble and sorrow caused by talebearers among the saints of God? It is connected here with standing up against the "blood," or "life," of one's neighbours. To such a length will talebearing go. But notice the next verse. We are to rebuke our neighbour and not suffer sin upon him. The instruction evidently is: if you discern wrong or sin in your brother, go straight to him about it, and do not talk against him behind his back. If we Christians acted thus how much good would be gained and how much evil avoided!

Chapter 20 opens with warnings against the very idolatry that Stephen had to accuse the people of, as we have seen, and verse 6 adds to this a warning against the practice of spiritism, which, sad to say, has become so common in our day. Following this are verses that indicate that if we do not sanctify the Lord in our hearts we shall not observe the natural relations that God has ordained, whether parents, as in verse 9, or other relationships as in verses 10-21.

This thought is enforced in the closing verses of the chapter. The

many statutes were given so that Israel might be utterly different from the corrupted nations into whose land they were going. The holiness of God is greatly stressed, and it is remarkable how many times the words "I am the Lord your God," are repeated. Verse 27 certainly infers that the terrible evils forbidden were largely introduced among the nations by spiritist practices — the trafficking with demons.

Chapter 21 is occupied with special instructions for the priests, not only as to themselves but also as to their families. Special sanctity became such in their habits and their persons. Reading this chapter we perceive how serious was the sin of Eli in not restraining his sons in their evil ways. Even more stringent were the rules for the high priest himself, as seen in verses 10-15. So when Caiaphas rent his clothes, as recorded in Matthew 26: 65, he definitely broke the commandment of verse 10. It has been asserted by some who have investigated the matter, that every possible rule of justice, both divine and human, was broken in the condemnation of our Lord.

What is ordained in verses 16-24, is very striking. Any man of the priestly family, who was deformed or blemished, was debarred from going into the sanctuary and exercising his functions, but he was not to be deprived of priestly food. He should eat "the bread of his God," though he might not offer "the bread of his God." Today all true Christians are priests, and we cannot but think that something analogous may be seen. There may be those who, by reason of some griev-

ous defect which is public, are debarred from public activity, whether in worship or in service, yet they are as much entitled to have their part in that which as spiritual food is the life of the priestly family, as the most unblemished and favoured of their brethren.

Chapter 22 continues the same strain for the first 16 verses. The most rigid care had to be taken lest uncleanness of any sort was brought into contact with the holy things of God. All these regulations were clearly intended to impress the children of Israel with their own natural liability to that which was defiling in contrast with the essential holiness of God. We too need to be impressed with this, though the uncleanness we have to fear today is that which springs from within rather than from without. In our Lord's time the Pharisees and others were misusing instructions such as these, treating such ceremonial observances as if they were the only thing that mattered. Hence the Lord's word that, "those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man" (Matt. 15: 18).

From verse 17 to the end of the chapter we have regulations as to offerings which might be brought by the ordinary Israelite or even by a stranger. Here the same intention is seen. Every offerer had to know the holiness of Jehovah to whom the offering was made, and see that no blemish of any kind marked the offering, and that it was not some

very small and feeble creature just born. All was to be done as God ordained. They were hallowed, and thus set apart, by Jehovah; and He was to be hallowed in the midst of them.

When we turn to the Book of Malachi, we at once see that the remnant of the people who had returned to the land, were violating these instructions in outrageous fashion. The priests were offering "polluted bread" on the altar of the Lord. They were offering "the blind for sacrifice," and also "the lame and sick." They were challenged to offer such things to the governor and see what he would say. Offered to him it would be an impertinence; offered to God it was a shameful sin. They were treating the statutes of our chapter as though they were null and void. Hence the reminder that the "law of Moses . . . with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4: 4), had not lost any of its force though a thousand years had passed since it was given. What God ordains at the beginning of a dispensation stands unaltered and authoritative at the end of it.

When we turn from the type to the Antitype we find as ever that which is perfect and in full agreement with God's thoughts and demands. We have only to quote one verse in connection with that which has been before us. We know that we have been redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1: 19).

"The little foxes that spoil the vines."

WHATEVER enfeebles attachment to Christ destroys power. It is not gross sin that does it, which of course, will be met and judged; but it is the little things of every-day life which are apt to be chosen before Christ.

ENLARGED IN PRESSURE

DAVID ROSS

Abridged Notes of an Address given years ago.

I WANT to consider Psalm 4, verse 1 — second clause of that verse, as it is translated in Mr. Darby's version, "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me," and as an illustration of that I would like to turn to the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians. Let us read, Chapter 1: 8-10; 3: 10; 4: 6-9; 4: 16-18; 9: 14; 12: 7-9; and lastly Ephesians 3: 17-19.

"In pressure Thou hast enlarged Me." What do we think that pressure does to us — contracts us, limits us, impoverishes us? Not if we are in the company of Christ. If we are set here for His glory, we shall find that the pressure, the trials, the bereavements, the sorrows, the disasters, the disappointments that come upon us, will open up for us a large place. We shall not be impoverished, but we shall be made rich and filled with the fulness of God.

Let us consider this wonderful man of God, Paul, in order that we might see Christ magnified in him. It is not with the desire of magnifying Paul that I speak of him, but it is in order that we might see fulfilled his desire, that in his mortal body Christ might be magnified whether by life or by death. He penned these lines which I have read to you, probably, from the city of Ephesus, or shortly after he had left it. Let us consider the pressure that there was at that time upon his spirit! Read the 11th chapter of this epistle: the care of all the churches — enough to bow

anyone down as you think of the condition of the churches.

To the east of him in Galatia, the brethren were in danger of leaving the true Christian position and being entangled with the yoke of bondage, a foreign, spurious thing, a Judaistic adulteration of Christianity. And the news of this reached him from over the hills and crushed his spirit. And then from across the Ægean Sea there came to him the news of the opposite danger, not of legalism but of laxity, where the Greeks of Corinth were translating Christian liberty into licence — licentiousness and looseness, and he wondered if all his work was to be in vain — that work he had built up in Galatia; that work on which he had spent years in Corinth. Truly he was pressed in spirit. And then in Ephesus, a stronghold of Demonism, he was face to face with the powers of darkness and of hell. He tells us he fought with wild beasts at Ephesus—men that were so bestial, men that were so under the power of the devil that they looked and acted like veritable wild beasts.

And then he says, "I want you to know, brethren, that we were pressed **beyond measure**, above strength," and it is the word "beyond measure" to which I want to draw attention. I happened to look up Mr. Wigram's Greek Concordance for a word beginning with "hyper," which means "over," and I found that the great majority of the words that begin with that prefix came from the writings of the

Apostle Paul, and the writings of this period — when this epistle was written — have this word over and over again. A man in the battle of life; a man pressed above measure, and yet in pressure we find that the Lord has enlarged him, and the blessing runs over. The pressure was excessive, above human strength to bear, so that he had the sentence of death in himself. And what did he learn? Oh, what an enlargement he got in that pressure!

How was he enlarged? He learned not to trust in himself. What a deliverance that is, and that is why God allows the pressure to come upon us; that is why He allows the sorrow to bow us down; that is why he allows us to be bitterly disappointed, that we may learn deliverance from SELF. He uses this word in the 7th of Romans when in that terrible experience he found out that within him was something that was **exceedingly** sinful, above measure, surpassingly sinful; so sinful that he felt himself chained to a corpse and cried, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Oh, the pressure to find himself bound up with that foul, corrupt self of his; and in the pressure God enlarged him and set him free, and the chapter that takes you to the depth of misery ends with a keynote of victory, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" So it was at Ephesus — the pressure led to the enlargement, and this man was delivered from himself that he should not trust in himself but that he should trust in the God that could raise from the dead — the living God.

As you read through the epistle, you find alternating the pressure and the enlargement; the fainting and the wonderful strength; the impoverishment and the enriching with the fulness of God. Gospel preachers, when you preach the gospel, do you ever feel, as the apostle felt in the 2nd chapter, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Paul's sufficiency is of God. Then he goes on to think of the glory, and here you have the word in contrast to the ministry of angels that came on Mount Sinai, when there was such a revelation of the glory of God that the face of Moses shone with the reflex of that glory and the children of Israel could not bear to look upon it — such a glory that men's eyes could not bear it. And what does he say? There has been revealed a glory that **excelleth**, that surpasseth, that is above measure, that is beyond all the glory of Sinai and has utterly eclipsed it, and you and I are led into that glory. No longer do we need to veil our faces in fear and darkness, but we all with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed.

Feeling our insufficiency for the ministry of the Lord in any sense of the word, we turn from ourselves to Him and we realise the glory in the face of Jesus, and there is this wonderful enlarging from the mean, small, contracted little creatures that we are. We are changed into His image by having our eyes fixed upon Him, the One who fills the heart of God. No longer fearing to look upon that glory, the supreme glory of God, we gaze upon it, for it shines in the face of the One who died for us. And we are not con-

scious of the shining. Moses wist not that his face shone, and if we get occupied with our shining we are self-occupied, and that will cause the cloud to come upon us. But when the eyes of our hearts, without any cloud, are gazing upon the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is this transfiguration; there is this unconscious result — the reflection in us of the glory of God which is in the face of Jesus.

Chapter 4 tells you about the possibility of fainting. Paul has a terrible burden: the god of this world is against him, blinding the eyes of men, and he might well faint under the pressure of the bitter opposition, but "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me," and he says, "God who commandeth His light to shine out of darkness has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus." As we look into the face of Jesus we are on holy ground; and as we feed on Him, the Bread of God, we find our delight in Him, upon whom God feeds.

But now you come to the pressure side. Where have we the great treasure? In earthen vessels — frail, brittle. Why? That the **excellency** — the surpassingness — of the power might be of God and not of us. Surpassing pressure and surpassing power! And why is it that we are so little conscious of the surpassing power of God? Perhaps because we are so little conscious of the weakness of the earthen vessels. The apostle protests as to this against God allowing him to have a thorn in the flesh, which seemed to weaken him and incapacitate

him and handicap him for the ministry of the Lord; but the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect" — not in your strength but in your weakness.

Then he begins a series of paradoxes, as we might call them — troubled on every side, yet not distressed. Do we know anything about that — to know what it is to be right at the centre of the storm cloud? That is where the Lord dwelt. Look at Him on the last night — the night before His crucifixion! All around the storm is raging; the cyclone of the devil's malignity and man's hatred was there; and there is that calm spot in which He speaks of **My joy** and **My peace** right in the centre. Oh, if we know what it is to company with Christ we may be troubled on all sides but not distressed; perplexed but not in despair — that might be translated at our wits' end but not out of our wits; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; pressure on the one hand and the enlargement on the other; human weakness on the one hand only gives the opportunity for the manifestation of the power of God on the other hand.

And then at the end of the chapter here is a beautiful expression, "For which cause we faint not." Paul, is the pressure not too great for you? Are you not too burdened? because he uses the same word here as in chapter 1, where he says, "We were weighed down beyond measure." But what does he say now? "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment" — momentary and light, although a

little before it was beyond measure and above strength — “worketh for us a far more exceeding” — now the word is repeated — if you were mathematicians, I would say the word was “squared”: it is an exceeding, exceeding weight of glory; it is a surpassing, surpassing weight of glory. Consider him in the 1st chapter, weighed down above measure, and then consider him as he is looking forward to that day when he will be weighed down above measure with the eternal glory of God. We do need eyesight, and we need to have our eyes turned from the things of time, from the things that are visible and temporal, and we need to look on the things that are eternal — “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever,” and all the eternal system of things that are linked up with Him; and we shall see the surpassing, surpassing weight of glory that lies ahead of those who, it may be, in this the vale of tears in the day of our testing and our trial, are in pressure. Won't we let the Lord have His way with us, and in the pressure enlarge us?

And what else do we find? What these Corinthians found, for Paul could speak of the **exceeding GRACE** that was in them. We get the same expression in the 2nd chapter of Ephesians: “That he might show forth the **exceeding riches of His grace.**” And that same man in the 11th chapter tells you of all the pressure through which he went. If you want to read and know what he calls “light afflictions” read the 11th chapter of this epistle, a chapter not sufficiently well-known. When we think of our petty trials and we are

weighed down, it would be a very good thing for us to get a sense of proportion, to read what this man of God went through and what he called “light,” and then we shall see that anything we have been bowed down under is a mere trifle.

This man that knew pressure beyond measure was the man that was privileged to have revelations beyond measure, because the **abundance** of revelation is the same word I have been speaking of — exceeding and above measure. He received an abundance of revelation, but along with that abundance of revelation he received a thorn in the flesh. Why? If we get merely the revelations of God, the truth of God, without something to balance it, we become exalted, and if he got revelation above measure, he also got the ballast to keep him steady along with it. What does he call this thorn in the flesh? A messenger of Satan to buffet him, dealing blow upon blow. Perhaps you know what it is to be buffeted. Some of us hardly get our heads above water but we get buffet upon buffet. Abundance of revelation, abundance of buffeting, and with it all abundance of **STRENGTH**. “My grace is sufficient, my strength made perfect in your weakness.”

And then, lastly — to balance this exceeding pressure, the “exceeding glory,” the “exceeding power”; the “exceeding weight of glory”; the “exceeding grace”; the “exceeding revelation,” and we may know the **LOVE, exceeding, surpassing knowledge** — the love of Christ that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. If the Lord allows us to pass through sorrow; if He allows blow upon

blow to fall upon us; sorrow after sorrow to come upon us, it is in order that we might be enlarged. What is the hand that sends it? It is the hand of infinite love, and the love of Christ is the love that surpasseth knowledge, and yet we can come to know it and be filled with all the fulness of God.

Shall we rebel against God's

way with us? Shall we spurn the hand that brings discipline with it? or shall we not put ourselves into His hands, and, if He allows us to be weighed down, remember with that weight, with that pressure, that trial, comes the enlargement, the enrichment, the enlightenment and the filling, with the love of Christ passing knowledge, into all the fulness of God.

FOUR THINGS WORTH REMEMBERING

W. BARKER.

(2 CORINTHIANS 4: 16, 18; 5: 10, 14).

I AM going to point out to you briefly certain things that you will find in this passage — things which helped to make the Apostle Paul the saint and servant of God that he was. We must not suppose that he had an easy path, any more than some of us. Perhaps, in the warehouse where you are employed, you have to rub shoulders with ungodly men. Many things happen, day after day, that try both your spirit and your temper, and you may sometimes wish you were in other circumstances, thinking that, if you were, your spiritual life would be more vigorous, that you would grow and get on faster in the things of God. But we are poor judges as to that, and we may well remember that if in a lawful position, we are where the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is all-sufficient for us.

Now, in fact, the Apostle Paul had a very rough time of it, and he could say what we could not, at all events with the same fulness of meaning. Look, for instance, at verses 8, 9: "We are troubled on

every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Think for a moment of what those terms suggest — troubled — perplexed — persecuted — cast down! And then glance at verse 11: "We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." Now, of course, we cannot say that. The Apostle Paul's path was indeed a great deal rougher than ours. The storms of persecution for Christ's sake continually howled around him, and he tells us in Romans 8: 36 that he and his fellow-Christians were looked upon as so many sheep for the slaughter. So the apostle had much to endure, but he found in his pathway that Christ was all-sufficient.

But without further preface let me name some of the things that made Paul the saint and servant that he was. There are four in number. We shall find the first in verse 16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Thank God, there is the in-

ward man, born of the Spirit. The Apostle here speaks of it as being renewed day by day. And so I hope it is with us. The outward man, as we well know, needs daily renewal. Therefore we go to bed and sleep, and sit down, most of us, to two or three good square meals in the course of the day. Now, if the outward man needs to be renewed thus, so does the inward man. Somebody may say, "But how does the renewing take place? What contributes to it?" I believe two things. First of all, **prayer**, which is the very breath of the Christian. If we neglect the throne of grace — if we seldom bow our knees in prayer to our God and Father in heaven, you may depend upon it that we shall suffer great loss. But there is more. You will remember a verse in the end of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." There is then a renewal that comes from waiting on the Lord. Now I believe that "**waiting on the Lord**" means more than simply bowing our knees in prayer to God in the morning, and again at night. We must also wait upon Him with His Word before us, to hear from Him, to receive through the pages of His blessed book some communication from Him whose words are spirit and life. You have but to read the first Psalm to see that the one who meditates upon God's truth is likened unto a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf never withers, and who brings forth fruit in his season.

May I, then, ask you to remember that the inward man should be

renewed day by day? When God's redeemed people were journeying from Egypt to Canaan the manna fell every day, and every day they gathered it up. So must it be with us. May God graciously incline our hearts to pay frequent visits to the throne of grace. We can do so, you know, not only in our own bedrooms, but when we walk along the busy street, or when serving in the warehouse or office where we are employed. All the day long, though our minds be engaged with business, we can be in the spirit, if not in the attitude, of prayer, and God's Word may be treasured up richly in our heart and memory.

Now for our second point. You will find it at the end of the chapter, verse 18: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Observe the contrast between things seen and not seen, and mark what is said about them. The things which are seen are temporal, they perish and pass away; it is the unseen things that are eternal. And the Holy Spirit is given to us Christians in order that we might enter into them. Now these were the things at which the Apostle looked. His eye was on the invisible. Men of the world would not understand this. They might say, "How can any one look at things that are not seen?" It is a mystery which they cannot explain. But it is simple enough to the Christian. We are called upon, then, to have the eyes of the heart fixed upon the unseen — upon the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. They are all revealed in the Holy Scrip-

tures, and the Holy Spirit is given to us that we might know them. Let these, then, be that on which the eyes of our heart rest. Of course, we have to do our daily business, and do it well. A Christian servant should be the best of all servants, and a Christian master should be the best of all masters. There is no doubt about that, and thus, in our daily calling, we should glorify the name of our Lord Jesus. That does not militate at all against what I have said.

The third thing that had a powerful influence upon the Apostle is named in verse 10 of chapter 5. He had just been saying that he laboured, he earnestly endeavoured, he strove, he made it his chief business that, whether present or absent, he might be well pleasing to his Lord and Master. "For," adds he, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Now the Apostle was not only a saved man, just as you are, but he was also a servant of Christ, as we all are in our little measure. And so he said in substance, "I may not find that everybody will pat me on the back, and say, 'Well done,' and I do not make it my aim to win the esteem of men; my one ambition is to be acceptable to my Lord and Master in that day when I shall be manifested at His tribunal." So should it be with us, for we must all appear there, and our life pass under scrutiny — shall I say the judgment? — of our gracious Lord and Master. Perhaps somebody may say, "But how does that agree with what we get in John 5: 24, where

we are told that we shall never come into judgment?" Ah! we Christians will never come into judgment on account of our sins. It was for these that Christ died. The judicial question is passed, blessed be God, but then our life will come under our Master's judgment and review. The Apostle did not lose sight of that. He was anxious that his life should receive His Master's approbation. God help us, then, to keep these three things in view: First, the inward man, renewed day by day; second, the eye of the heart on unseen and eternal things; third, we must all be manifested at the tribunal of our Master.

One other thing, and this is my last. Verse 14: "The love of Christ constraineth us." It is blessed to have the heart under the powerful influence of the love of Christ. Of all the mighty factors in the life of the Apostle, that was the mightiest. He says elsewhere, "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And so he judged that if the Lord Jesus Christ had died for him, and he was, by God's grace, among them that lived, it became him not to live unto himself, but unto Him who died and rose again. It ought to be so with us. True, we do not move in the same circle as the Apostle; we have neither received his great gifts nor his call to service; but if your lot is cast in the humblest sphere, let us live and move in it to the glory of Him who died for us and rose again. How needful it is to remember that the name of the Lord Jesus is written upon us, and that at home, in business, in the church, or in whatsoever circle we have to be, we are to carry ourselves so as to please our graci-

ous Lord and Master. Those, then, are the four things brought before us in this passage, all of which contributed to make the Apostle Paul

the saint and servant that he was, the last but not least, **the constraining love of Christ.**

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

J. HOUSTON

PETER wrote his epistles to the dispersed Jewish Christians in Asia Minor. He mentions the places where these Christians were driven as a result of persecution. The Lord Jesus had charged him with the care of the sheep. In fulfilment of his pastoral charge, he wrote to them, to guide and comfort them in their sufferings.

It is important to notice that, in writing to them, he does not view them in their **union** to Christ, as His **body**. Nor does he view them as **seated in heaven**, blessed with all the blessings that flow from that union. He sees them as **strangers and pilgrims on earth**, subject to all that was incidental to their wilderness journey, such as "the fiery trial" of their faith, and their suffering for righteousness' sake. The Lord Himself had been a Stranger and Pilgrim on earth, and had suffered for righteousness' sake. They were to "follow His steps."

God's government is clearly seen in both epistles. In the First Epistle it has reference to His own people; in the Second, to the world. His judgment begins at His own house; afterwards it extends to the world. This is the order, uniformly observed, in His governmental ways with man. He said to Ezekiel with reference to His judgment, "begin at my sanctuary" (Ezek. 9: 6). Peter says: "the time is come that

judgment must begin at the house of God." In Revelation, the seven churches are judged as responsible witnesses of Christ on earth before judgment is poured out from heaven on the world. And Peter adds: "if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

It may seem strange to the reader that God should judge His people whom He has brought into an unchangeable relationship to Himself. The fact is, He judges them **because they are His people**. To Israel He said: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3: 2). Referring to this judgment, Peter says: "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." Again, it is written: "The Lord shall judge His people" (Heb. 10: 30). **I n d e e d**, He "scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." This judgment is for **correction**, and in no wise for **condemnation**. God, as Father, disciplines His people **in love**, and that always **for their good**. As "Judge of all the earth," He **condemns** the world in **righteousness** (see Gen. 18: 25). Never can His

people come under the condemnation of the world. The very discipline He gives to them is **preventive**, as well as **corrective**; for "when we are judged, we are **chastened** of the Lord, **that we should not be condemned with the world**" (1 Cor. II: 32).

It may also seem strange that Peter should say of the righteous that they may "scarcely" be saved, as if there was doubt of their salvation. He is not referring to the absolute salvation that believers have, as founded upon the work of Christ and the sovereign grace of God; but to salvation from the various trials and sufferings they have on earth, as under the government of God. It might be said of righteous Lot that he was "scarcely" saved from Sodom. "While he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city" (Gen. 19: 16). He had settled down in the very place where judgment was about to fall; and he was afraid to leave it, not knowing his danger by being in it.

He is a remarkable case of one who is saved, "yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3: 15). The fact remains Lot was saved; Sodom was **condemned**. With reference to this, Peter says: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." This, in a summary way, is just what He does in His all-wise and righteous government.

And Peter gives us, in his First Epistle, the deliverance of the godly out of all their temptations; in his Second, the reservation of the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

Peter takes the long view of God's government, that is, from the **beginning** to the **end**. He looks back to the deluge, when God intervened in judgment for the first time in the world's history. Then he looks forward to "the day of God," in which God will rest in His love, with all His redeemed, in "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." He calls this "the end of all things," and he says it is "at hand." God's rest is where "righteousness dwelleth." Righteousness is the fundamental principle of all His dealings with man, and the foundation of all His government. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom" (Heb. 1: 8). When God rules, it is in righteousness; when He saves, it is in righteousness, as the cross at Calvary dearly proves; when He rests, it is in righteousness.

Three things are noticeable in reference to righteousness; it is **proclaimed** by the righteous, who suffer for it in an ungodly world; it **reigns** in the millennium when Christ's kingdom is established in power; it **dwells** in the eternal state, when God is "all in all." As to the proclamation of it and suffering for it, Christ is the perfect Witness. He "loved righteousness and hated iniquity." And from the very beginning God's witnesses have suf-

ferred for righteousness. Abel was slain **because he was righteous** (see 1 John 3: 12). Even Lot suffered **for righteousness**, for he was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." Peter's reference to Noah is significant in this connection. Noah proclaimed righteousness as "a preacher of righteousness," to an ungodly world ready to be judged. Then came the flood, in which all perished excepting Noah and his house, who were saved in the ark. This, no doubt, is typical of the day of the Lord, when God's judgment will fall upon the wicked. Finally, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, in a new world, type of God's rest in new creation.

It remains to be noticed that Peter, in speaking of the Lord's coming, does not give us the rapture of the Church, when it is taken from earth to heaven to meet the Lord **in the air**. He alludes to this in speaking of Christ as "the day star," or as it is expressed else-

where "the morning star." He gives us **the appearing of Christ** in power and majesty, when every eye shall see Him. He will then establish His kingdom on earth, and give to every man according to his work. This is in keeping with the character of his Epistles, in which he gives us God's righteous government. Paul refers to this when he speaks of "the Lord, the righteous judge," giving him "a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4: 8). It is befitting that those who suffer with Christ should reign with Him; and that, in His kingdom in glory, there should be the "crown of righteousness" for those who have faithfully served Him, as Paul certainly did.

"We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Since we "look for such things," let us be diligent that we "may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless."

As Paul walks to the executioner's block, he rests his heart on this invulnerable certainty: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Even death cowers before the steady eye of certainty. It was the man who could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," who could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Doubt is destructive; speculation is vague; inference is uncertain; mere opposition is shifting sand. Certainty alone is solid rock beneath our feet; and no wise man will build on anything other than this. Alas, how flimsy are the standards by which multitudes today meander through life! "I think," "I assume," "I hope," "I imagine," "I suppose," "I guess," "I dare say." However many pleasures such people pack into their mortal span, they never know the meaning of real heart-rest and abiding satisfaction. Their pleasures may be passionate, but they are paltry in reality.

BIBLE STUDY—LEVITICUS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 23: 1 — 25: 23).

CHAPTER 22 ended with a solemn reminder to Israel of the holiness of Jehovah, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt to be their God. Chapter 23 opens with the fact that He desired to have the people, whom He had thus redeemed, assembled before Him. A "convocation" is a "calling together," and this was to mark the feasts of the Lord.

The weekly sabbath is mentioned first of all. For six days work was to be done, but every seventh day was to be a time of complete rest. Other scriptures indicate the special character of the sabbath. For instance, Deuteronomy 5: 15, states that it was to act as a reminder of their deliverance from Egypt. Again, Ezekiel 20: 12, shows that it stood as a sign between God and Israel, that there was a covenant between them. It signified rest after work accomplished. This was the case in creation when, after six days of work which was very good, God rested. Under the law Israel was to work for six days, and so earn a rest on the seventh.

In reading the Gospels, we cannot but be struck with the frequency with which our Lord's recorded works of mercy were done on the sabbath, incurring the anger of Pharisees and scribes. Israel had wholly broken the covenant, so He was setting aside the sign of it, and showing also that there was no rest for God in a creation that had been ruined by sin. Hence that great word of His, recorded in John 5:

17, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." We are delivered from the law, and it no longer forms the basis of our relation with God. We stand before God in righteousness, accomplished by the work of Christ, and therefore we begin with rest on the first day of the week, instead of reaching it at the end by works of our own.

The sabbath however had a typical significance, foreshadowing the rest of God, into which ultimately we shall be introduced, according to Hebrews 4. When we read, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (4: 9), the margin tells us that the word used there for "rest" is literally "a keeping of a sabbath" — the only place in Scripture where that particular word is used. In our chapter therefore the sabbath is prophetic of that rest into which God will ultimately bring the true Israel, and the feasts of the Lord, which follow, are prophetic of the steps by which that rest is to be reached.

Of these feasts the passover stands first, as typifying that which forms the basis of all God's work toward that end — the death of Christ. Full details of this we had before us in Exodus 12, and so in verse 5 it is mentioned without detail; and we may pass on to the consideration of the feast of unleavened bread, in verses 6-8.

Leaven being a type of sin in its fermenting activity it was to be wholly excluded from their bread for seven days. Here we have

something that is applied to ourselves in 1 Corinthians 5: 6-8. We know that Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us, though we are not of Israel, and the seven days of unleavened bread picture the complete period in which we now live, when it is incumbent on us to have done with the sin for which, and to which, Christ has died. We are to "keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

There will be no doubt a special application to Israel in the day to come, when they discover how their Messiah has died for them, and learn to abhor and forsake their sin. It stands true indeed in every connection, that if a soul is released from the penalty of sin, which has been expiated in the death of Christ, that soul repudiates the sin for which Christ died. The principle of it is clearly stated in Romans 6: 2.

Our chapter is divided into paragraphs, beginning respectively with verses 9, 23, 26 and 33. The first paragraph contains the feasts that have the character of "firstfruits," see, verses 10 and 17. As a matter of fact, though the words are identical in our version, the words in the original differ. In verse 10, the significance of the word is "**principal** fruits," and in verse 17, it is "**earliest** fruits;" another mark this of Divine inspiration, inasmuch as we can now see that here were types and predictions of, first, the resurrection of Christ, and second, of saints who are His followers.

The New Testament antitype of the first we find in such a scripture as, "Now is Christ risen from the

dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15: 20). The sheaf of the firstfruits, that was to be offered by being waved before the Lord, and which would be accepted on behalf of the people, was in an absolute sense the beginning of the harvest. Until it was offered the produce of the harvest was not in any form to be touched by the people, as verse 14 shows. When offered it was to be accompanied only by a burnt offering and a meat offering with the corresponding drink offering.

How accurately all this foreshadowed the great Antitypical event we can plainly see. Christ risen is before us, so no sin offering is suitable here. Nor has the peace offering a place, since the thought of communion does not enter. The two offerings that do appear set forth the sweet savour of both His spotless life and His sacrificial death.

And further, the sheaf of firstfruits was not to be waved before the Lord on the sabbath, but on the day after the sabbath; that is, on the first day of the week. True to this type, Christ lay in the tomb all the sabbath, and on the first day of the week He rose from the dead. The sheaf was waved "to be accepted for you," as verse 11 says, and in keeping with this Jesus our Lord, who was delivered for our offences, "was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4: 25). The believer today stands before God in the acceptance of the risen Christ; and indeed for any saint at any time no other acceptance is possible.

The succeeding feast had its date fixed in reference to this one. Fifty

days had to be counted, which according to Jewish reckoning, brought them to the morrow after the seventh sabbath — the feast of Pentecost. The offering on this occasion of two wave loaves is spoken of as "a new meat offering." This it was indeed, inasmuch as from every other meat offering leaven had to be rigidly excluded, and here it had to be introduced. Yet though introduced its fermenting action was to be ended by the action of fire, since the loaves were to be baken.

Here then we see foreshadowed that which first took place on that day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2. On that great occasion, fifty days after the resurrection of our Lord, three thousand Jews, gathered out of many nations, were converted, and offered as "earliest fruits" to God. Not until Acts 10 is reached do we get Gentiles offered as "earliest fruits." But they **were** so offered, for later we find the Apostle Paul speaking of himself as "ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15: 16).

In our type there were two loaves, setting forth the two classes, and both, the sin that was in them being judged and thus set aside, were equally accepted, when presented to God. What is not typified here is the fact that in the Church both are made one before God. But that fact is a part of "the mystery" which has now been revealed and which, we are expressly told, was not made known in earlier ages. What is foreshadowed is the fact that the saints today are not the complete harvest that is to be

reaped as the result of the death and resurrection of Christ but rather, "a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (Jas. 1: 18).

In keeping with all this, the accompanying offerings were to include both sin and peace offerings as well as burnt offerings. The two loaves themselves were the meat offering but representing as they did redeemed sinners, they could not be presented save on the basis of a sin offering, the leaven that was in them having been typically judged by the fire. Again, we meet with the words, "Ye shall do no servile work therein." We had them in connection with the feast of unleavened bread, but they were absent in connection with the sheaf of firstfruits. If saints are to be presented to God, all human effort is totally excluded.

Verse 22 is really a parenthesis, brought in to show that God, while ordaining these feasts in which He was to be honoured and exalted, had a heart full of compassion for the needy among His people, and even for the stranger. In the Book of Ruth we are permitted to see how a God-fearing Israelite, Boaz, observed this command; and his observance of it was over-ruled of God to bring Ruth's name into the genealogy, not only of David but also of Christ Himself, as mentioned in Matthew 1: 5.

The feasts of the Lord were not equally distributed throughout the year. After Pentecost came a pause until the seventh month, and then in quick succession came three feasts, which closed the series. On the first day of the seventh month the feast of trumpets was to be

observed, which in its prophetic bearing still awaits fulfilment. It foretells the gathering together of the elect Israel at the second Advent, according to the Lord's words, recorded in Matthew 24: 31.

Verse 24 of our chapter speaks of this feast as "an holy convocation," and an holy gathering together that day will indeed prove to be. It will be accomplished on the ground of sacrifice, as the next verse indicates, and all "servile work" is eliminated, for this predicted gathering together of Israel will not be achieved by works of law, but wholly based on the mercy of God, as declared in Romans 11: 26-32.

On the tenth day of the seventh month came the day of atonement, details of which we had before us when considering chapter 16. Here we have emphasized the elimination of all work on that day, and even more strongly the affliction of heart and soul that was to characterize the people. Viewing it therefore in its setting amongst the other feasts, it is predictive of that great spiritual awakening in Israel, which will produce repentance of unusual depth and reality, as is predicted in Zechariah 12: 10-14. By this inward work of grace there will be created a nation morally fit to enter upon millennial blessedness.

Just five days later came the feast of tabernacles which lasted for seven days. It was a time of thanksgiving and rejoicing when all the fruits of the year had been gathered in, and that doubtless was all that it conveyed to the people at that time. Now that we have the light of New Testament prophecy we see

how it foretold the millennial blessedness, which is the purpose of God for Israel. Had the people known its ultimate meaning they might not have been so careless as to its observance, as is noted for us in Nehemiah 8: 17. And a similar carelessness seems to have marked them as to other feasts.

Reviewing the teaching of the chapter, we find that it points to great landmarks in Israel's history — the death of Christ; His resurrection; the coming of the Spirit; the gathering out of an elect people; their profound repentance; millennial joy and blessing. The first three have found fulfilment: the last three await it. The portion of the church is not found here, but in the New Testament only. We may rest assured that, whether for Israel or for the church, not one predicted thing will fail when its season arrives.

The last words of the chapter repeat the opening words of verse 2 — "**the feasts of the Lord.**" It is sadly instructive to note how John speaks of them in his Gospel. A sample is, "After this there was a **feast of the Jews**" (5: 1), and so it is all through. They were being more observant of them than their fathers, but only in a ritualistic way. They had lost the kernel while retaining the shell. Consequently their feasts were disowned. Herein is a warning for us. Let us not fail to take to heart the principle involved in it, and the danger disclosed.

Chapter 24 divides into two parts. In the first we have instructions as to the maintenance of the lamps in the holy place and of the cakes

upon the golden table, so that all was to be in order before God. In the latter part we discover that there was bad disorder in the camp, when it was a question of the actual state of the people. To view things ideally according to God's mind is one thing: to view them practically according to the state of the people is quite another. And thus it is of course in connection with ourselves today.

It is worthy of note how often the word "pure" occurs in verses 1-9. The pure candlestick had seven lamps to be fed with the pure oil beaten out of olives. The pure table had on it the twelve cakes of fine flour, covered in pure frankincense, renewed sabbath by sabbath before the Lord. Here we see what will yet be realized in the coming age, when the light of the Spirit of God will not only be "before the throne," but also, "sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 4: 5; 5: 6). In that age too the twelve tribes will at last be maintained before God in a fragrance which they derive altogether from Christ.

The holiness of all this is emphasized in verse 9. The weekly cakes were to be eaten only by the priests, and in the holy place. They were not to be carried forth into the outside world. Yet even this regulation had to give way in the presence of the pressing need of David, who was the Lord's anointed, as recorded in 1 Samuel 21: 6; and this action of Ahimelech was approved by our Lord in Matthew 12: 3, 4. The true Lord's Anointed is "greater than the temple," important though that temple and its arrangements were. David more-

over was in rejection when the incident took place; and our Lord was the rejected One when He spoke in Matthew 12. Under these circumstances the needs of the Lord's Anointed took precedence of legal regulations.

The sin of the man who cursed the name of the Lord is brought in here by way of contrast. The Lord's mind concerning him was made known and he had to die. In verse 17, killing a man is mentioned, and cursing the Lord is as grave a sin as that, for death was to be the penalty of both. Here too we have mentioned lesser evils, and we get the legislation, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth," mentioned also in Exodus and Deuteronomy, and referred to by the Lord in Matthew 5: 38. He referred to it to throw into relief the grace that He was beginning to reveal, which would entail upon His disciples the showing of grace to others.

Chapter 25 introduces a fresh subject. The previous chapters have dealt mainly with matters that specially concerned the priests, and were spoken "out of the tabernacle" (chap. 1: 1). We now have a matter that concerned rather right government in Israel, when they were come into the land, and so it was spoken "in Mount Sinai." In this connection the basic fact they had to remember is stated in verse 23, — "the land is Mine." Consequently Israel had to deal with the land, when they possessed it, in the way prescribed in the earlier verses.

Every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year, when the land was to be given a rest. And when seven

of these sabbatical years had passed the fiftieth year was to be a jubile, when not only no sowing was to be done but every man was to return to his inheritance. This law must have been a great test to the people.

In verse 20, it is anticipated that they would say, "What shall we eat . . . ?" In answer to that they had to rely on God's pledged word that the sixth year should bring forth enough for three years. This being so there would be a sufficiency of supply even when they did not sow on the fiftieth year as well as the forty-ninth. The question became simply this — Would they take God at His word? It is a rather ominous fact that there is no record in the history of the people of the jubile year being observed, though we do have a reference to a

kinsman redeeming an inheritance.

What is made very plain is that since the land was God's, those to whom He gave it might only dispose of it on the leasehold principle, selling it until the jubile came; the value of the lease decreasing as the jubile drew near. Thus each inheritance was not to be permanently alienated from the family that originally had it. In this way any accumulation of landed property by men of a grasping nature was prevented and, what was even more important, Israel had a continual reminder that all they were to possess they held from the Lord, and they were dependent upon Him. Do we who are Christians need this reminder any less than they? Do we not rather need it more?

SPIRITUAL DEGENERACY

WE, who are English-speaking Christians, have for about two centuries been privileged to live under a tolerant and non-persecuting regime. Wintry blasts of fierce opposition have not spoiled our summer atmosphere. But these pleasant conditions carry a danger with them.

Many years ago a number of hives of bees were brought from temperate climes to the tropical island of Barbados. At first the bees went diligently to work gathering honey for the winter that their instinct led them to expect. But the winter never came, and the bees found themselves in a land of perpetual

summer. What happened? Why, the bees ceased to gather honey and spent their time flying about and frequently stinging the people, and making themselves a nuisance!

Here is a parable from nature. Let us take it to heart, and apply its lesson to ourselves. Have we spent all too much of our time in buzzing around and stinging other people instead of diligently gathering the sweetness of the Gospel? How much better to gather it, and then use it for the good and blessing of our fellow-men, both saints and sinners, and thus bring glory to the name of our Lord and Saviour.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

An article written long ago by the late W. H. Westcott.

THE present dispensation is peculiarly characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ, having finished the work of redemption, is gone on high, and the Spirit is now here to represent Him. All the work of the Spirit tends to make much of Christ. "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16: 14).

This being the case, it would be well for us all to be **filled** with the Spirit, that we may get to know Him in His fulness, and in the beauty and wisdom of His ways. It is thus that we shall learn to find our delight in Him as God does, and get the power to represent Him worthily here.

The words, "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. 5: 14, New Trans.), seem like the New Testament paraphrase of, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60: 1).

Those who sleep are in appearance very like the dead. The Apostle calls on such to arise, shake off their slumbering inactivity, and, he adds, "the Christ shall shine upon thee." At this fag-end of the Christian dispensation there is a strong tendency to grow heavy with sleep. It is a solemn thing that the company **who know more than many**, as at Ephesus, is the one to which the exhortation is given. They had the highest truth, and

were in danger of going to sleep over it.

Shall we consider how we arrive at such an experience as is here enjoined? And how God would bring it about in our souls?

Ploughing up of heart and conscience — a preparation we know little of — is doubtless the first thing (Rom. 1: 16—3: 20). Then Christ is set before the soul; and when there is rest, and we have come into Christian liberty, then we are free to learn (Rom. 3: 21—8: 39). Light displaces darkness. The work of Christ being before God in all its unchanging and eternal efficacy, the Holy Spirit produces in the soul desires Godward. He gives a real sense of the existence and the presence of God, a true view of our present state and what our solemn future might be. We are led to see things not merely as they affect us, but in their relation to God. The fear of God is created, which is the beginning of wisdom. We realize that to be God, God **should** be holy, He **should** be just. We get a growing sense of the holiness of His throne and of indwelling sin. Hence in Acts 13: 26, it is said, "**Whosoever among you feareth God**, to you is the word of this salvation sent." I think we should be ready to acknowledge the sovereign and gracious ways of God, who uses various instrumentalities in awakening souls. The testimony of an itinerant or open-air preacher may be used to awaken; then perhaps God permits the awakened soul to go elsewhere, to get peace through

hearing the Gospel preached more fully. Herein is that saying true, "One sows and another reaps," for it is God that is working all the time.

The Spirit is here in Christ's name. When He finds one who has trusted in the atoning work of Christ which the Gospel presents, one who has definitely yielded himself to Christ, He comes and takes possession of that soul on behalf of Christ and for God. He seals him for God, as belonging to God.

The Spirit links Himself with the believer and dwells in him as one who is of Christ, and as belonging to God. Note well that the **blood** was first placed on the leper's ear and hand and foot, and afterwards the **oil** (Lev. 14: 17). The Spirit's power is not something added to what I am as a mere natural man. The work of Christ must be apprehended, its results formed in the soul; see, Romans 3: 25. Have you not found this out? You felt that as to yourself you had not a word to say (v. 19), and God having closed your lips, then set forth **Christ** as your Saviour. See how He directs your faith: first, in the **blood** (v. 25); secondly, in **Jesus** (v. 26); thirdly, in Him that justifieth the ungodly (4: 5); and fourthly, in Him that raised up **Jesus** our Lord from the dead (4: 24). Instead of yourself, God sets before you **Christ**, raised from the dead — once delivered for your offences, but raised again for your justification. It is on this ground that the Holy Ghost is given to you (5: 5). Faith in the blood, in the Saviour whose blood it was, in the God who gave the Saviour and raised Him up again — wherever

such faith is found there is peace with God, and the Spirit is given.

The exhortation to be filled with the Spirit implies that the Spirit is within you and is able to fill you. He is prepared to bring you completely under Christ's control. If you were filled, you would be engaged with Christ and all that is His, and would do everything unto Him. How much of you has the Holy Spirit really got under His control?

We sometimes think that the filling of the Spirit will be like a sudden effusion after long prayer and waiting, and much seeking. But let us understand that **here is the Spirit**, the Spirit IS; He is **within us** who are saved. He is a Divine Person in great earnest to **fill** us with positive, divine energy — willing, longing to do it.

How, then, may we be filled? Just by being free from everything which would grieve or obstruct Him. There are two other exhortations in Scripture to the Christian in regard of the Holy Spirit, and both are negative. One is, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" do not grieve Him by unseemly or unsuitable behaviour. The other is, "Quench not the Spirit;" do not hang back when He urges you to some act in daily life, service, or ministry. To quench the Spirit is to refuse to obey some leading. You yield to human motives or listen to natural reasonings, and the *thing is not done*. On the other hand, if you obey, you get all His divine power to carry you onward. But He will always carry you along on well-defined lines laid down in Scripture. He **never** leads contrary

to it, therefore let us study the Scriptures ever.

If you are awake you will often be conscious of the distinct leading of the Spirit. Many illustrations are found in the Word. "Arise, and go. . . . And he arose and went" (Acts 8: 26, 27). "Run, speak to this young man" (Zech. 2: 4). He would have your every faculty subjected to the operation of the Spirit.

All the verses which refer to the Spirit are like rosebuds. Linger over them, and you will be astonished to see how they open out, and how much sweetness there is in them. For example: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Rom. 5: 5). Then, if filled with the Spirit, God's **love to you** would surely flood your soul, and everywhere you went you would show to all **the love of God**. It would sway us in all our actions towards our fellow-men.

Take Romans 8: 2 — "Life in Christ Jesus." What is that? There is no fret, nor disturbance, nor turmoil in His life, no ruffle there. If Satan could have succeeded in extracting from His lips one expression of impatience, all the work of redemption would have been spoiled. Then, if the Spirit filled us — the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus — He would so engage us with Him that we too should be freed from every element of unrest. Instead of weakness and failure in seasons of temptation, we should be held up

and enabled to exhibit His life by the Spirit.

So with each passage in which is stated anything of the office and work of the Spirit. Each suggests a line upon which the saint may be filled, and come under the unchecked control of this Holy and Divine Person.

Accompanying this exhortation in Ephesians 5: 18, there is the other "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." If we were set for being Spirit-filled, we should guard against anything that would simulate it without being it. We should never mistake exhilaration for unction. All extravagancies would be shunned, however pleasing to the flesh: a sober, holy, happy devotedness unto Christ, altogether beyond the flesh, would take their place. The natural excitement of wine, and the Spirit's power, that takes a man outside of himself, are not to be confounded (see, Acts 2: 13-17). They are as different in their origin as flesh and spirit.

Further, there are given some marks of one filled with the Spirit. There will be not only **singing**, but the making of melody **in the heart** to the Lord. There will be a **thankful spirit** for everything — not only for the agreeable things, but for all things; and there will be **subjection to one another** in the fear of Christ, the regarding of each other, brother or sister, as more worthy than myself.

Let us go in for being "filled with the Spirit."

As to work for the Lord, the simple enquiry for us is that which is recorded as the first utterance of Paul to the Lord, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

YOUNG MEN AND THEIR DANGER

W. BARKER.

IF we turn to the First Epistle of John and in chapter 2, read verses 12-24, we at once see that the "young men" hold a middle place in the family of God; the fathers are above them and the babes below.

These distinctions, of course, relate to growth, not to the soul's acceptance with God, nor to its standing and relationship. In these great privileges all are equal and there is no difference. Whether babes, young men, or fathers, all are forgiven (v. 12), all are God's children (3: 2), all have received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1: 13), and all have eternal life (5: 11). Here there is no above nor below. We cannot be too clear as to that. The babe in the family of God holds as near and dear a place as a father, though the latter be richer in experience and in the knowledge of Christ.

The three classes have their distinguishing marks. The babes know the Father. Not only are they assured of the forgiveness of sins, but they know Him whose grace has made them *His children*. This does not necessarily suppose that the babes are able to talk about these things intelligently. A little child knows his parents, knows what it is to love and be loved, long before its infant lips can plainly speak. What the soul of a babe in the family of God may be conscious of and deeply enjoy he may be unable to express in words. The talking time will come by and by.

Of the fathers it is said that they "have known Him that is from the

beginning." Twice over the same witness is borne, and nothing more can be added. To know Him, whom no one altogether knows but the Father (Matt. 11: 27), to be daily growing in the knowledge of Him, this marks a point beyond which none can go. Here our ship is sailing on a boundless sea, whose uttermost shores no eye shall ever behold; they stretch away into the vast infinitude, unreached and unreachably. This knowledge is not like the babbling brooks or shallow mountain streams, which laugh and sing and clap their hands as little children do. It is deep and tranquil like the waters of a great lake.

The young men are said to be strong, the Word of God abides in them, and they have overcome the wicked one. Precious testimony! They are not novices, though they be not fathers. They are strong through divinely-given strength, the Word of God is cherished and understood, and they have not fallen before the seducing words of the wicked one, the great antagonist of Christ, and the defamer of the glory of His Person, against whose emissaries the babes are warned and put upon their guard in verse 18, and onward.

But the danger of the young men is the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." For what the heart loves it will go after, and love is the most powerful of all forces, and will sweep aside, if it can, every impediment that stands in the way of its desires. **Let the young men then be wary of the world.** It is their great foe. It will mar their Christ-

ian life and make their arms as weak as Samson's after he had laid his head in the lap of Delilah. Poor Samson! once strong when "the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times," strong enough to rend the lion, to carry away the gates of Gaza, and to smite the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, but afterwards bound, blinded, and brought forth to make sport for the enemies of the Lord when their hearts were merry. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," is written in blazing letters all across the history of that young man.

Strong in another sense are the young men. They are strong in physical strength. And this must have play, and so the football club, the tennis court, the cricket field, the running match suggest themselves as innocent outlets. Is there any evil, then, in following the ball over the field, in standing at the wicket, or engaging in other forms of athletics? Are not these harmless and healthful pursuits? Perhaps so, though harm often comes of them. Into what associations do they sometimes lead, into what friendships, into what entanglements!

We knew a young man some years ago, an earnest Christian, an open-air preacher, and a diligent labourer among the young. Seldom was he away from the meeting for prayer, and often was his voice heard, leading us to the throne of grace. Full of promise was that young man's life, like a tree in an orchard covered with the beautiful blossoms of spring. But in an evil hour he entered the tennis court, fell gradually into worldly associa-

tions, and little by little gave up everything of a Christian character, till he became a hopeless wreck — ruined, utterly ruined, through love of the world and the things that are in it. Young men, beware of **the first step** in that direction. It is a road that leads away from Christ. Think of Samson, think of his end, and take warning.

Not in one heart, at one and the same time, can the love of the world and the love of the Father dwell. There is not room for both. No man can serve two masters. If he honours one he will despise the other. God and Mammon cannot sit on the same throne. And the world passes away with its pride and pomp and glory, and the soul that has loved it is left like a man who, having flung away fortune and friends finds himself at last a homeless wanderer in the city streets. Such was Lot, whose possessions perished in the overthrow of Sodom, and whose sun went down in the evening of his life in dark and gloomy clouds — himself saved, yet so as by fire (1 Cor. 3: 15). And Lot, being dead, yet speaketh. Across the intervening centuries he cries in loud and stirring tones, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "The fashion of this world passeth away."

The babes, as we have already said, are warned against the many antichrists. Their danger lay there. Simple and unsuspecting, they might lend their ears too readily to doctrines that dishonour God. And all the more so since Satan assumes the character of an angel of light, and his servants profess to be the servants of righteousness, and talk

as if they were (2 Cor. II: 14). Specious indeed would the words of such be, and the babes in the family of God, who are ignorant of Satan's devices, might be easily deceived. These many antichrists were once in the Christian assembly, bearing Christ's name. But they went out from us, says the Apostle, because they were not of us. And they went out speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20: 30). Their teaching was anti-Christian, a denial of the true Deity and of the true and proper relationship of the Son to the Father. "He that denieth the Son, the same hath

not the Father." It is a liar and an antichrist.

And these words of warning are needed now. Never in the lifetime of the reader has the truth as to the Person of Christ been so bitterly assailed even by men who pose as Christian teachers. Let us turn away from every voice that does not uphold the true Deity of Christ, His perfect Manhood, and the necessity and all-sufficiency of His atonement. Not for nothing were these warnings given to the young men and babes in the heavenly family. May we heed them well.

A STUDY IN WORDS

A. J. POLLOCK

THE Holy Scriptures are God-breathed, inspired of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3: 16). "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1: 21). All this is most blessedly true, and of the greatest importance.

But, someone may ask, What about the original manuscripts of the inspired writings? Where are they? The answer is, They have tracelessly disappeared. It is perhaps as well that it should be so. If they had been in existence, there might have been two likely reactions. The ritualist might make them objects of idolatrous worship, as the children of Israel did with the serpent of brass (see, 2 Kings 18: 4). On the other hand the in-

fidel might deny outright that they were the original Scriptures of God. But when many hundreds of manuscripts are found, evidently copies of the originals, men cannot dispute the existence of the originals, nor that they were held in such high esteem, as to be most carefully copied by hand with patient, meticulous care. And that, many many times over and in hundreds of places, and spread over centuries. No other manuscripts have received such high honour. In this we can plainly see God's hand preserving to us the Holy Scriptures.

As the word of God spread, many translations in many languages have appeared. Up to the present time these translations, in whole or in part, number over a thousand languages. Translations, however, cannot claim inspiration as the original Scriptures do. Yet the godly and learned scholars, who in the time of King James I produced

The Authorised Version of the Holy Scriptures, besought prayerfully the Lord's guidance, support, and help in their very responsible task. Surely we can see that God has answered their prayers abundantly, when we examine the Scriptures we hold in our hands, and which we can receive with assurance as being indeed the word of God.

Seeing that copyists of the original Scriptures were not inspired, as the Scriptures themselves are, it follows that with all the possible care taken to make a perfectly correct copy, mistakes and errors might creep in. These copyists however were so very careful in their work, that these errors and variations between the many copies are only very slight, and do not in the least degree diminish or weaken the testimony to the great fundamentals of the Christian faith. The proportion of important variations to the whole of the Scriptures is likened to a handful of corn compared with a field of wheat. Or again, if you look into a mirror in which a speck or two of quicksilver has got scratched, you would have no doubt as to what you see in the glass. So it is with the Holy Scriptures, over which God has so manifestly put His powerful and preserving hand.

One great difficulty the translators had to contend with was how best to convey the niceties, the delicate shades of meaning of the Hebrew and Greek languages into plain English. We purpose in this article to furnish a very few examples of this from the New Testament, it may lead others to further searching of the Word of God in that direction.

The word, **world**, is the translation of four distinct words in the Greek New Testament. They are as follow:—

Aiōn, indefinite time, dispensation, occurring 31 times.

Kosmos, arrangement, world, occurring 187 times.

Oikoumenē, habitable earth, occurring 14 times.

Gē, land, earth, occurring only once.

In Matthew 13, we find the expression, "**the end of the world**," occurring three times. A reader might naturally suppose that this refers to the end of the world, as described by the Apostle Peter, when "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3: 10). But when we know that the correct translation is "The end of the **age** [**aiōn**]," we find it refers to the close of this present age of God's grace, to be followed by the outpouring of God's judgments on this guilty world, leading up to the Lord setting up His kingdom on this earth to last a thousand years, commonly called the millennium.

Matthew 12: 32 confirms this. We read, "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." This expression, "The world to come," occurs also in Mark 10: 30, Luke 18: 30, Ephesians 1: 21, Hebrews 2: 5 and 6: 5. Again some might think this refers to the literal end of the world in which we

dwell, but as we have seen the correct translation is "the **age** [aiōn] to come," when "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14).

There is another passage, which still further confirms the above. We read, "Through faith we understand that the worlds [aiōn] were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11: 3). Here reference is clearly made to God's initial act of creation. But why should the word, **ages**, be employed when creation has to do with material things? The expression, **ages**, is clearly a reference made to **time**. But how did time begin? How can we, how do we, measure time? The answer is, Only by the fact of the creation of the earth, the sun, the moon and their movements. The revolving of the earth gives us day and night; its orbit round the sun gives us our year. The movement of the moon round the earth gives us a lunar month. "God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also" (Gen. 1: 16). **Creation** was necessary to carve out of eternity, the little span, we call time, regulated by the movements of the heavenly bodies and this earth. So we read, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Gen. 1: 14). Time will not cease to be till heaven and earth cease to be. We can understand somewhat

why the translators used the word, **world**, where it should have been the word, **ages**; this latter clearly giving a better understanding of this remarkable passage of Scripture.

We all know very well the verse of Scripture, continually on the lips of Gospel preachers, and called by Martin Luther, **The Miniature Bible**, "God so loved the world [kosmos], that He gave His only begotten Son . . ." (John 3: 16). In this verse this word, **world**, does not stand for a definition of time, and therefore the Greek word, **aiōn**, is not employed. **Kosmos** is the Greek word employed here, setting forth, not the material world in which we live, but its inhabitants, the people to whom this wonderful message is sent. This word occurs frequently in the New Testament. The diligent student can find many instances of the care exercised by God in choosing the exact word to express His meaning.

The Greek word, **oikoumenē**, means the habitable earth, thus bringing the earth and its dwellers together as one whole. We read of Satan as one, "which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12: 9). There are vast stretches of the world uninhabitable, but wherever man is found, there Satan is active.

The Greek word, **Gē**, meaning land, earth, occurs only once, "All the world [gē] wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13: 3). This passage foretells a universal wonderment, stretching to earth's remotest bounds, wherever man is found.

There are two words for **crown** in the New Testament. One is the

Greek word, **diadēma**, meaning the monarch's crown, from which we derive the English word, **diadem**. It occurs three times, and the Lord is the only rightful wearer. "On His head were many crowns" (Rev. 19: 12). The other word translated crown is the Greek word, **stephanos**, describing the crown awarded to the successful athlete in the Olympian games. We see this clearly used as an illustration in the following Scripture, "When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5: 4). The laurel wreath placed on the head of the winner in the Grecian games would soon wither. The crown which our Lord will award to His faithful servants will never fade away.

There are two words for Temple in the Greek New Testament. **Hieron** embraces the whole of the Temple area, the Court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Jews, the Place where they bought and sold the animals for sacrifice, the Place where the money-changers had their seat (Matt. 21: 12). This word occurs 71 times. The other word, **naos**, has an exclusive meaning, designating the inner sanctuary of the Temple, the Holy Place where the priests ministered, the Holiest of all to which the High Priest alone had access on the great Day of Atonement. This word occurs 45 times. These two words are carefully distinguished in Scripture. For instance we read of Peter and John going into the Temple [**hieron**] to pray (Acts 3: 3). They were Galileans, and not priests, so therefore the wider word was used. When our Lord cried on the cross

those triumphant words, "IT IS FINISHED," which have brought peace to the hearts of millions, "the veil of the Temple [**naos**] was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27: 51), thus showing that the way into the holiest was made manifest. It is very reassuring to see the care Scripture takes to present these shades of meaning. No uninspired writings would exhibit this care.

It is hoped this sketchy article may encourage some of our younger brethren to study the Scriptures, and find out these delicate shades of meaning, so difficult to translate. Without any knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, it is quite possible to follow up this subject. Over sixty years ago the writer purchased a copy of **Young's Analytical Concordance**, which he prizes and uses more than any other book outside the Bible. In it is given against every word the corresponding Hebrew or Greek word. A most valuable Index-Lexicon is appended at the end of the concordance, in which each Hebrew and Greek word is listed, and under each word are appended the different words employed in the English Bible to represent the one Hebrew or Greek word, sometimes running into scores.

But here just a word of warning. A little knowledge is sometimes a dangerous thing. The writer knew an old brother, a most estimable man, who managed to learn a few Greek words. His little knowledge became a perfect nuisance as he paraded his few words on every occasion. One day he said most triumphantly this Greek word differs altogether from that Greek

word, so they cannot mean the same thing. We replied, Suppose there is a biography of your life printed in the English language. A Greek Christian knowing a little English reads it. In chapter one he reads that you are a **brave** man. In chapter three he reads you are a **courageous** man. He tells us these are two very different words in their spelling, and therefore they cannot mean the same thing. **But they do.**

A little knowledge of another language is useful, if it shows us how slight and superficial our knowledge is, leading us to be careful how we press our views. Knowing such words as we have dealt with, does not carry with it the knowledge of cases of nouns, tenses of verbs, pronouns, and all the intricacies of a flexible language. But even the bare meaning of the original word may help at arriving at a shade of meaning, not apparent in its English dress. It is

blessedly true that a Christian knowing no language but his native English is better equipped for knowing the mind of God in reading the Scriptures, than the most learned Hebrew and Greek scholars, who have scholarship but lack the illuminating grace of God in their hearts.

Timothy was a most highly gifted young man, of whom the Apostle Paul could say, "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state" (Phil. 2: 20). Yet he felt it incumbent to press upon Timothy some weighty advice. "Give attention to reading . . . meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them . . . take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4: 13-16). This instruction given to Timothy, we may well pay heed to and practice ourselves.

"NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD" (JOHN 12: 31).

Man's great abilities will be much more developed in the day that is just approaching than they have ever been, in trying to make the world go on thoroughly well without God . . . Man looks for progress in the philosophy, commerce, politics, and comfort of this world, but still there is in his heart a dread of the consequences of the progress of this self-will. Thus is fulfilled the apparent paradox of Scripture, the cry of peace combined with "men's hearts failing them for fear." Men would say this is a contradiction, but it is not; for while men are building up commerce and arts and science in the energy of self-will, who is there among them that would undertake to answer for the state of any nation in three years time, or for even a much shorter period? Man is afraid of the working of self-will in his neighbour, though he likes to exert it in himself. But the Christian has learned that the question as to the world is settled in the rejection of Christ. At that moment it was all over with the world.

BIBLE STUDY—LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS

F. B. HOLE

(Leviticus 25: 23 — Numbers 3: 51).

ISRAEL having been reminded that the land, into which they were going, was Jehovah's, so that they were merely tenants in possession for a time, and therefore they might not permanently alienate it, they were next instructed as to right of redemption that was to be observed, if anyone became poor and parted with his land for a time.

Some who had done this might later be prospered financially and be able themselves to redeem it. Such a case is contemplated in verse 26, and equitable terms of redemption are stated in verse 27. But in verse 25 we learn that, if a man remained poor and unable for this, "any of his kin" might step in and redeem it for him. This is illustrated for us by the action of Boaz in the Book of Ruth; and by this type we see how needful it was that the Lord Jesus should assume perfect Manhood, sin apart. Thus He "took part" of "flesh and blood," as Hebrews 2: 14 says, that so by death He might annul the power of the devil over us. Had He taken hold of angels only, He could not have fulfilled the type as our Kinsman-Redeemer, and paid the necessary price.

Verses 29-34, deal with exceptions to the above. Houses in villages were to be treated as land, but not if the house stood in a walled city. Such could only be redeemed within a year of the original transaction. They were more distinctively man's handiwork, lacking the simplicity connected with God's handiwork in

the countryside. And further there was special protection ordered for the Levites and their possessions, since they were specially God's possession.

In the latter part of our chapter we pass from the laws relating to the land to those concerning the redemption of persons. The first case considered is that of the Israelite, who becoming poor sold himself for a period of service to one of his brethren. He was to be treated as a hired servant and not a bond-servant and at the jubile he was to be free. The case of such was considered fully when we read Exodus 21.

But then secondly, some of the nations round about might be prepared to sell themselves into servitude. If so, no redemption was provided for, and their service would be perpetual. It may be remarked that here we have a form of slavery permitted: Yes, but it was a form that was accepted for a monetary consideration by the person concerned, and not something forced on them, or similar to what was done with African negroes a century or two ago.

Thirdly, there was the case of the Israelite who, becoming poor, sold himself into servitude to some sojourner or stranger in the land. He would go out free at the jubile, but also special arrangements were made for his possible redemption before the jubile arrived. But such right of redemption was again

limited to one of his own kin — brother, uncle or cousin. So that the “kinsman - redeemer” comes into view when persons are in question, and not only in connection with land. In considering this type, we have to remind ourselves, as indeed with all the types, that the great Reality that is typified far exceeds the type.

The 26th chapter, which we have now reached, bears an exceedingly solemn character. Verses 1-13 give a glowing picture of the earthly blessing and prosperity that would follow their obedience. Verses 14-39 give a terrible forecast of the evils that would ensue, if disobedience marked them.

Verse 1 prohibits idolatry of any kind. Verse 2 enforces the sanctity of the sabbath and the sanctuary. Verse 3 sums up all the other laws as “My statutes” and “My commandments,” which were to be carried out. Lip service was not enough. They were to “do them.”

Then follow the details of the prosperity that would follow. But, all was strictly provisional. It is, “If ye walk . . . then I will give.” All depended upon their obedience, and that “If” proved fatal. The blessings promised were of an **earthly** and **material** sort. They may be summed up as, fruitfulness, peace, victory and the realized presence of God in their midst. Jehovah had broken the bands of the yoke, imposed on them in Egypt, so that they went upright instead of being bowed down under heavy burdens. His presence would be their continued salvation. There is no mention of heaven or of the life to come. How great the contrast

with the Christian’s portion — blessed “with all **spiritual** blessings in **heavenly** places in Christ” (Eph. 1: 3), and that without the introduction of any “if.”

The larger part of the chapter is occupied with warnings as to the dreadful evils that would be provoked by their disobedience, and which would fall upon them with sevenfold intensity. In the days of Ezekiel the sad history of Israel’s law-breaking was reaching a climax, and through him the Lord spoke of, “My four sore judgments . . . the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence” (Ezek. 14: 21). In our chapter the “four sore judgments” appear, only the sword instead of being mentioned first comes in the fourth place. Moreover, as verses 36 and 37 disclose, they would also bring the sword the one upon the other, and thus add to their miseries and destruction.

Verses 34 and 35 anticipate that they would ignore the commandments as to the sabbath, particularly as regarded the land, and that consequently God would give it a long sabbatical rest, when they were driven out and it lay desolate. We all know how long a rest that land has had until quite recent years.

With verse 40 a ray of light begins to shine. A door of hope is opened, if two things come to pass. First, there must be the confession of their iniquities. Second, the acceptance of the punishment that their iniquities have brought upon them. This second stipulation is mentioned twice, you notice, and evidently it is a very important matter. Both things are seen in Daniel’s prayer

(Dan. 9) so he got a speedy answer. A man may confess his sin but, if he still kicks against the punishment it incurs, it shows that his confession is superficial only, and lacks depth of real contrition. This is as true for us today as it was for Israel of old, since God's governmental dealings with His children, though always in love, are in strict righteousness. Psalm 73 gives evidence as to this.

It is also made plain in the end of the chapter that though disobedience would bring upon them such dire consequences, God would never forget His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in which He pledged Himself toward them unconditionally. To this Paul refers in Galatians 3: 17, pointing out that the law was not given until four hundred and thirty years after and cannot disannul it. This earlier covenant was "by promise" and when God fulfils it, Israel will be blessed on the ground of mercy, as is stated in Romans 11: 31, 32.

One thing more may be said: the woes threatened, like the favours offered in the earlier verses, are all of an earthly and temporal nature, though described in terrible terms. No attempt is made to soften down the language; indeed the very reverse. Just so it is in the New Testament where the dire consequence of unforgiven sin in eternity are stated. The language, whether of our Lord or of His apostles, could not be stronger. In this we ought to see clear evidence of the kindness of God. Those who break human laws may sometimes have ground for the complaint that had they been told plainly the penalty involved they would not have transgressed. No such complaint from

Israel would have stood against God. Nor will any such complaint stand from those who, having heard the Gospel and refused its warnings, pass into a lost eternity.

Chapter 27 contemplates cases where Israelites might desire to devote under a vow to the Lord either themselves or their animals, houses, land, etc., on special occasions. As to persons there was a fixed valuation, as given in the opening verses. This was in the hands of Moses. Verse 8 contemplates the case of the poor man, who was permitted to turn from Moses to the priest, who would value him according to his ability. Now the priest was one who could "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (Heb. 5: 2). Pure law itself admits of no flexibility: what is demanded must be paid in full. The priest represented that measure of grace that was permissible under the law system.

There seems to be very little reference in the Old Testament to such vows and offerings to the Lord. It is possible that the vow of Jephthah (Judges 11) so rashly made, came under this heading. So also the vow of Hannah, in giving Samuel to the Lord. Israel frequently misused, if they did not neglect these regulations, and of this we have an illustration in Malachi 1: 14. God was not deceived however, and a curse came on the head of the man who was deceitful in that which he vowed.

As we pass to the consideration of the Book of Numbers we note that there is no real division between it and Leviticus, as indicated by the fact that the first word is, "And."

In a little over a year from the Exodus there had to be a numbering of the people. When we come to chapter 26 we find there had to be another numbering just before they entered the land; and from these two occasions the book gets its name. It is the **Book** however in which we get details of the journeyings of the people in the wilderness. If it opens at the end of the first year in the wilderness, after the law had been given, it closes with the people on the border of the promised land at the end of the forty years.

As a prelude to their journeys several things had to take place. The first of these we find in chapter 1. God would take an account of His people, and more particularly of the men from twenty years old and upward, who were "able to go forth to war." We must remember that God's plan was to carry them straight into the land of promise, though "not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near" (Exod. 13: 17). The people who from their very beginning had seen no war were not to face it within a few days of their deliverance; yet they had to be prepared for it. Indeed Amalek attacked them within a couple of months and came under God's undying curse for so doing. As yet the sin recorded in Numbers 13 and 14 had not taken place, and had God's original plan not been set aside the conflict in the land would soon have been upon them.

Our chapter records that as a preliminary a "head" or prince of each tribe was selected. The choice was not left to the people, or even to Moses. The word to him was,

"These are the names of the men that shall stand with you " God chose His own leader for each tribe, and this may usefully remind us that God today chooses His own servants and leaders, and does not submit the matter to a popular vote.

These men, expressed by name, then assisted in the census. All had to be enrolled, when "they declared their pedigrees after their families," so that every man counted was without a doubt a genuine child of Israel. A present-day application of this lies on the surface. The test today is not that of natural descent but of spiritual. Even a Nicodemus, whose natural pedigree could not be impeached, had to discover that the necessary spiritual pedigree would only be his as he was "born of the Spirit." In Philippians 3, we see that Paul, who was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," not a drop of Gentile blood having come into his pedigree, counted all to be loss that he might have Christ as his gain and be "found in Him." To be "in Christ" is the pedigree of supreme value.

The total that were numbered amounted to 603,550, as we are told in verse 46. We were told in Exodus 12: 37, 38, that about 600,000 men beside children left Egypt, and also a "mixed multitude" went with them. In this census the mixed multitude were eliminated and we have more detailed and accurate figures. Since all males under twenty and all females were omitted, we are safe in assuming that the host must have numbered over two millions.

Also the tribe of Levi was wholly excluded from this numbering. In

chapter 3 we get the reason for this. As a tribe they were to be set apart wholly for the service of God, and out of their midst came the family chosen for the priesthood. This fact indeed comes out in the closing verses of the first chapter. They were to serve the tabernacle, while the children of Israel were to pitch their tents in relation to it, at a certain distance; the Levites pitching theirs more closely round about it, as keeping it in charge.

We may say therefore that God not only called the **warriors** who were to take possession of the land, but also the **workers** who were to take charge of His sanctuary, and the **Aaronic family**, who were to be the **worshippers**. But though the three callings were separate in Israel, the Christian of today finds them coalesced in himself, though the occasions of their exercise be separate. The Apostle Paul was called to be the pattern saint, and we certainly see in him the worshipper, the worker, and the warrior, as the occasion suited.

The people having been numbered, we learn in chapter 2 that each tribe had its appointed place, when there were stationary periods and they pitched their tents. We notice in the first place that the tabernacle, where was to be seen the cloud indicating the presence of God, was at the centre of everything. So much so that it could be truly said that when Israel was gathered together in a state of repose there was the token of the presence of God in the midst of them. It was visible as befitted that dispensation. It was not so manifest to them, as it is to us today, that "the things which are seen are

temporal." Our attention is to be fixed on the unseen things which are eternal. The presence of God amongst His people today is not visible; nevertheless if the church of God be convoked, and the indwelling Holy Spirit acting unhindered in power, an unbeliever coming in would be constrained to confess, "that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. 14: 25). We have also that great word of our Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20).

In verse 2 the words, "far off," must be noted. It is true of course that in Ephesians we read of Gentiles being "far off" in contrast to Jews, who were "nigh." But Israel's nearness was relative only—in contrast to the distance in which Gentiles dwelt. Priests and Levites pitched their tents round about the tabernacle and the people had to remain on the fringe of things, for there was always fear of wrath coming upon them, as stated in verse 53 of chapter 1. The whole system was evidently designed to show that, "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (Heb. 9: 8).

Though the tribe of Levi had been severed from the rest, the division of the tribe of Joseph into two maintained twelve as their number, so that on each side of the tabernacle three tribes pitched their tents. The group under Judah faced toward the entrance into the court. That under Ephraim was on the west side, and therefore nearest to the holy place with the cloud of the Divine Presence. This explains the reference in Psalm 80, to God shining forth "before Ephraim and

Benjamin and Manasseh." We notice that the order in which the tribes were to march, when they set forth on their journeys, was commanded by God, equally with the order of their tents, when they rested. Arrangements were not left to their discretion or desires. Had they disobeyed, under the mistaken notion that they knew of some better order, they would simply have produced **disorder**.

In this we see a typical lesson for us. In 1 Corinthians 14, we have the Apostle Paul instructing as to order in the Christian assembly, and saying that what he has written "are the commandments of the Lord." Much disorder has been produced by the setting aside or ignoring of these commandments.

In chapter 3 we get details of God's order as to the tribe of Levi. This tribe was taken by God for the service of His house, under the hand of the priests, instead of all the firstborn throughout the tribes, which He had claimed for Himself. Levi had three sons, Gershon, Kohath and Merari, and each of them became the head of a section of the tribe. To each section was allotted a special service in connection with the tabernacle, and each had their tents in a specified position round the tabernacle. Nothing was left to their own devising.

Out of Kohath came Aaron and the priestly family, and the sons of

Kohath had special charge of the ark and the other vessels of the sanctuary. Kohath was to pitch tent on the south side of the sanctuary, and Aaron and the priests together with Moses had to dwell on the east side, facing the entrance to the court, keeping charge there, with strangers excluded under the penalty of death.

One thing more we notice in chapter 3. When the census was taken, the number of the firstborn in Israel exceeded the number of the Levites by 273. These God claimed equally with the 22,000 for whom a Levite was found as a substitute, and hence five shekels apiece had to be paid for these as redemption money. According to Exodus 13 the firstborn were to be redeemed at their birth. In our chapter the principle of redemption as the preliminary to the service of God is again emphasized. Whether the Levites during Israel's history realized that it was only as redeemed people that they were brought into the service of God, may perhaps be open to question, but we should not miss this fact, which is typically set forth here.

The redemption money was handed to Aaron for the service of God, showing that it met His claims upon the redeemed. Let us never forget that as redeemed we belong to God, and that upon this fact is based the life of service to His Name, to which we are committed.

It is a great encouragement that it is not to the man who works most, nor to the one who reads most, that the Lord confides His mind, but to the one who **loves** Him most, as Mary Magdalene.

GAIUS, DIOTREPES AND DEMETRIUS

A. J. POLLOCK.

IN the third Epistle of John, consisting of only fourteen verses, these names — Gaius, Diotrepes and Demetrius — appear. Covering the whole Epistle, there is the exhortation to follow the good and refuse the evil. "He that doeth good, is of God; but he that doeth evil, hath not seen God" (verse 11). We shall find this strikingly exemplified, as we examine what is said of these three men.

John did not address his Epistle as being from an apostle, but as from an elder, writing to his well-beloved Gaius, rejoicing greatly that he was walking in the truth. How very prominent in this short Epistle are the references to the truth, since that lay very near to the heart of the writer. And well it might, for if every believer walked in the truth, what a mighty change there would be in Christendom — spiritual reality taking the place of empty ritualism and superstition; Christian brethren, finding it good and pleasant to dwell together in unity, instead of the ceaseless clash of warring tongues.

We learn from this short Epistle that the soul of Gaius was in a very prosperous condition. So much so that the Elder wished that in proportion as his soul was blessed, he might prosper in his earthly affairs, and in bodily health. One would gather from this, that the health of Gaius was not so good as his spiritual condition.

It certainly was a most unusual wish, for Scripture warns us that riches bring with them worldly

temptations. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6: 9). The Elder evidently had confidence that if his wishes were fulfilled, Gaius had sufficient spiritual stamina wisely to carry wealth and health for the glory of God. We have known, alas! of not a few cases where things worked the other way; that when Christians prospered in their earthly calling, and became wealthy, their spiritual vigour declined.

In contrast to this there is a story told of the late G. V. Wigram, a deeply t a u g h t and spiritually minded servant of the Lord. One evening he appeared at the weekly prayer meeting and, addressing the assembled brethren, informed them that he had just received news of a fortune being left to him, and begged them to pray earnestly for him, that this might not be a snare to him, and but that he might use it for God's glory. Our only safety, whether we possess much or little of this world's goods, is that we hold all as stewards to God, to whom we must give account of our stewardship at the judgment seat of Christ. How things look **then** will be the great test!

The Elder told of the particular way in which Gaius sought to serve the Lord. He opened his house to the Lord's servants, showing them loving hospitality, and helping them on their way. In this happy service Gaius had the honour of being a

fellow-helper to the truth (verse 8). What a blessed and holy honour!

It is interesting to note that the name of Gaius is mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans. His ministry, too, is similar to that ascribed to that mentioned in John's third Epistle, so much so, that we have no doubt that they refer to one and the same person. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Gaius mine host, and of the whole Church, saluteth you" (Rom. 16: 23). Here, much later, we find Gaius exercising the same blessed ministry, evidently carrying out to his old age the exhortations, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6: 9); "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Peter 4: 9).

How cheering will the words sound in his ears, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matt. 25: 40). But how unutterably sad it will be, if any one of us should hear the words, "Inasmuch as ye did it **not** to one of the least of these, ye did it **NOT to Me**" (Matt. 25: 45).

We would here venture to pass on a word of exhortation and encouragement to our young brothers and sisters who have homes of their own and would seek to exercise them on these lines. They will find in seeking to serve the Lord that, in watering others, they will themselves be watered, for we read, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11: 25). In these days when the pound is seriously depreciated in value, when prices are soaring, and house-

keepers are finding it difficult to make ends meet, you will feel this is not easy. Remember the barrel of meal that wasted not, and the cruse of oil that never failed in the days of Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 17: 14). Surely the God of Elijah's day is the same God we have to do with today.

Many a young Christian doing national service has testified how greatly he was blessed in receiving the hospitality of a Christian home when separated far from father and mother, or from wife and children. Many a young Christian life has possibly been saved from spiritual shipwreck through this loving hospitality, rendered in the Lord's name at a sorely tried time.

"Who loveth to have the pre-eminence" (3 John 9). In these words we have given to us the character of Diotrefes. There can be no greater condemnation than to describe a Christian in such words. To put this characteristic in plainer language, we should call it the offspring of **fleshly lust**, for it is certainly **not of the Spirit of God**. Even in worldly politics, whenever ambition is stronger than patriotism the individual so marked can only bring in confusion and sorrow, and, mark it well, in the end his own destruction. Look at the example of Napoleon the Great. Spite of immense ability, his over-riding ambition in the course of a few brief years bled his empire white, and destroyed himself. Defeated and dethroned, not much beyond middle life, he died in captivity of a loathsome disease on the lonely rock of St. Helena.

In the things of God this loving to

have the pre-eminence works only sorrow and confusion in the Christian assembly. This spiritual astigmatism renders the vision distorted and unreal — everything looked at from the standpoint of **self**. The worth of others is determined by their attitude to this lover of pre-eminence. If they support him, they are used as tools to his own evil ends; if not, they are excommunicated and cast out ruthlessly.

Diotrephes even went to the length of refusing the Apostle John. He would be too dangerous a rival to be tolerated for a moment. The words which proceeded from his mouth, aimed at the Apostle, were "malicious," poisoned by his overweening conceit and fleshly lust for supremacy.

It was the poet, John Milton, who described Satan as preferring to be first in hell, than second in heaven. Indeed we know from Scripture that his fall came by not being content with the very high place God had assigned to him as a creature — "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezek. 28: 14). He dared to say in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the Most High**" (Isa. 14: 13, 14). What a fall was his, and his end will be most lamentable — "cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20: 10). Here we trace the **source** of the evil spirit of Diotrephes, and of all who have transgressed like him from his day to this.

What a contrast to turn from all

this to the spirit of our blessed Lord, who said when here on earth, "I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke 22: 27); who declared, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11: 29); who stooped in lowly grace to wash the feet of His disciples (John 13: 3-10). When the disciples of our Lord quarrelled among themselves as to who should be the greatest, our Lord rebuked them, and showed them where true greatness was to be found. "It shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20: 26-28). The Scriptural way to be divinely great is to be little in one's own eyes, and to have the grace of humility. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 4).

Diotrephes was far removed from the spirit of the One he professed to own as Master. In happy and vivid contrast to his sorrowful and tragic story, we have Demetrius, who had a good report of all, and of the truth itself. The Elder was glad to give him this praise (verse 12). Only years of quiet consistent testimony, and unostentatious walk before his brethren, could have gained him such a happy report.

Would that all of us, who prize the privileges of Christian assemblies, were jealous with a holy jealousy, lest this spirit of domination should get into our midst.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psa. 133: 1). If we find any such feeling as the loving of pre-eminence rising up within our own hearts, may we have grace to meet it with unsparing judgment in the presence of God.

We remember being greatly struck years ago by the request of a young

brother in the prayer meeting, “Lord, deliver us from self-occupation, and self-pity.” How full of meaning are these seven words, and how happy to be exercised to have them realized in our own lives.

We hope this little study of the three names recorded in John’s third Epistle will be to profit, and for the glory of God.

“BORN OF WATER”

J. A. TRENCH

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3: 5).

It is very helpful to the soul to see the place that “water” has typically in Scripture as well as the blood; for though, in the ordinary testimony of evangelical Christendom, the latter occupies nearly the whole ground, the former has in Scripture an almost equally important place. Both flowed from the side of the Lord Jesus in death, as John bears witness to it (chapter 19: 31-35).

And note the order, historically—the blood first, as the basis of all for God’s glory. In that precious blood-shedding, all that He is in holiness and righteousness against sin, and in love to the sinner, has been made good, involving pardon and peace for us. But when we come to the application of these blessed realities to us, in the First Epistle of John (5: 6), the order is reversed. “This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.” There is something needed before the blood, namely, the Word, of which water is ever the symbol. This needs to

be applied to the soul in the power of the Spirit, that there may be the awakening of the conscience and the conviction of sin, to which the blood applies. The Spirit, the water, and the blood, is the order of application.

But it is especially with the water we are now engaged.

Very early we find it in the types. For on the day of the consecration of Aaron and his sons they were washed with water (Leviticus 8: 6), as well as sprinkled with blood later on (verse 23). This washing was never repeated, though in the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar they washed their hands and their feet, when they went into the tent of meeting and came near unto the altar (Exod. 40: 31).

This becomes of great interest to us when we know that the Lord Jesus speaks of this double action of water, in that wonderful scene of John 13. Under the symbol of the washing of His disciples’ feet He brings out His present service for His own as having departed out of

this world unto the Father. Peter, with his warm, impulsive nature, resented the apparent humiliation of the Lord, saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But this leads the Lord to the true character of the service, of which His action was symbolic — a service of deep significance for us. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no **part with Me.**" This washing is essential to our having part with Him in the realization and enjoyment of His presence where He has gone. "Lord," he says, "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." He declares there was that one first application of the water that needs never to be repeated, being connected with the communication of a new life and nature by the Spirit, in which alone there is true cleansing. Secondly, there should be the constant application of the water to our ways, wherein in such a world we are so easily defiled, and rendered unfit for the enjoyment of the presence of the Son with the Father. Briefly, it is the Word as applied to the soul first at the new birth; and secondly, by the Lord in His constant service for us in grace, of which the Lord speaks under the symbol of water.

This brings us to the beginning of all God's ways with us in grace — the new birth. Without it our eyes will never be opened on the kingdom of God, as it was manifested in every characteristic trait of its blessedness in the Person of Christ when He was here; nor can we ever enter into it when set up. "Ye must be born again."

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That which is born of the flesh may be religious, as it was in Nicodemus; amiable, cultivated, strictly conscientious, and even blameless in outward life, as in Saul of Tarsus; but it is flesh and never can be anything else than flesh, and is only fit for the judgment of God. But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; that is, it has the essential nature and characteristic of its Source, as the flesh has of its source. There can be no purification of the flesh. There is but one way God can deal with it — as He said in Genesis 6, "The end of all flesh is come before Me." It must be dealt with either in the Cross — for faith that submits to the sentence — for "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," or else in the lake of fire.

This helps, then, as to why the water for purification, as well as the blood for propitiation, came from the side of Jesus in death. For it is the Word applied by the Spirit that is the mighty instrument of this change. This participation in the life and nature of God, carries with it the sentence of God's judgment upon all that is of the flesh in one reached by it. And the purification is by the communication of a new life and nature in which we are clean every whit. Thus in John 13, while Judas was yet present, the Lord has to say (verse 11), "For He knew who should betray Him. . . . Ye are not all clean." Judas having gone out (verse 30), in chapter 15: 3, He can say, "Now ye are clean, through the word

which I have spoken unto you.”

Both James and Peter confirm the force of the constant symbol of water. “Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth” (Jas. 1: 18). “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1: 23). But by the use of the symbol we are carried beyond the instrumentality of the work to take in also its effects in the cleansing from the defilement of sin, as the blood was needed for cleansing from its guilt.

Paul comes in to complete the testimony, for in speaking of Christ’s love to the Church, who

gave Himself for it, we learn that His was not only a love of the past, but of the present. If He has cleansed it with the washing of water by the Word, it is that He may form it more and more like Himself by the same means. For the Word is the revelation of all that He is who has set Himself apart in glory, as the Object for our souls, thus to be the source, measure, character and power of our sanctification and of our being formed like Him. Nor is this all, for His love will never be satisfied till He can present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot of defilement or wrinkle of old age, or any such thing, but all His heart can delight in for ever (Eph. 5: 25-27).

NOTES ON EPHESIANS

J. HOUSTON.

THE Ephesians were in a good state. In writing to them, the apostle could address them as “the faithful in Christ Jesus.” This was a form of address peculiar to this Epistle. They were marked by their faithfulness to the truth they had received; consequently, were in a fit state to receive more. The divine principle is: “Unto every one which hath shall be given”; for “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.” Hence the vast range of truth and blessing the Spirit was free to communicate to them!

Their faithfulness did not express itself in anything **high**, or **great**; but in their practical walk of **obedience to the truth**. They were **wise**, and they were **simple**: “Wise unto

that which is good, and simple concerning evil.” In malice, they were children; in understanding, they were men (Rom. 16: 19; 1 Cor. 14: 20). In ministering the Word of God to them, the Spirit did not require to be occupied with evil in order to correct it, as was the case with the Corinthians and Galatians; nor was it necessary for Him to adapt His teaching to a state of stunted growth, as was the case with the Hebrews. He was free to reveal the truth in its fulness concerning the eternal counsels of God in Christ which were for His own glory and the Church’s highest blessing. It was not a question of giving milk to children; but of ministering strong meat to men who were of full growth (1 Cor. 3: 1-3; Heb. 5: 11-14). Nevertheless many

practical exhortations had to be given.

All our blessings flow from "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He it is, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." He it is too, who "hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." God is the God of Christ, viewing Christ as Man; and the Father of Christ, viewing Christ as Son. We share everything with Christ, as His co-heirs, in all the vast inheritance He takes up as Man. And we are sons in Him, the Son; near to the Father as He is near; dear to the Father, as He is dear. His Father is our Father; His God, our God (John 20: 17). We are accepted in Him, the Beloved. And we are "holy and without blame" before God in love. God is love — this is His nature. His is holy — this is His character. We are in everything suitable and pleasing to Him. These are our individual blessings; and they are of the very highest character.

The prayer of chapter 1 is addressed to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 17); that of chapter 3, to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 14). In the former, we have what God has wrought for us in Christ; in the latter, what He is working in us through the Spirit. Both these things go well together. What is true for us in Christ ought to be real in us by the Spirit. What is objective for faith ought to be subjective by the Spirit. Balance is thus maintained and growth ensured. What fervent desire Paul

had that the saints might rise to the height of their blessings and privileges, and enjoy all in the power of the Spirit, in communion with the Father and the Son! This, in brief, is the burden of his prayers addressed to the God and the Father of Christ.

We are seen as "dead in trespasses and sins" (chapter 2: 1). Even Christ is in death when God raises Him. What God works, therefore, is a **new creation**. It is life out of death; life in resurrection. Christ was raised from the dead; we were quickened and raised with Him. Such is the mighty work of God! And we are reminded, so far as we are concerned, that it was by grace we were saved. It had to be so; for we were **dead**. What could we do? How forcible is the truth, "by grace ye are saved" (chapter 2: 5)!

Then our practical walk is to be according to the standard of new creation; the old man put off, and the new man put on. This means a complete **change of man**; one put off, the other put on. As for the new man, it is a **creation of God**; "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (chapter 4: 24). Being a creation of God, it is according to God, a nature like God; loving what He loves, and hating what He hates. We see this perfectly in Christ, who loved righteousness and hated iniquity. We are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1: 4), and called to be "imitators of God" (chapter 5: 1).

As for works flowing from this new nature, and according to God,

it is said we are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (chapter 2: 10). To be imitators of God in a new nature, doing work foreordained for us, and we created to accomplish these works, is a standard of the highest order! Such is what is set before us who are blessed in the heavenlies in Christ. But this is always the case; the height of privilege and blessing is the standard of our walk. In a very real way, as imitators of God, we walk in the light as He is in the light; love as He loves; forgive as He forgives, and so in all else. It is in reality showing forth "the life of God," the very thing from which the heathen are alienated (chapter 4: 18).

A good deal is said about the Church both as to individual and corporate blessings. In fact, Ephesians is a Church Epistle. It is clearly seen that it is the body of Christ, and the habitation of God through the Spirit (chapters 1: 22, 23; 2: 22). As Christ's body, it is His fulness or complement; just as Eve, typically speaking, was the complement or counterpart of Adam, the essential to give the complete idea of man. It was not good for **man to be alone**; he needed the **helpmeet for him** which God alone could provide. So Christ owns the Church as **bone of His bones, flesh of His flesh**. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (chapter 5: 30). Astounding statement! How it exalts the wisdom, the power and the grace of God that could form it!

Then there is God's habitation

through the Spirit; and we are "builded together" to form it. God dwells here through the Spirit; it is His dwelling place on earth. He is not in any temple made with hands; nor does He dwell in thick darkness. He dwells in that which is living, built of "living stones," on Christ the "living Stone." How real then is the presence of God on earth in His habitation! How near He is to all them who form that habitation through the Spirit!

There is **one** Spirit in the Church, forming the body, leading the saints through Christ to the Father; and building the saints together as God's habitation. Exhortations are given to keep the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We are not told to **make a unity** by some formal agreement amongst ourselves to **amalgamate together**; but to keep the unity **that is made** by the indwelling Spirit, and that in **the uniting bond of peace**. This is achieved by walking worthy of the vocation by which we are called, in all lowliness and meekness. Lowliness gives no offence; meekness **t a k e s** none. Happy they that have learned of the Lord, who was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11: 29)! Then we have to forbear with one another; not **cut one another off**. Diotrephes did this bad work of casting the brethren "out of the Church" (3 John 9, 10). Had there been lowliness and meekness, and gracious forbearance with one another, there probably would have been no divisions. Solemn thought!

It remains for us to take "the whole armour of God" (chapter 6: 13-18). This we need in the evil day, in order to stand. If our blessings

are in heavenly places, our conflict is also there (chapter 6: 12). Just as Israel had their blessings in Canaan, and their enemies there

also. But full equipment is given to us in order to stand; and we need not surrender **any ground** to the enemy.

THE TESTIMONY OF GRACE

W. KERR

ELIJAH, the man of God, stands out in the pages of Holy Scripture as one who testified for God in a very dark day in Israel's history. His testimony, accompanied by powerful signs, failed to touch the hearts of that rebellious nation, or to recall them to God. Their wickedness all but overwhelmed Elijah, as we see in 1 Kings 19; just then God brings another man to light in whom are wonderful features of grace.

When we come in 2 Kings 2 to the end of Elijah's life, it is of interest to compare that incident with what we read in Luke 24. In the closing verses of 1 Kings 19 we have the account of Elisha's call from his normal daily tasks to follow Elijah the man of God. There is a similarity between this call and the call of the fishermen by the Lake of Galilee, who followed the blessed Lord throughout His service here, and then stood at the end before the risen Lord, as in Luke 24, and received the promise of the Holy Spirit — "power from on high" to indwell and enable them to be witnesses when He had gone from them.

When we view those two men of God as they move together from Gilgal to Bethel, and thence to Jericho and the banks of Jordan, we are reminded again of the movements of our Lord Jesus Christ in

His ministry toward men, and on the other hand, of those who followed Him from Galilee to the Cross. As Elisha was reminded of the departure of Elijah, so the disciples were reminded of their Lord's departure, and consequent coming of the Holy Spirit to spread universally the testimony of grace.

We next view the two by the bank of Jordan. There were those who looked on from afar, taking account of the happenings; Elijah about to be taken, Elisha ready to receive a double portion of his spirit for the continuance of the testimony accompanied now by grace and mercy. In John 19: 25, we read of a company of women who stood by the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, identifying themselves with Him in His death, forming the link, so to speak, between Himself and those who later waited for the Spirit as recorded in Acts 1 and 2.

The passage of Jordan speaks to us of a way made through death. In Joshua 3 we read of the Ark of the Covenant entering the Jordan, and the waters stood, "and the priests that bare the ark . . . stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan." The people then, following the Ark of the Covenant, passed over. This then in 2 Kings 2 is the second time we have a way made through Jordan in the Old Testament, and serves as

a type of what was accomplished when the holy spotless Son of God went into death, destroying its power and emerging triumphant on the other side, a **Risen Man**. In this position risen from the dead, He gathers His own around Him and tells them that this was the fulfilment of the things written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Himself.

The power of God takes Elijah to heaven, having typically passed through death in the crossing of Jordan; and Elisha seeing him go receives the power to take up the testimony in Israel. Elisha comes back in this new power, having been in touch with heaven in the special place given him at the translation of Elijah. The scene at Bethany comes now before us. The blessed Lord Jesus, the risen One, having passed through death, lifts up His hands in blessing on His own, being then carried up into heaven. The disciples return to Jerusalem to wait for the Holy Spirit, the power from on high which constituted them the witnesses of God's boundless grace now fully revealed through the death and resurrection of the Son of God. If that sovereign grace has operated in our souls, we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us, and this wonderful position is ours now, being set here for testimony in a dark day.

Elisha is met by the men of Jericho, which was the city of the

curse, indeed a barren, thirsty land. Although the situation was pleasant, death was upon all because there was naught to sustain life. The action of Elisha illustrates in a remarkable way, the power resident in the grace of God. The new cruse — the vessel — and the salt therein — the preserving element — restores the land and brings life and sustenance to a scene of death; so the Holy Spirit will work in the world to come, and the saints of God bear the character of "the salt of the earth," in the world today.

In Acts 3 we see Peter and John acting in continuance of that power which was in the Lord Jesus for the relief of men. Their steadfast continuing in those things spoken of in chapter 2: 42, takes them to the place where there was one who was in dire need. As the situation of Jericho was, so was the position of this lame man, sitting at the gate Beautiful, giving expression to his utter helplessness and entire dependence. Through these servants, and in the name of Him who alone can give life in a scene of death, the man is cured and restored to a condition which he had never formerly known.

May the great privilege and the equally great responsibility of being here in a scene of deepening darkness, for the testimony of the wondrous grace of our God, be really felt in our souls today, bringing us in dependence, submission and obedience before the Lord, to be led by His Spirit for the glory of God.

Speaking to young Christians, an old veteran said, "You can easily become too big for God to use you; but you can never become too little." It would be well if all servants of God remembered this; the old as well as the young.

BIBLE STUDY—NUMBERS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 4: 1 — 8: 26)

IN chapter 4 we have details as to the service of the Levites in connection with the sanctuary, and also details of the work of the priests, particularly when the camp was in movement. The Levites were divided into three groups under the leadership of Kohath, Gershon and Merari respectively, though the first of these groups was controlled by Aaron's son Eleazar and the second and third by his son, Ithamar.

It was exclusively the work of the priests to prepare the contents of the tabernacle for transit. No eyes but theirs were to gaze upon the ark and the other holy objects and vessels that were there. No hands but theirs were to place upon them the suitable coverings. Only when covered by the priests were the Kohathites to lift them. If these objects, which were but the shadows of the good things to come in Christ Himself and the Holy Spirit, were only exposed to priestly eyes, we may take to heart the lesson that the far holier Reality, now revealed to us, is only apprehended as we take up our priestly privileges in the power of the Spirit. Apart from this we may attempt to scrutinize, but only to our own undoing.

As regards the coverings, the ark was alone in this respect, that the veil which divided the holiest from the holy place was placed immediately upon it. When the tabernacle was stationary the veil separated the ark from all beside; when in movement it completely covered it; and its significance is fixed for us in Hebrews 10: 20, "the veil, that is

to say, His flesh." Veiled in flesh, the true "Ark" moved amongst men.

But over this was to be placed a covering of badgers' skins, and again over this a cloth of blue. Badger's skins would present a rough surface but be very impervious and protective to the holy things beneath, while blue, the heavenly colour, was what met the eye. As a type this is significant, for in our Lord the protective element was essential to Himself — beneath the surface, so to speak — and hence nothing marred the heavenly beauty He displayed before men.

In the cases of other vessels the blue was inside and the badgers' skins were on the surface to preserve from defilement. This was so even with the candlestick, typical of the seven-fold light of the Spirit, who is essentially holy even as Christ is, but who has never become incarnate, but now indwells redeemed men. There was a further difference since on the table of shewbread was to be spread a cloth of scarlet as well as one of blue, and on the brazen altar was to be no cloth of blue but one of purple. Scarlet is generally held to be indicative of human glory and purple of imperial dominion. The shewbread loaves spoke of God's perfect administration for the earth, yet to be realized through the twelve tribes of Israel, and there human glory will most brightly shine.

How fitting also that the altar,

which spoke of the sufferings and death of the Saviour, should be covered with purple under the badger skins, for His universal dominion will be acknowledged by all to rest for its foundation upon His death, as Revelation 5 so clearly shows. The only One, who is worthy to receive the power, which is grasped at by the "beasts" of chapter 13, is "the Lamb that was slain." To this we all add our worshipful "Amen" even today.

The Levites were to serve from the age of thirty to the age of fifty; that is, their years of maturity and physical strength were to be devoted to energetic service, for it was theirs to set up the tabernacle and take it down, as we saw at the end of chapter 1, as well as carry it and its contents when the people journeyed. When we come to chapter 8, we shall find further reference to this.

As we survey the whole of chapter 4, we cannot but be struck by the way in which God ordered everything in connection with His wilderness house, leaving nothing to man's preference or choice. It reminds us at once of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, where we learn that in God's present house, which is "the Church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3: 15), the Spirit of God is sovereign, acting under the lordship of Christ, and that He divides "to every man severally as He will." We are only right as we serve under the direction of the Spirit of God. It is not for us to pick and choose.

Chapter 5, which follows, instructs as to the removing of defilement from the camp which surrounded the tabernacle. The directions come under three heads.

First, the removal of persons who may be defiled by leprosy, or by bodily issue, or by contact with death. Leprosy is a type of that "sin in the flesh," of which Romans 8: 3 speaks. The "issue" reminds us of the words of our Lord, "that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matt. 15: 11). Man being corrupted by sin, everything that comes out of him is defiled and defiling; and then "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," as the Apostle James tells us.

A second source of defilement meets us in verses 5-10. Trespass against the Lord and one's neighbour is contemplated. This was to be met by confession and by restitution with a fifth part added. This regulation has a very definite voice for us today. Confession was the first thing, but by itself it was not enough. There is, we fear, today much defilement, even among the true saints of God, springing from trespass, in speech as well as in act, all of which is grieving to the Holy Spirit and a great hindrance to spiritual blessing. Not infrequently has a time of awakening and conversion amongst sinners been preceded by a time of revival amongst saints, when **conviction** of trespasses against their Lord and their fellow-Christians has seized them, followed by **confession** and **restitution**, as far as lay in their power.

Thirdly, we have, from verse 11 to the end of the chapter, what is spoken of as "the law of jealousies." The camp was to be holy as the dwelling place of God, and if jealousy as to his wife entered the mind of a man, it was not to be left to rankle there but to be tested,

whether based on fact or fancy. If true, judgment fell on the woman; if false, she was free, and demonstrated to be so. We may see here a type of that which marked Israel and Jerusalem, indicated for instance in Ezekiel 16. Possibly too this was in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he wrote 2 Corinthians 11: 2.

Israel had to learn that their Jehovah was "a jealous God," and we Christians have to remember that the Lord Jesus, in whom our faith reposes, is jealous of the affections and devotions of His saints, and something of that righteous and holy jealousy was in the heart of the Apostle as he thought of the way in which the Corinthians were unequally yoking themselves with the men of the world, as to which he warned them in chapter 6. It was the loss of "first love" for Christ that helped on all the evils that developed in the Churches of Revelation 2 and 3.

In chapter 4 then, we have the **order** of Levitical service, appointed of God, for the removing and setting up of the tabernacle; and in chapter 5, the **removal** of that which would **defile** the camp in the midst of which God's habitation was placed. Now, in chapter 6, we have the very opposite, since he, who undertook the Nazarite's vow, placed himself in the most **holy**, or **separated**, position open to an Israelite. The meaning of the name, Nazarite, is "a separated one."

According to our chapter a man might make a vow to separate himself unto the Lord for a certain period, and if so, he placed himself under a threefold obligation, which

he had to observe "all the days of his separation." The only actual case, recorded in the Old Testament, is that of Samson, and he was to be a life-long Nazarite from his birth, as we see in Judges 13: 5. He did not take the vow upon him; it was placed upon him by God, and his supernatural strength depended upon his faithful observance of it. The story of how he was seduced from it, we all know.

It would appear that John the Baptist was from birth under this or a similar vow. In Luke 1: 15, abstinence from wine or strong drink is mentioned, but not the two other things. Here we have a contrast. The strength of Samson was physical; John's strength was spiritual. The one lost his Nazariteship; the other retained it until he died a martyr's death.

In the first place the Nazarite undertook to abstain from the fruit of the vine in all its forms. In those regions the vine grew in abundance, and nothing was more common and ordinary as drink than wine. Under this vow of separation to God a man had to make himself quite peculiar by declining it in all its forms.

The second stipulation was that he must let the hair of his head grow without cutting it. This was something purely external. Only the friends and acquaintances of the man would know that he did not touch the fruit of the vine in any of its forms, but as he went about anyone could see the peculiar feature of his long hair.

Thirdly, he was to avoid all contact with a dead body. Much was made of death in those days, and

great were the lamentations and the mournings. Not to come nigh even when father or mother, brother or sister died, was separation from life and its ordinary ways indeed! But the Nazarite was a separated man! Separated to his God.

These things clearly have a voice to us, though we are not under the law. We may make in the first place a general application. The Christian has been called out of the world system to be for God and to find his joy and exhilaration in heavenly things; setting his mind and affection "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3: 2). He does not drink of this world's pleasures.

Again, the Christian does not seek the glory of the world. We are told in 1 Corinthians 11: 14, 15, that while long hair is a glory to a woman, it is a shame to a man, since for him it betokened an absence of that virile push and assertion of leadership which is characteristic of the man as distinguished from the woman. Paul's word to the Christian is, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4: 5). The word translated "moderation" means simply, "yieldingness." Knowing his Lord to be near, the Christian can yield to others the glory that men covet.

Lastly, we have to recognize how many things in the world there are which have about them the corruption of death, and, what is even worse, that we carry about in ourselves the flesh, which is like a dead body in its corruption. Hence that word of the Apostle in Romans 7: 24, "O wretched man that I am!

who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" — or, "this body of death?" The answer to the question is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Under His sweet and gracious power we are delivered from the dead body within, as well as the dead bodies in the world without.

But having made this general application we must remember that a special and particular one may also be made. Even today the Lord may call some of His servants to a path of special consecration, though not on the legal basis of a vow. The apostles were so called; pre-eminently so the Apostle Paul who was, "separated unto the gospel of God" (Rom. 1: 1). The same thing might be said, though in a lesser degree, of a servant like Timothy (see, 1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 6). Such a special call involves a more complete disentanglement from the ordinary and un sinful pleasures of life than is known by the average Christian. In saying this, we think of 2 Timothy 2: 4. No man thus called in a special way to enter into the wars of the Lord, "entangleth himself with the affairs of this life."

Numbers 6 details for us the offerings to be made; first, if the Nazarite failed in his vow; and second, when his vow was completed without failure. In the former case, the earlier days of his vow were lost, and he had to begin all over again. This was law, but thus it is not under grace. Personally we think that what is recorded in Acts 21: 20-26, indicates a lapse in his consecration to Christ on the part of Paul, but his years of separation and devotion to his Lord before that

were not treated as a lost thing.

Observing wholehearted devotion and separation from earthly joys, such as was seen in Paul, an unspiritual believer might say, What a straitened and gloomy life! How like living in a monastery, but without monastery walls! Nothing would be more mistaken. It is a life of joy and blessing. Why, this very chapter in Numbers, which gives us the Nazarite vow, ends with the special blessing of Jehovah. It is not indeed a blessing confined to the Nazarite, though such would be included, but rather on the children of Israel, considered as a people upon whom the name of the Lord was to be placed.

What strikes us about the blessing is that, in a day when blessing was so largely connected with earthly and material things, it is so bound up with spiritual things. The shining of Jehovah's face and the lifting up of His countenance surely signifies that Israel might be kept in the **light of the revelation of God**, as known in their midst. Then they would experience His **grace** though they were in the dispensation of law, and they would enjoy His **peace**. Such blessings may be ours today, but in a far larger and richer way, since God is now revealed in Christ.

Chapter 7, a lengthy one, records the offerings of the princes of Israel, representing the twelve tribes, when Moses had set up the tabernacle and anointed it. Coming in at this point, it reminds us that if it is God's thought to bless His people richly—as at the end of chapter 6 — it is equally His thought that His people should respond by their offerings to Him, all of them in connection with

the carrying and work of His sanctuary. Verses 2-9 give us the collective offering for the transport of the sanctuary, wagons and oxen, which were given to the sons of Gershon and of Merari. The holy vessels, including the ark, were to be borne on the shoulders of the sons of Kohath, so no wagons or oxen were needed for them. It was this that David overlooked, when he went to bring back the ark after it had been in the hands of the Philistines, and hence the disaster with Uzzah. Later David recognized his mistake, as we find recorded in 1 Chronicles 15: 13. God had to be sought "after the due order."

The rest of the chapter is occupied with the separate offering of the princes in connection with "the dedication of the altar." Each offered separately on his day, but each offered the same things. Vessels were presented — chargers, bowls, spoons — but none of them were empty; they contained fine flour mingled with oil as a meat offering, or incense. But whether for a meat offering or for burnt or sin offering, all that they presented spoke in some way of Christ. Doubtless they did not know this, but it is our privilege to discern it.

The last verse tells us that these offerings made, Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with God, and then he heard God speaking to him from the mercy seat. Chapter 8 begins the recital of the further things that God had to say.

The first word was instruction to Aaron as to lighting the seven lamps on the candlestick, which had been made, as verse 4 tells us, according to the instructions recorded in

Exodus 25. Then, from verse 5 to the end of the chapter, is the record of the purifying and consecration of the Levites. It is worthy of note that of all the sacred furniture of the tabernacle the candlestick only is mentioned here, and the shining of its light has a typical significance.

Chapter 7 has shown us that God may be served by the **offerings** of His people, and that God takes notice of these offerings in an individual way. They were not all lumped together — a good many verses might have been saved had they been — each prince, each tribe is named, and full details of each offering given. Then, God may be served by the **activities** of His people. This is seen in the Levites, as recorded in chapter 8. But all will be estimated by God in the light of the sanctuary; that is, the light of the Holy Spirit. And further, we must remember that the light of the Spirit is to shine through us, His people. The Spirit of Christ is to shine out in both what we offer and in the active service we are privileged to render. Only as this is so will the Lord's words, in Matthew 5: 16, be fulfilled in us.

God's claim on the Levites, inasmuch as they were substituted for the firstborn, is reiterated in our chapter. They were servants to Him, but first they had to be cleansed. They were not bathed all over, as were the priests, but only

sprinkled with "water of purifying," and then not only were they to wash their clothes but also "shave all their flesh." This should teach us that we need not only the cleansing of the word before we engage actively in the Lord's service but also the removal of the things that mark and distinguish us as men in the flesh. When this is observed we are cleansed **from ourselves** and fit for service.

Then the Levites had to present their offerings, the whole congregation of the people having identified themselves with them by laying on of hands. The force of this rite is clearly shown here, and by it the people identified themselves with the service, so that they were regarded as serving their God in the service of the Levites.

The closing verses show that Levitical service began at twenty-five years of age, and after five preliminary years, full service began at thirty and continued until fifty. After fifty their heavy labours ended but they still ministered and kept the charge. Old age did not end their privilege of service but only altered its character.

We have to recognize that today every saint is called to Levitical service as well as priestly service. Let us humbly confess how short — how very far short — we come in both directions.

The Lord's words in John 15: 7, demand a life of such obedience and communion that it may be truly said that we "abide in Him." They call for such an acquaintance with His Word that it may be truly said that His "words" abide in us. Our wills and requests would then accord with His will.

OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES AND INWARD GRACE

F. B. HOLE.

From Notes of an Address

THERE are many remarkable stories concerning the saints of God recorded for us in Scripture. Those in the Old Testament are often instructive because of their typical value. Joseph in his humiliation and then in dominion and glory is one of the most perfect types of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we shall all agree that there is no more extraordinary story than that of the Apostle Paul. In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter II, we get his list of sufferings and trials, every one of them a great test. His outward circumstances were all against him; yet in chapter 12 we discover he received a mighty compensation of such inward grace as made all these trials very much worth while.

Reading the whole Epistle at a sitting we find ourselves conducted on a geographical tour. We start with Asia in chapter I, where Paul refers to the great riot, recorded in Acts 19. His preaching at Ephesus was so truly in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that there was a pronounced overthrow of Satanic practices, and the devil became furious and stirred up his servants. In chapter II: 23, Paul speaks of being, "in deaths oft," and this was one of those occasions. God came in for his deliverance, but the whole episode brought home "the sentence of death" in his own experience. He realized indeed that he was a dead man, and all trust in himself was dissipated.

Acts 20: 1, records that, the riot having subsided, Paul departed for

Macedonia, but it makes no mention of his stay at Troas on the journey, which is recorded in 2 Corinthians 2: 12. There he found himself in very different circumstances, but he did not escape trial.

He moved into an outward calm, but found himself plunged into conflict of an inward sort. He had written his First Epistle to the Corinthians and expected at Troas to meet Titus, who would bring him news as to the effect of that letter upon them. Titus failed to appear, and his anxiety as to them was such that he had no rest in his spirit. From the outward dangers of Ephesus he had plunged into inward distress of spirit; so much so that he was incapacitated for service in the Gospel there. This inward distress was as decisive in its effects as the outward. The one sent him off in haste from Ephesus; the other in haste from Troas.

We pass on to chapter 7: 5, and we find ourselves with Paul in Macedonia, where still he was kept in suspense, waiting for the arrival of Titus. Things were getting worse and worse, rather than bettered by his leaving Troas, for he says, "our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side." At Ephesus the trouble was **outside**; at Troas it was **inside**; but in Macedonia it was **on every side**. It was like Ephesus and Troas rolled into one, as he says, "without were fightings, within were fears."

We may pause a moment to reflect

that we are today in very different circumstances. For a couple of centuries now there has been little or no persecution in Britain. As a consequence we almost have to reverse the statement and say we have become soft and timorous, so that we have had fears without and fightings within. If we were hammered at more by the world without we should be less inclined to quarrel within.

In Macedonia, however, Paul's fears were alleviated by the arrival of Titus with good news as to the repentant state of the Corinthians as the result of his letter, so that he felt himself free to survey the state of things amongst them. Our thoughts are thus turned to Achaia, the province in which Corinth was situated, though Paul himself was not actually there.

Although there had been a measure of recovery, things were still not too bright. In the matter of a collection, then being made for poor saints, they had made a promising beginning but it had not been carried to completion, and they had been quite outstripped by the Macedonians, who were far less enriched in worldly possessions. The Apostle was still fearful lest their minds were being corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ by the activities of men who were not true followers and servants of the Lord. He does not hesitate to use strong language as to such men. They were "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (II: 13).

These false men magnified themselves by lording it over the saints. When Paul writes, "if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour

you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face" (II: 20), he was describing exactly what these false apostles did. By way of contrast to this he is led to relate his own experiences, as we see in verses 23-33. And what a contrast it is!

We now in our thoughts leave Achaia and travel far round in that circuit "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum," to which Paul refers in Romans 15: 19. Trials, trouble and disaster seemed to be piled upon him mountains high. Five times of the Jews he received forty stripes save one — 195 stripes administered in five doses. Thrice beaten with rods; apparently at Gentile hands. Once stoned; that we know was at Lystra. Thrice he had suffered shipwreck, and when he wrote that he had not been taken prisoner and sent to Rome. So the shipwreck, recorded in Acts 27, must have been at least the fourth. And one of the shipwrecks was so desperate that for a night and a day he was being washed about in the sea. All this was enough to kill most men, but it was not all the story.

For there were things that affected his mind, as these had affected his body. There was "the care of all the churches." There were the weak, and those who gave and those who took offence; and these things pressed in upon him daily. The churches were not little paradises, even when Paul was among them. Too often nowadays when people find something not right in a meeting, they run away. Paul did not run away; he prayerfully addressed himself to meeting the difficulty.

As the Apostle ends his recital of

these outward circumstances he brings us to Damascus. The incident he mentions happened, we suppose, at the close of his second visit to that city, which he referred to in Galatians 1: 17. Anyway it happened early in his history. The basket must have been a big one to contain a full-grown man — the sort that one often sees filled with dirty washing! A few years before he had been the proudest of the proud Pharisees of Jerusalem, and now he has descended to this! He himself writes, "in a basket was I let down." Yes, but do not miss the contrast that greets us directly we read on into chapter 12. The man who was "let down" on earth was "caught up" to the third heaven.

But let us note how, in this connection, he speaks of himself. His own name, whether Saul or Paul, drops out entirely and he is simply "a man in Christ," — a description which applies to every true believer. Such an one has a new life, derived from a new Source — not Adam but Christ — and who in the power of that life stands before God in a new place, even Christ's own place. In the third heaven, which is Paradise, there was granted an abundance of revelations, and the hearing of unspeakable words, things that could not possibly be communicated to others in this lower realm.

It is stated that there are 700 languages or dialects in Africa alone, and perhaps 2,000 in the whole world; yet not one of them has the words in which could be communicated to others what was revealed to Paul. Until we have the thing or the idea the word to describe it is not needed. If some-

one could have invented the word "aeroplane" and used it in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, it would not have conveyed to them what it describes to us in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. So Paul was introduced into a region of things for which we have have no words.

Yet there were revelations entrusted to Paul that he could and did reveal, such as the mystery concerning Christ and the church, that he alludes to in Ephesians 3: 3, and that concerning the rapture of the saints, of which he speaks in 1 Corinthians 15: 51, and 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17. So the inference we may draw from these unspeakable revelations is that they were intended to convey to Paul personally an abundance of inward and spiritual grace, that would support him under the exceptional trials he had to face.

But again, when once more Paul found himself in the circumstances of earth trial came upon him. The flesh in him had not been eradicated by his sojourn in the third heaven. Its tendencies to pride and self-exaltation were still the same, so the "thorn in the flesh" was given to him. We understand that the word "thorn" is hardly strong enough, though we remember seeing in South Africa mimosa thorns five or six inches long and as hard as the hardest wood. The Greek word indicates a sharp stake. It was God's preventive discipline, and the exact form of it we do not know, and do not need to know. It was a "messenger of Satan," and yet it came permissively from the hand of God, on the top of all the trials that came upon him from the persecuting world and

the defects and failures of the saints.

Though thrice he prayed for its removal it still remained, but it became the occasion for a fresh assurance of an abundant supply of inward grace in those immortal words, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." It is not only grace, but MY grace, not only strength, but MY strength. The immensity of the grace and the strength can only be measured by the divine and eternal fullness of the One whose grace and strength it is. In the presence of this greatness how small was Paul, who was indicated by the "thee,"—and we are even smaller than Paul. There is an infinitude of grace and

strength with our Lord. It carried Paul to the finish, and enabled him to triumph with martyrdom just before him, as we see in 1 Timothy 4: 6-8.

So let us take courage, my brethren, and be assured that though there are outward circumstances that test us there is abundance of inward grace and strength to carry us through. When we get to glory, we shall all be saying we would not have missed any of the testings, which provoked the inflow of the grace and the proving of the strength. In our earthly circumstances we may be "let down" like Paul, but when our Lord comes again, with Paul we shall be "caught up."

THE JEWISH CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

A. J. POLLOCK.

SCRIPTURE clearly indicates that the signs of the last times centre very largely in the land of Israel. These signs are connected with the coming of our Lord the second time to earth, to put down His enemies under His feet, and to reign upon the earth, where once He was crucified and cast out.

But before our Lord comes to set up His millennial kingdom on earth, He will first descend into the air to translate His heavenly saints "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15: 52), to the Father's house.

Between this coming for His saints who share in the heavenly calling and the later appearing on earth to make good the Jewish calling, the judgments of God as outlined in Revelation 4 to 19 — the seven seals,

the seven trumpets, the seven vials — will run their course.

If then the signs of the last days tell us that the coming of our Lord draws near, when He shall reign on the earth, and the rapture of the heavenly saints precedes this, it follows, that the coming of the Lord **for** His saints will be still nearer. How deep then should the Christian interest be in these signs, which are foretold in Scripture.

There is one remarkable sign of the last days, coming before the world today, that we should like to draw brief attention to. It is of a most peculiar character, and fits in with what we find in Scripture. Quite recently there has arisen in the land of Israel a movement of a religious kind, entitled,

The Jewish Christian Community.

It is claimed that the movement furnishes a most significant sign of the last times, that "the fulness of the Gentiles" has come in, and that the judicial "blindness in part" of the Jew is beginning to be slowly lifted (Rom. 11: 25).

The first **Jewish Christian Community** Conference was held in 1944. The Community was enlarged in 1945 by the addition of Gentile Christians. In 1946 a most important development took place. Members of the Community visited Palestine with the object of finding out the position of Jewish Christians, to discover who shared their vision, and would be led to join in the movement. We read, "Later that same year the foundation was laid for the Christian synagogue in Israel by the kindling of the Sabbath light of Christ on the Mount of Olives, where prayers of repentance were offered up, and Jews called to the Messiah to return. The banner of the Messiah was unfurled in the midst of the Jewish people."

That this **Jewish Christian Community** seeks a worldwide response was seen in that at their Conference in 1952 in Strasbourg, delegates from France, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and Israel were present. Their publications in German, French and English circulate in 44 countries.

This surely is a most significant sign of the last times. Not many years ago this movement would have been impossible. Of late years the Jewish fanatical hatred of the Lord Jesus, the absolute refusal of His atoning death on the cross, the New Testament treated as an absolutely

forbidden book, has yielded to gentler views. Many Jews today begin to acclaim our Lord as one of their great prophets, and the demand for the Scriptures, including the New Testament, is a marked feature of the present time. We read, "Now learn a lesson of the fig tree [symbolically **Israel**]; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [the coming of the Messiah to set up His earthly kingdom] is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24: 32, 33).

This movement takes a peculiar and unique position. How does the Jew react to it? Hitherto a Jew, embracing the Christian faith, whilst remaining a Jew nationally, is no longer a Jew religiously. The "orthodox" Jew, that is a Jew who fanatically rejects the claim of our Lord as their promised Messiah, cannot accept this movement. A Jew embracing the Christian faith is looked upon by them as a traitor to his own people, and no longer to be recognized as belonging to the Jewish nation.

On the other hand Christians, intelligent in the Word of God, learn that all distinction between Jew and Gentile is done away in Christian fellowship. Scripture is plain in this respect. We read, "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off [**Gentiles**] are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our [**Jew and Gentile believers**] peace, who hath made both [**Jew and Gentile**] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us [**Jew and Gentile**]; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in

ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain [**Jew and Gentile**] one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2: 13-15).

To put it into plain language, this movement takes a position half-Jewish and half-Christian. The Jews reject this absolutely, as we have seen. The Christians feel it is a denial of true Christianity, where we read, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 13). Further it brings confusion into the Christian profession, for some Christians to take full Christian ground, and some to take up half-Jewish ground, acknowledging Christ as their Messiah, but connecting Him with earthly, instead of with heavenly hopes. We are surely right in cleaving to Scripture, and refusing byways, even when there is much that is Christian mixed up with the movement.

Just a word as to how far this movement may be more or less blindly leading to the fulfilment of Scripture. When our Lord comes into the air to rapture His Church to glory, all believers will leave this earth, not one will be left behind. The Church's history will then be closed, but Scripture leads us to realize that just before our Lord comes to earth to reign, there will be a fresh and remarkable awakening on the part of His earthly people,

the Jewish nation. That is clearly indicated in Zechariah 12: 10-14. In Matthew 25: 31-46, we find the separation of the sheep and the goats — the sheep on our Lord's right hand, the goats on His left. The sheep plainly indicate those, who have paid heed to the gospel of the kingdom preached among all nations, who will enter into eternal life; the goats are plainly those who have refused the message, and go into everlasting punishment. Who are those our Lord calls His brethren, but those He uses to be the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom? May it not be that the movement we have been considering will furnish seeking souls, who in their turn may evangelize among the nations?

We must remember **The Jewish Christian Community**, whilst centering in Palestine is an all-world association. That the fulfilment of Scripture at the last time will be rapid is indicated in Scripture. We read, "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth **in one day**? or shall a nation be born **at once**? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isa. 66: 8). Read the whole chapter attentively.

The present movement is energized by the hope of the Lord's return to earth to set up His millennial kingdom, and we believe is a most significant sign of the times.

THE DEAD SEA

What makes the Dead Sea dead? Is it not because it is ever receiving and never giving out anything. Why is it that many Christians are inert — dead? Is it not that they are all the time receiving and never giving out anything.

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

G. S. HEPBURN

SAUL, typical man after the flesh, had been rejected by God as King over Israel on account of his rebellion and disobedience, and David, outstanding type of the Lord Jesus, had been chosen by God to supersede him, and was duly anointed by Samuel, the priest. Reference to him in the New Testament reads thus, "When he had removed him [Saul] he raised up unto them David to be their king, saying, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will'" (Acts 13: 22).

But Saul clung to the throne, and persecuted David, seeking by every conceivable means to encompass his death. And so intense was his hatred of David, that he had eighty-five of the Lord's priests slain, because they failed to betray David, and deliver him into his hand, when they could have done so (see, 1 Sam. 22: 18).

In such circumstances it was that David escaped to the cave of **Adullam**. And when his whereabouts became known some four hundred men, foremost among them David's brethren and all his father's house, gathered round him, men who were discontented, distressed and "in debt" (1 Samuel 22: 1-4). Were they a motley crowd? No! indeed they were the moral stalwarts in Israel.

Not on account of their own hard lot were these men distressed and discontented, but on account of the state of things in the nation, and chiefly because David, the anointed of the Lord, was in exile. And to

whom were they in debt? Why! to David himself, of course, if to no one else. In fact the whole nation was deeply indebted to him, since he had delivered them from their great enemies, the Philistines, with a mighty deliverance in the Valley of Elah. But these four hundred men alone were rightly affected by all this, and decided to leave all, and follow David.

And what a change had come over David's brethren, or at least over one of them — Eliab, the eldest. How he reproached David when he arrived in the Valley of Elah for leaving the few sheep that had been committed to his charge, saying, "I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart: for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle" (1 Sam. 17: 28). And how lovely was David's answer, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" And does not this remind us of a similar change taking place in the Lord's brethren?

Not to see the battle had David come, but to fight it. There was no widespread battle to see. The very sound of Goliath's voice, as he challenged the Israelites to fight, was enough to fill the hearts of Saul and his host with terror and dismay, but David, single-handed and alone, smote the mighty giant to the earth, then cut his head off with his (Goliath's) own sword. What a lovely type of the Lord Jesus, David is in all this. "He [Jesus] also Himself likewise took part of the same [flesh and blood]; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is

the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2: 14, 15).

And here it is that the great appeal comes to us today, for while the Lord Jesus has been exalted by God to His own right hand, He is still rejected, and His rights denied, not only by Israel as a nation, but also by the world He came to save. Realizing this, and our deep indebtedness to Him, and being distressed at the state of the world at large, and of that which bears His name in particular — Christendom — the only path for the faithful soul is to leave all in spirit to follow the Lord.

One man, Jonathan, was conspicuous by his absence at Adullam. Where was he? Jonathan, whose soul was knit with the soul of David, had stripped himself of all he valued, and had given it to David, and had said, "Fear not, thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee" (1 Sam. 23: 17). This was, as it should have been, but, alas! for poor Jonathan, it turned out otherwise. Oh! the pathos connected with the parting of these two. Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace . . . and he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city" (1 Samuel 20: 42). Again we read: "And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house" (1 Samuel 23: 18).

Having parted thus with David, he evidently threw in his lot with Saul, his father, whom God had rejected, and alas! shared in his ignoble end. Both fell together in

their high places, being slain on Mount Gilboa by the sword of the Philistines; Jonathan in the flower of his age. See David's lament in 2 Samuel 1. In David's four hundred we have a noble and inspiring example: in Jonathan we have a most solemn warning. Let us then cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart.

The Valley of Elah, where David slew Goliath, and the army of the Philistines was completely routed; David in the Cave of Adullam, with four hundred men, whose hearts he had completely captivated, though he was in exile; and Mount Gilboa, with its unspeakable tragedy: what soul-stirring scenes these are, and what lessons they have for the Lord's people today.

One other mention there is in Scripture of **Adullam**—in 2 Samuel 23: 13-17. In this most interesting Scripture David's last words are recorded. His mighty men and their deeds come under review, and after the first three, who are mentioned by name, we read of another three, who went down to David in the Cave of Adullam. When David longed for a drink of water from the Well of Bethlehem, these three broke through the ranks of the Philistine Army, secured the water and brought it to David — what selfless devotion!

But David would not drink of it. He valued it, as the blood of these men, who had risked their lives on his account, and he poured it out before the Lord. What an incentive to us who are far more deeply indebted to the Lord Jesus than these men were to David, and how

forcefully does this remind us of the Lord's appreciation of any service we may be privileged to render to Him. There is an even greater incentive to devotedness to Him on

our part, since He not only risked His life, but in infinite, measureless love laid His life down, shedding His precious blood for us on the Cross of Calvary.

MAN'S ANTAGONISM TO CHRIST'S DEITY

L. A. ANDERSON.

IT seems that Satan's aim is, and always has been, to attack the deity of Christ on every possible occasion. Examine the many false cults and religions and it will generally be found that they are unsound as regards His divinity. It was the same in our Lord's day when He was on earth, and this comes out most notably in the Gospel of John. In that Gospel there are at least seven distinct instances of hostility cited, apart from any indirect references. They are as follows:—

1. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work. Therefore 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: 17, 18).

To break the law of the sabbath by healing the impotent man was bad enough, thought the Jews, but to say God was His Father was in their sight worse still, and He must be killed if at all possible. They could not however carry out their evil desire.

2. "He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, **the same is true . . . Why go ye about to kill Me ? . . . Then they sought to take Him**" (John 7: 18, 19 and 30).

Here the Lord Jesus proclaimed Himself as the True One sent from God. In another place we read that He said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." The Jews would not however agree that He was sent from God nor that He was the True One; but His hour was not yet come, and so again they could do nothing.

3. "The Pharisees and the chief priests **sent officers to take Him**" (John 7: 32).

But what was the result? The officers heard such marvellous words from His lips that they were dumb-founded and returned to those who had issued instructions to them that He should be taken, saying "**Never man spake like this Man**" (v. 46).

4. "Before Abraham was I am. **Then took they up stones to cast at Him**" (John 8: 58, 59).

Now the Lord proclaims His existence in the past eternity and long before Abraham's day, from which period the Jews dated their origin. This aroused such bitter enmity that the Jews would no longer endeavour to take Him away and eventually kill Him, but they would stone Him there and then on the spot. But we read that Jesus went through the midst of them and so passed by. Again His enemies were powerless to do anything.

5. " I and My Father are one. Then the Jews **took up stones again to stone Him** " (John 10: 30, 31).

What wonderful and gracious words had Jesus been speaking as regards the perfect security of His sheep, and yet many Jews turned away in disdain and annoyance. But when He stated His oneness with the Father they would tolerate Him no longer, and again they took up stones, but not one hit Him.

6. " The Father is in Me, and I in Him. Therefore they **sought again to take Him** " (John 10: 38, 39).

Again the Lord emphasized the fact of His oneness with the Father; again they seek to take Him; and again He escapes out of their hand. Had He not said earlier on that no man taketh His life from Him, but that He would lay it down of Himself?

7. " If we let Him thus alone all men will believe on Him From that day forth they took counsel together for **to put Him to death** " (John 11: 48, 53).

Jesus had performed the miracle of giving life again to Lazarus who was dead, thus proving Himself to have power over death and the grave, and that He was the Resur-

rection and the Life. The people could not deny the mighty miracle which had been performed and many of the Jews had believed in Him. A council of the chief priests and Pharisees was called and it gave commandment that if any knew where He was he should shew it. They were determined to get Him; but it was only as the hour was drawing nigh that He would allow them to take Him (John 12: 23 and 17: 1).

Today it is the same; how often do men get angry when spoken to as to the Lord Jesus Christ's deity. There was a man whom I used to meet occasionally and when spoken to on this subject would break out with such awful blasphemy that I finally had to leave him alone. Yet that man was what the world would call a kind-hearted and well-meaning person, but he would not accept the fact that Christ was God as well as Man on any account.

" What think ye of Christ is the test
To try both the state and the scheme
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him."

May the Spirit of God ever keep us faithful to Him.

" And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it. . . . But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy Him " (Luke 19: 41, 47).

Thou lovedst them, but they would not be loved,
And human hatred fought with love divine:
They saw Thee shed the tears of love unmoved,
And mocked the grace that would have made them Thine.

BIBLE STUDY—NUMBERS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 9: 1 — 12: 16)

THE instructions as to the Passover, which occupy the first half of chapter 9, were given to Moses at the beginning of the first month of the second year; that is, about a month before that which we have been considering; as is evident, if we compare the first verse of our chapter with the first verse of chapter 1. The Passover commemorated the basis on which the redemption of the people rested. That came first, and the numbering of the people followed. Thus in type was the fact emphasized that God only numbers and counts as His, those who have been redeemed.

Verses 2-5, enforce obedience to all that God had commanded as to it. The time and manner of it had been laid down, and what had been laid down was to stand for all time. This principle of obedience is as true for us who are under grace as it was for Israel under law. One variation only was permitted, as we see in verses 6-8.

Moses knew that he had no authority to vary God's instructions, so he went to the Lord to hear what He had to say. The men in question had been defiled not by their sin but by attending duties in connection with the dead. They were permitted to eat the feast exactly a month later, but observing all the ordinances connected with it. Thus while there was no sanctioning of carelessness, there was provision made for unavoidable duties. The teaching of this we may well take to heart in relation to

the Lord's Supper, which was instituted just as the prophetic import of the Passover was to be fulfilled. To miss that by reason of carelessness means spiritual loss; but not so if hindered by duties that are necessary and right.

Another thing comes to light in verse 14. Not only was this provision made for any who were hindered on the due date, but in His kindness God also thought of "the stranger." Such an one might also partake, if he observed all the ordinances. Thus, while under the law God was dealing only with Israel, He kept the door open for any strangers who might have their heart touched and drawn toward Himself. This was a thing that the average Jew was slow to admit, as we see in Peter's words, recorded in Acts 10: 34, 35. Now, in the Gospel, all distinctions have disappeared. There is "no difference," either in guilt or in the richness of the proffered grace, as the Epistle to the Romans declares.

The latter part of the chapter is occupied with the sign of the presence of God in their midst; namely the cloud that descended on the tabernacle on the day of its erection; which cloud had the appearance of fire by night. On the ground of redemption God vouchsafed His presence, and as there is with Him, "no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1: 17), we find here the words, "So it was always." His presence was only forfeited as the result of the apostasy of the people, as we have to learn later on.

Moreover the cloud acted as a sign by which the goings or the stayings of the people were regulated. Such matters were not settled by the votes of the people or by the wisdom of Moses, but by the commandment of the Lord. The cloud might rest for only two days, or it might for a month or even a year. While it rested the people rested. When it moved the people moved. Thus their wilderness journey was regulated by the wisdom of God. Hence the extraordinary features that marked their journey, as noted by Moses at the beginning of Deuteronomy 8, and particularly verse 4.

Have we ever sighed for guidance in our pilgrim way, wishing we had some visible sign to direct? We have to remember what the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to enforce; namely, that the outward and visible things of Judaism were but shadows, which have given place to the realities that have reached us in Christ, and are known to faith. We have **His Spirit** and **His word**, and if we have that **meekness**, of which Psalm 25: 9 speaks, we shall not lack the over-ruling guidance that we need.

The people needed not only guidance as to when to rest and when to journey; there were times when they needed to congregate together, or when an alarm had to be sounded. Hence the silver trumpets were to be made, and instructions for their use are given in the first ten verses of chapter 10. Each individual Israelite had his place and responsibilities, yet they were a people who might be assembled together before God. In this sense Stephen spoke of them as the "church" or "assembly in the

wilderness" (Acts 7: 37). Further, there might be times when in the land an enemy drew near, and then blowing an alarm, they would be remembered by God.

The prophet Joel gives us an example of both. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain" (2: 1). Here a powerful adversary was in view as the succeeding verses show. But again, "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly" (2: 15). Here it is a matter of approaching God, as the next verses show. We find similar thoughts in the New Testament. The alarm for conflict is alluded to in 1 Corinthians 14: 8, so the trumpet must give no uncertain sound. In 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, the trumpet of God is to sound to assemble the saints, whether dead or living, to meet the Lord at His coming again.

The instructions about the Passover were given early in the first month of the second year. The people were numbered on the first day of the second month. On the fourteenth day of that second month the men previously disqualified were allowed to eat the Passover. That completed, on the twentieth day the cloud was taken up, as verse 11 says, and the further journeyings of the people began. They left the wilderness of Sinai for the wilderness of Paran. Verses 14-28 give us the order of the tribes and their leaders.

Everything, we notice, was regulated; and the order was **God's order**. Judah led the first three tribes. After them came the bearers of the tabernacle. After the second group of three tribes came the

bearers of the sanctuary — the ark and other holy vessels. Thus in the new spot the tabernacle was erected before the ark arrived. Ephraim led the remaining six tribes. These arrangements held good for all the journeyings of the children of Israel, according to verse 28.

In verses 29-32, the relations of the wife of Moses again appear. They were wilderness folk, well versed in its peculiar features, and therefore we can well understand the natural prudence of Moses in asking them to join in their journeys, and be unto them "instead of eyes." It sounded an attractive proposition to both sides. Israel would get very expert human guidance, and they would get a share in all God's goodness that was being showered upon Israel. But if God undertakes to guide His people, the most expert skill and understanding are unnecessary.

The Divine answer to this prudent suggestion of Moses, recorded in verse 33, is very striking. The ark of the Lord with the cloud of His presence left its accustomed place in the midst of the people and went in front to search out the exact resting place for them. Thus not only were their journeyings and their restings controlled, but the very spot for their encampment was indicated. Is God any less careful about the movements and the restings of His saints today? The church was "scattered abroad," in Acts 8: 1, but in chapter 9: 31 we read, "Then had the churches rest," and both things were under the control of the Lord.

The two verses that close the chapter show how fully Moses entered into the significance of this

action on God's part. If God acted as the Vanguard of His people, every opposing force would be scattered and their safety assured. If the cloud rested when the camping place was reached, it meant that He returned to be the centre of the many thousands of Israel. That, and that alone, was the guarantee of their prosperity and blessing.

How great is the contrast as we commence reading chapter 11. We move from the calm sense of the presence of God, ensuring victory and blessing, and descend to contemplate the people in their unbelief, which gave rise to bitter complaints. What happened at Taberah is recorded in the first three verses, though the particular matter as to which they complained is not mentioned. The people, however, were now definitely under the law that had been given, and had to face its judgment. If we refer back to Exodus 16 and 17, where are recorded their murmurings and complaints before the law was given, we at once see a difference. Then no judgment followed, as was the case here. It furnishes us with an illustration of the statement that, "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5: 13); as also of that other statement of the Apostle, "when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7: 9).

But even worse was to follow, as we see from verse 4 onwards. The trouble began with the "mixed multitude," that was among them as we were told in Exodus 12: 38. These were people who were not really of Israel though they had attached themselves to them; and amongst these the lusting for the delicacies of Egypt began, and from

them it spread through the host.

To corrupt by introducing a mixture is a very common and very successful device of Satan. Directly God called a people out of Egypt to Himself, the "mixed multitude" appears. The same thing we see in principle in Matthew 13. When the good seed of the Word is sown, the enemy immediately sows tares amongst it. Again the Gospel is faithfully preached by Paul, but almost immediately there are "false brethren unawares brought in" (Gal. 2: 4); and it is not otherwise today. A wholesome word of warning for us is — Beware of the "mixed multitude"!

Soon there was general lamentation throughout the host. The bondage of Egypt was forgotten; its luxuries were remembered, and as they thought of them the manna lost its attraction and was despised. The manna is now more particularly described to us. It was attractive in its colour and taste, but labour had to be expended in gathering it and preparing it for food, whereas Egypt's delicacies were more easily obtained and prepared besides being more varied. To the people the manna seemed monotonous.

The warning for us is very obvious. Christ is the true "bread from heaven," as John 6 so plainly declares, and when the first joy of our spiritual deliverance is passed, it is all too easy to lose our relish for Christ and His things and to hanker after the things of the world that appealed to us in our unconverted days. Then we become discontented, and tired of Christ, and complaining as to the absence of fascinating things that once we enjoyed. For

Israel, being under law, judgment was the ultimate result. We are under grace, but nevertheless the Father's chastening in His holy government comes upon us.

Verses 10-15, reveal how deeply all this affected Moses. He was so overwhelmed by a sense of the burden of the people that he forgot that the burden really rested upon his God rather than himself. In verse 15 he asked to die rather than continue to bear the burden, thus doing just what Elijah did centuries after, when he flung himself beneath the juniper tree. Both suffered a collapse in their mind, under the burden of the unbelieving people, yet both had the honour of appearing in the glory of Christ on the mount of transfiguration. Such is the grace of our God!

Many a servant of God has had the burden of a similar experience, but in lesser measure. We discern it in very large measure in the Apostle Paul when he wrote to the Galatians, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (4: 19). We may be sure however that no servant of God can ever rightly say, "I am not able to bear all this . . . alone, because it is too heavy for me." We must never leave God out of our reckoning.

Thus the unbelief and grievous sin of the people provoked some breakdown on the part of Moses, but the way in which the Lord condescended in His kindness to meet His fainting servant is very beautiful. Moses should no longer feel lonely, as though he had to bear the weight alone. He was granted human support in the shape of seventy elders

of the people, though it was by reason of sharing the spirit that had been upon him that they were able to give the support. In result, they became prophets. Two who shared in the power were out of order as to their location, and this brought to light another striking feature that characterized Moses.

Joshua would have had the two men silenced because of the irregularity that marked their prophesying, but Moses forbade him. Envy might have found a place in the heart of Joshua but it had no place in the heart of Moses. The desire for pre-eminence, which is so rooted in the mind of the natural man, had no place with him. He displayed very clearly that meekness which is attributed to him in verse 3 of the next chapter. When 40 years old he was **not** very meek, as Exodus 2: 12 shows. Now after the 40 years' discipline from God in Midian, he is "**very meek**" though he had become "**very great**" (Exod. 11: 3), in the eyes of the world.

Though so meek, Moses found it hard to accept the pronouncement of the Lord that He would feed the whole community on flesh, not for a day or a week only, but for a whole month; so verses 21 and 22 remind us of the attitude of the disciples when the Lord Jesus challenged them before the feeding of the five thousand. We are all so prone to measure an emergency by human possibilities and to forget what the Lord stated in verse 23. The Lord's hand is not waxed short and His word ever comes to pass, no matter how impossible the thing seems to us. The people had despised the Lord, as stated in verse 20, and even Moses had doubted Him. Yet what

He had promised was speedily fulfilled in spite of its seeming improbability.

The quail, is, we understand, a bird of migratory habits, not very strong in its flight and therefore its direction easily affected by wind. The Lord had divided the Red Sea by a strong east wind, and now again His wind blew, and moved not water but birds. In result quails came in such vast numbers as to surround the camp for miles on either side, so that the people could capture them without the slightest difficulty. The people were thus enabled to satisfy to the full their desire for flesh, but as they greedily satisfied their lust, plague broke out amongst them and many died. What they had desired as a blessing became to them a curse. And the damage was not only physical but spiritual also, for we read, referring to this episode, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Psa. 106: 15).

It looks as if the sad events recorded in chapter 12 sprang out of what we have just considered — the faint-heartedness of Moses and the prophesying of the seventy elders. The very prominent position accorded to Moses by the Lord had awakened envy in the hearts of both his sister and his brother, and this weakening on his part called it forth. Moreover he had married a woman who was outside the circle of Israel, and this furnished a convenient excuse for their protest; and both of them, especially Miriam, were older than Moses.

Now the Lord had most definitely spoken by Moses. He had revealed His holy law, and Moses was the

chosen servant through whom the revelation had been made, and was being made, and that in inspired words. They made the bold claim that Jehovah had equally spoken by them — that their utterances should be accepted as an inspired revelation from Him. A bold claim this! And one that was a great sin, meriting severe punishment, as the sequel shows.

During the church's history, sad to say, similar false claims have been made all too frequently; and are even made today by men who claim that what they say is to be received as a word inspired of God. When the false claim was made in our chapter, we find the significant remark, "And the Lord heard it." The man Moses being so pre-eminent in meekness, the Lord not only heard but promptly acted in such a way as to vindicate him, and make it very plain that he and he only was His accredited mouthpiece.

It is here that we have also the Divine testimony concerning Moses to the effect that he was, "faithful in all Mine house," which is quoted in Hebrews 3. It is very evident that if God selects a man to be His mouthpiece, in order to convey to others His message in inspired words, faithfulness is a prime necessity. The opposite of meekness is self-assertiveness, and if Moses had not excelled in **meekness**, his tendency would have been to intrude himself and his own thoughts into the words from God. If he had not been **faithful**, he might easily have been diverted, so as to misrepresent

what God had really said.

Verses 6 and 7 indicate that Moses was more than a prophet. He was the apostle and mediator of the law covenant, as Galatians 3: 19 shows. This being so, we can see how serious was this sin, in which Miriam was the leader. Aaron followed her, but he was evidently a man too easily influenced by others, as the incident of the golden calf showed. Hence the displeasure of God was manifested against Miriam only, and by an instantaneous act of God she was smitten with leprosy. Aaron confessed their sin and acted as intercessor, for also the cloud had left the tabernacle, which was the sign for the moving of the camp.

We saw in Leviticus 13 the instructions for the detection of leprosy and its cleansing. It is a remarkable fact that the first case in which Aaron had to act was that of his own sister, and in regard to a sin in which he himself had been implicated. Miriam was the chief sufferer, but everybody was affected in some degree. Moses, who had been wronged, had to intercede. Aaron had to act. The people were held up in their journey for seven days. The whole episode may remind us of what is stated in 1 Corinthians 12: 26, only that which binds saints together today as one body is far more real and intimate than anything that constituted Israel one nation in the sight of God. And further, if Moses was not to be challenged, how much more are we to regard the Head of the church, the Lord Jesus, as supreme and unchallengeable.

Christ was witnessing while Peter was denying; but Christ had been praying while Peter had been sleeping. The armour should be put on before the battle, not just at the battle.

THE ATOM AND THE ADVENT

A. J. POLLOCK.

A FRENCH scientist, Pierre Berchelt, made a very remarkable statement in 1860. He may have had but little knowledge of the Word of God, but he had some sense of the evil that lies in the heart of mankind. This is what he said, "I believe that inside of one hundred years of physical and chemical science, man will know what the atom is. It is my considered belief that when science has reached that stage, God will come down to earth with His bunch of big keys, and will say to humanity, 'Gentlemen, it is closing time!'"

Almost a hundred years have passed since those words were uttered, and the first half of the French scientist's belief has dramatically come true. The atom has been discovered. With that has come the knowledge of immeasurable power, but how will man use this power?

Man has learned that the universe is run by atomic energy. It is calculated that 250,000,000 tons of matter are broken up into atomic energy every minute since the day of creation. When we recollect that the heat of the sun must travel about 90,000,000 miles to reach this planet, we realise, though very very feebly, what atomic energy is in the hands of God.

And what does God do with this inconceivable power? Only that which is beneficent, the ripening of the world's harvests, the evaporating of moisture from the vast expanse of water that girdles this globe, producing clouds, which descending in refreshing showers, renew the fertility of the soil. Thus does a loving

Providence plan for man's blessing and support.

In striking contrast to this, let man get into his possession ever so little of this power, and the immediate result is a consuming fear filling the hearts of millions. Let another great world-wide war break out, there would immediately be one wild mad rush to hide in the dens and rocks of the earth. The realization of the awful results of atomic energy completely staggers humanity. Surely the discovery of atomic power constitutes one of the gravest signs of the last days, telling us that the coming of the Lord is drawing very near.

As to the second part of the French scientist's statement, we would give answer by bringing to your notice two great outstanding examples of last-day signs. Zedekiah was the last king of Judah about 599 B.C. Since then, up to this present time, over 2,500 years have rolled by. During this period Palestine has been without a king. Within comparatively recent times Jews of all nationalities and tongues have been flocking back to their ancient land in their hundreds of thousands. In still more recent times the Jews overnight, greatly daring, in May 1948, proclaimed a sovereign Republic of Israel. Within three days this was recognized by the United States of America and Russia, followed by general acknowledgment. This was prophesied by Scripture, and constitutes a sign of the last days of the greatest magnitude.

The other sign of the last days,

we would draw attention to, also prophesied by Scripture, is the Communist movement, anti-God, anti - Christ, anti - religion, anti - morality, anti-Bible, having its objective the dethronement of God and the deification of man. When that stage is reached God will indeed come down to earth in the Person of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will put down all opposition to God's holy will, and establish His reign of peace on the earth.

“ For the earth shall be filled with

the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ” (Hab. 2: 14).

But before that blissful time arrives the Church of God will have been raptured to heaven at the summoning shout of our Lord, to be with Him for ever. How we rejoice that the coming of our Lord draws nigh, and that signs of the last days are prophesied in Scripture for our learning and comfort, though in the mercy of God the Church will not be called to go through the Great Tribulation.

DISOBEDIENCE LEADS TO DISASTER

F. B. HOLE.

WHEN the Apostle Paul reminded Timothy that he had known the Holy Scriptures from the days of his childhood, he alluded of course to that part of our Bibles that we call the Old Testament. It was able to make him “ wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Today we have the far clearer light of the New Testament as regards the salvation of the soul, but as to the salvation, that we all so much need from the perils of the world and the seductions of Satan, the Old Testament remains full of instruction which will make us wise, if only we observe it.

Let us take a striking example. There are many outstanding human figures in its pages, but none of them are more resplendent than King Solomon. We read the early chapters of 1 Kings, and observe that everything concerning him was in his favour. At his birth he was given a second name, which signified, “ Beloved of the Lord.” He

stepped into kingship just when the Israelitish state had been enlarged and consolidated by his father David. Peace reigned on all sides. Moreover, when tested by God, the desire he expressed was very acceptable: asking for wisdom, he received it and much else beside. His knowledge of God was so exceptional that the fame of it travelled far afield, for the Queen of Sheba was attracted by it. She came to Solomon, not because she heard of his literary gifts or his vast acquaintance with natural history, that we read about in the end of 1 Kings 4, but because of his fame, “ concerning the name of the Lord ” (1 Kings 10: 1).

And then we turn to chapter 11, and the record it sets before us seems almost incredible. What! this highly blessed, highly endowed King, ends his days a worshipper of abominable idols, erecting high places in their honour, bringing himself under the severe discipline

of God, and sowing the seeds that finally wrecked the whole nation. This almost unbelievable disaster is vouched for by the Word of God, and its roots are laid bare, that we may be saved from anything similar.

We have written, "roots," for we may discern a variety of causes, yet they all sprang from one main cause. The tap-root, if so we may call it, of the whole disaster was found in **disobedience** to the word of God.

The first wrong step we notice is mentioned at the beginning of chapter 3. Solomon "made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt" and took his daughter as his wife. In the days of Moses the people were told not to take in marriage the daughters of heathen peoples — see, Exodus 34: 16. The Lord knew what evil would spring out of this, and so prohibited it for all the people. Did Solomon think that he was so lifted up above the ordinary folk that legislation that applied to them did not apply to him? Or did he think that the lapse of time since Moses and altered conditions had made this law obsolete?

If now we read Deuteronomy 17: 14-20, we shall see how God anticipated that when in the land a day would come when Israel would demand a king, and so in advance special laws were enacted that should apply to him. The closing verse shows that the tendency would be for the king to be lifted up in heart and consider that legislation for the multitude did not apply to him, so that he could ignore laws made for the people, as we have just suggested.

But beside this there were three laws specially laid down for him. First, he was NOT to multiply horses to himself, and thereby cause the people to return to Egypt. Second, he was NOT to multiply wives to himself, that his heart should not be turned away. Third, he was NOT to multiply to himself silver and gold. It is noticeable how the word "multiply" occurs, and the third time it is "greatly multiply." And in each case it is "multiply to himself."

And further, in these verses the king-to-be was bidden to keep himself well posted up in the law. He was to go to the trouble of writing a copy of it and then reading therein all the days of his life. Did Solomon act in obedience with this? We fear he did not. If he did, he simply treated these three prohibitions as a dead letter.

So, as regards the first, "Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen (1 Kings 4: 26). And again, "Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt" (1 Kings 10: 28). What more natural since his wife came out of Egypt, and was not likely to be contented with humble asses or mules? It is to be noted that with the exception of the few that David captured and reserved, according to 2 Samuel 8: 4, and of Absalom, who, when making his bid for the kingdom, prepared him chariots and horses (2 Sam. 15: 1), there is no mention of a horse in Israel up to the days of Solomon. This first enactment, then, Solomon flagrantly disobeyed.

The second enactment was also

disobeyed in flagrant fashion, for King Solomon loved many strange women together with the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings 11: 1). This transgression it was that wrought such havoc in his religious life, and carried away by their influence he plunged into sad idolatry — the special error which brought down upon him, and ultimately upon his people, the judgment of God. In his younger days and in middle life he may have had the strength of mind to resist the tendency, but “it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods” (1 Kings 11: 4). Sowing to the flesh in earlier days, he reaped corruption when he was old.

Nor was it otherwise as regards the third prohibition, as the latter part of chapter 10 testifies. He greatly multiplied gold and silver and ivory, and not only these but things that were useless, or that merely pandered to his personal vanity, like apes and peacocks. All these things he multiplied **to himself**.

We may remember that his father David also amassed great stores of gold and other precious things. Yes, but he did it for the house of God, that he was forbidden to build. The latter part of 1 Chronicles 28, tells us about this. And the next chapter tells us that because he set his affection to the house of his God he gave out of his privy purse no less than 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 talents of silver. David multiplied **for the service of God**, though he was never to see the wealth expended. Solomon used it, and then multiplied much more **to himself**.

These things are recorded for our learning and warning. Riches may be a snare to a Christian, as 1 Timothy 6: 9 bears witness; but we are thinking of the many other plain instructions laid down in the New Testament for us. Because we are not under the law but under grace, we must not imagine that we have no commandments to observe. Indeed some of us might be surprised if we counted the number of times that Scripture mentions a commandment applying to Christians, particularly in the writings of the Apostle John. If we were under law, our standing before God would be determined by our keeping, or not keeping, His commandments. We are under grace, and our standing is in Christ, beyond all forfeiture. Yet if we disregard the commandments of our Lord, we dishonour Him and bring ourselves under His discipline.

There may be many details of our lives as to which the Lord has not issued any definite commandment, and we are then left to inference which with an exercised conscience we may deduce from Scripture. In such matters there may be differences of judgment. But when our Lord has spoken — as He indeed has — it is ours simply to obey. He has issued commandments in assembly affairs — see, 1 Corinthians 14: 37 — as well as in matters of personal conduct, and if we fly in the face of these, or simply ignore them, we are bound for a disaster of some sort.

When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and He surveys all our earthly course, He will doubtless show us how much of the troubles and even disasters of a

spiritual sort, that we suffered, we brought upon ourselves by our disobedience to His plain commands,

and to the definite instructions that have reached us in the apostolic writings.

HUMBLING AND RECEIVING

R. TURNBULL.

(Matthew 18: 1-6)

HERE is a blessedly simple word addressed by our Lord to His disciples. In it we learn how we are received into His kingdom, and also how we are able to receive the Lord: "Whoso shall receive one such little child receiveth Me."

It is very important that we should ever remember that we have been received in the character of a little child. Did not the disciples forget it when they would have driven away the children who were brought to Jesus? They brought upon themselves a merited rebuke from their Lord, and were reminded that the kingdom of heaven consisted of such.

Our Lord is no longer on the earth personally, but in this same chapter He graciously promises to be in our midst if we gather in His name. That surely means according to the truth of His character as revealed in the Scripture. If we through grace are enabled to humble ourselves, and maintain the character of little children, the promise of our Lord will be graciously fulfilled when we gather together. But there is nothing of exclusive right in this, except that it is exclusive of the world. It is not exclusive of any of God's children who walk in truth.

"Whoso shall receive one such little child receiveth Me." If we

act like the disciples and refuse to accept simple, godly Christians, we shall like them merit the Lord's rebuke, and we shall not be able to count upon His presence, for we shall not be gathered in His name, but in our own. A devoted servant of God long ago wrote: "You are nothing; nobody, but Christians and the moment you cease to be an available mount for communion for any consistent Christian, you will go to pieces or help on the evil."

Many sad divisions have taken place even since these words were written, but the truth stated by our Lord remains unchanged as all truth ever does. Many of God's children recognize this, but find difficulty in carrying it out. However, if there is the will to carry out the Lord's instructions, difficulties will disappear.

There must be door-keeping. The Church at Pergamos was rebuked for its failure in this regard. They evidently allowed unconverted persons in their midst, as we see in Revelation 2: 14 and 15. And the Corinthians were instructed to put away from among themselves "that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5: 13). These were cases where the evil was known, and the door must be shut.

Now Scripture gives us instruction in the matter of receiving. It tells

us whom to receive, whom not to receive, and to exercise caution. Firstly, in Romans 15: 7, we are told to receive one another as **Christ has received us** to the glory of God. Christ has received all true Christians, and that freely, without imposing any condition or law, and in that way we are to receive others, no matter how "weak in the faith" they may be (Rom. 14: 1). Secondly, 2 John forbids us to receive any who bring not the doctrine of Christ. Lastly, 1 Timothy 5: 22, enjoins caution: "Lay hands suddenly on no man." That is, there must be evidence or testimony that one is a true Christian and clear of evil. The evidence may be given by persons who move in other circles than our own, but credible witnesses for all that. Caution might be over-

done. The Lord will not hold us to account if we act in good faith even if a mistake should be made, and in the light of Matthew 18: 6, it is more serious to exclude one who sincerely desires reception than it is to receive one who may ultimately prove to be unworthy.

There may be no hope of undoing the divisions that have taken place. This is no plea that any such attempt should be made. Let us humbly confess our part in the failure, and recognize that we are nothing. Yet there is "the open door" (Rev. 3: 8). If we believe we are where the Lord would have us, we shall not deny that place to others, nor shall we desire to wander away from it. It is the place of nothingness, but of blessing.

THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION

J. G. TURNBULL.

How often we hear the view expressed, "Who is there to carry on?" Who, indeed! Let us consider.

The problem of succession is not a new one. It is as old as the fall of man. It has been, therefore, a constantly recurring problem with every generation.

It is good to remember, however, that God Himself is not regardless of the problem. When we say that God never leaves himself without a testimony, we say, in effect, that God is concerned with succession. The problem is man's. The answer is God's. God is always prepared.

Moses and Joshua

This problem was one which exercised the heart of Moses. Know-

ing that his time was now short, he was concerned as to who his successor should be, and went to the Lord about it. "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring in, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (Num. 27: 16-17).

The danger was great. But God was ready.

"Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him" (verse 18). God had been preparing a man in the sternness of the wilderness to take over leadership under

His guidance. He who sees the end from the beginning knows all the needs of His people and has promised to supply them.

So in due course, Joshua became God's man, having the certain promise: "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them . . . As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage" (Josh. 1: 2-6).

So in infinite wisdom, God choses the right man for the right job — to His glory. God's answer to the succession problem was given.

David and Solomon

How disappointed King David must have been as he realized that God had prohibited him from building the great temple on which he had set his heart. But God had spoken and David in true humility and repentance bowed to His decision. He was not content, however, to leave the matter there. He considered Solomon his son, the successor whom God had appointed, and the great task that lay before him. Although David was forbidden to build the temple himself, he was not idle.

"And David said, Solomon my son is yet young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before

his death" (1 Chron. 22: 5).

What a beautiful picture we have here of the faithfulness of the older man, concerned about the Lord's things, doing all in his power to prepare the way for those who follow. The task was great. In spite of the fact that he would never see the finished work, he prepared abundantly before his death. What faith — and what encouragement and help to his successor. His interest in the problem of succession was not merely academic. It was practical, vital, Spirit-inspired.

The stress in these days is on the segregation of age groups. These have their place. But we must ever keep in mind that, although we are many members, we are one body. Old and young are dependent on one another. We must work together.

Paul and Timothy

The aged Apostle could look back on a fight well fought; a race well run; a faith well kept. Personally he looked forward to "a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4: 7-8). But what of the work of Christ which his faithfulness had done so much to forward?

It was many years before this that the Apostle had met young Timothy. Ahead of Paul lay years of preaching, travelling and suffering for Christ's sake. With spiritual perception he assessed the value of a good succession. In Timothy he saw God's plan. He saw in him a young man who had the marks of faithfulness, spiritual (not necessarily bodily) strength, a sound

knowledge of the Scriptures and humility of walk. With such, realized Paul, lay the continuation of Christ's testimony.

So in his closing days his advice was plain: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2: 2).

Christ needs faithful men -- not only in former generations but also today. Christ needs young men who have heard and learned. The precious oracles of God are in our care to learn, to practice, to preach, to teach and to pass on. What a great responsibility; what a glorious privilege!

When the Olympic Games come round, a torch is lit and is carried by relays of runners to the Olympic Stadium in whatever country is housing the Games. The runners are constantly changing. The torch remains the same. Such is the scriptural picture of succession. The faith once for all delivered to the saints never changes. The messengers are continually changing. The

torch from the first runner is delivered to the second for faithful custody and transit to the third. Thus the message is carried.

From Paul to Timothy; from Timothy to "faithful men;" from "faithful men" to "others also." Yes, even to you and to me who have been chosen, redeemed, equipped, entrusted and sent forth with the Word of Life.

There is much in these passages for our instruction, rebuke and comfort, but this may be stressed. There is a God-given responsibility on us all; on elders to teach and on the young to learn. It needs grace, time, meditation and prayer. Only thus can the runners be fit.

Let us thank God for the faithfulness of those who have gone before us. Let us thank God for those who are with us now, to teach us the things most surely believed among us. Let us thank God that as long as we are left here there will be "faithful men."

May we find grace to be faithful, whether in learning or teaching.

A DESIRE

The Shepherd-love impart,
 That never wearieth
 Oh! give to me the Shepherd-heart,
 That loveth unto death.
 Give me the love that led
 Thy feet to Calvary,
 That Thy dear sheep be shepherded.
 Lord, give that love to me.

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

J. HOUSTON.

IF we enquire why so many Christians fail to walk in communion with God and with one another, we shall find that it springs not so much from lack of knowledge as from neglect of practice. The trouble with them is **not doing** what they **know**, rather than **not knowing** what they **do**. This brings their delinquency into a serious light for, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4: 17). To such God's word is not a lamp to their feet, and a light to their path, but a rebuke to their conscience. This leads to a breach of communion with God, and separation from the fellowship of His people.

Knowledge, if only held in theory, and not wrought out in practice, is but an inflation of the mind. The Corinthians were affected in this way. They came behind in no gift, and were enriched "in all utterance and in all knowledge" (1 Cor. 1: 5-7). And they were "puffed up" (4: 6; 8: 1). But, in the practice of what they knew, they were sadly deficient.

We all have to admit that our knowledge of what we should do is far in advance of what we actually perform. We can see a greater distance ahead than we reach with our feet. In this respect we are like the children of Israel. When they entered the land of promise, they did not possess that on which their eyes fell, but that on which they set their feet. Not what they saw, but what they personally appropriated, determined the extent of their possession. It is a fixed principle in the government of God that His

people can only possess and enjoy His gifts in so far as they willingly and obediently appropriate them. Hence it is laid down, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. 1: 19).

When the Lord ended His teaching on the Mount, "the people were astonished at His doctrine." People are often impressed by what they hear, without being practically affected by it. So the Lord, in order to ensure that a passing impression might not be the sole effect of His words, spoke the parable as to the house built on the rock and the house built on the sand (Matt. 7: 24-27). The solidity of the foundation and the security of the superstructure, to use the language of the simile, depended entirely on practice — on **the doing** of what was heard.

James says a lot about practice. In fact, his Epistle is one of the most practical we have in the New Testament. He shows the utter folly of hearing the word of God and not doing it. The hearer who is not a doer is "like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass." While he is in the act of looking he sees his face; but when he turns away "straightway he forgetteth what manner of man he was" (1: 22-25). No lasting impression was made in him. It is to be deplored that so much of our Bible knowledge is like this. We see wonderful things; but alas! when out of sight they are out of memory.

The Apostle Paul was an able preacher. Apart from his apostolic gifts for service, he had the back-

ground of a godly life, which gave support and character to his preaching. He certainly practised what he preached, and we can go further and say of him, that he only preached what he practised. The things he preached were **true of him**, before he presented them as **truth for others**. His preaching therefore was visible in his life, and not simply audible from his lips. He said to the Philipians, "Those things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and **seen in me**, do; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4: 9).

To the Corinthians he said, "I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me **above that which he seeth me to be**, or that he heareth of me" (2 Cor. 12: 6). He made sure that he **was** what he **said**. Of course, only the blessed Lord could say, in an absolute way, that He **was altogether what He said**. His enemies asked Him, "Who art Thou?" He gave answer, "Altogether that which I also say to you" (John 8: 25. New Trans.)

The Pharisees might tell others what to do, and not do it themselves. What they said might be correct, only they did not do it. As the Lord said of them, "they **say**, and **do not**" (Matt. 23: 3). Their teaching was valueless. Is there not much religious teaching today that is like this?

Coming to the teaching of the Apostle John, he affirms that the clear line of distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil lies in practice. "Who-soever doeth not righteousness is not

of God." On the other hand, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John 3: 7, 10). Life in the children of God shows itself in righteousness and love; that is, in practice. This is a spiritual law, and a natural one too. The nature of all creatures is shown in their practice. A bird takes to the air; a fish to the water; a righteous man to righteousness; an unrighteous man to his unrighteousness. All show what they are by what they do.

Lastly we have the teaching of the Apostle Peter. Speaking of the progress of the Christian, he gives in his first chapter a whole series of upward steps. Then he terminates by saying, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Pet. 1: 10). This was dependent on practice. Growth is the natural outcome of life **in action**.

But we cannot close this subject without giving the Lord's own words, which were preceded by His action. After He had washed the disciples' feet, He said to them, "Know ye what I have done to you?" This question was unanswered. Then He added, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13: 17). Here again, happiness is dependent on practice. It is a good thing to be a Christian and **know** it: it is a far better thing to be a Christian and **show** it. There is a quaint and pithy saying, which sums up the matter: What is wanted is Christianity in **boots**, and not simply in **books**.

The latter will give us knowledge: the former, practice. They should never be divorced.

BIBLE STUDY—NUMBERS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 13: 1 — 16: 35).

AT the opening of chapter 13, we find the people had moved northward and were camped on the confines of the Promised Land. From that spot, by the commandment of the Lord, a leading man from each tribe, except the tribe of Levi, was sent to search out the land they were to enter. This command evidently had a twofold bearing. In the first place, it was to act as an encouragement and incentive to the people by allowing their representatives to see for themselves the excellence of the land, and report on it. But in the second place, it was to make them realize that there were mighty opponents; so that they must still rely on the power of God. Their faith was to be tested. If they truly believed that nothing but His power had broken Egypt, and brought them out, they would have no difficulty in believing that His power would break all the adversaries in the land, and bring them in.

Now Canaan does not typify heaven, where Christ is. When we enter that blissful place, all conflict and fightings will be over for ever. It does typify the realm of heavenly blessing that is ours in Christ, and which we enter upon at the present time through spiritual conflict. Hence the Epistle to the Ephesians which opens with an unfolding of those "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," ends with the warfare indicated in chapter 6. It is worthy of note that the recounting of the armour of God in that chapter is followed by the word, "Praying always with all prayer

and supplication in the Spirit." We too must realize that to overcome we must be dependent on the power of God.

The word, "southward," in verse 17 may present some difficulty. The solution seems to be that encamped, as they were, close to where the hill country in the south of Judah begins, the spies had to start by going south and then climbing into the mountain region to the south-east of the Dead Sea. Thus, travelling on the east side of Jordan to the far north near to Hamath, and then turning south to return through to Hebron on the west side, they raised no suspicions as to who they were, but appeared to be ordinary travellers.

At this time Hebron was heavily fortified and held by a race of giants, the children of Anak. It was evidently of peculiar strength and antiquity, as the closing words of verse 22 show. Zoan was a chief city of Egypt, and evidently Pharaoh's seat, for twice in Psalm 78 we have reference to the "marvellous things" and the "wonders," that God wrought "in the field of Zoan" (verses 12 and 43). Hebron became the first seat of the Davidic kingdom that God established. So the closing words of verse 22 may remind us that what God purposes antedates anything man establishes however great and glorious in his eyes.

For forty days the land was searched and the men returned with ample evidence of the fertility of the

land; that it did indeed flow with milk and honey, and bore fruit of exceptional size. The land was fully what God had declared it to be.

To all this the spies bore witness, yet they laid the chief stress upon the walled-up cities and the imposing greatness of the children of Anak. They stated, truly enough, that they were no match for these giants, but being men of no faith they left God completely out of their thoughts: all of them, that is to say, except Caleb and Joshua. In result they measured themselves against the giants and their cities, and communicated their unbelieving fears to the mass of the people.

In verse 30, Caleb alone is mentioned, though we know from the next chapter that his faith was shared by Joshua. Faith looks not only at the difficulties but also at God, in whose presence difficulties are nothing. Hence his word was, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." When, on the banks of the Red Sea they sang, "All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away . . . Thou shalt bring them in . . ." (Exod. 15: 15-17), the people adopted the language of faith in the enthusiasm of the moment, without possessing the faith. How often have we been like them to this extent, that we have sung hymns expressing Christian experience without really having the experience? Such a thing it is very easy to do.

The effect on the people is recorded in the first four verses of chapter 14. Their weeping and their words were the plainest declaration of their unbelief. They murmured against the leaders that God had set

over them, and insinuated that the Lord had let them down by bringing them out of Egypt to place them in an impossible position. The leadership of Moses had recently been questioned by Miriam, as we saw in chapter 12; it is now challenged in a far more serious way. They would reject him and elect a captain of their own, to lead them back to Egypt.

In Exodus 32: 4, we read of the making of the **calf**, that they imagined had brought them up out of Egypt. Now they wish to make a **captain** to take them back. Both these evils are brought together very strikingly in Nehemiah 9: 17, 18, but there the order of them is reversed. It looks as if the provocation in this later case was as great as in the former. To reject a servant, whom God has appointed captain, is tantamount to the rejection of God Himself; though rejecting Him by making a golden calf was a cruder proceeding.

Since the days of the calf no crisis had equalled this in gravity. It threw up into relief four men of faith. Aaron's faith had not the strength of the faith of Moses, but nevertheless with Moses he fell on his face before the congregation. He shared here in the meekness of Moses, since for a man to fall on his face before his opponents is virtually to obliterate himself. As a matter of fact they could not have done a more serious thing. Had they risen to their full height before the people, they would have asserted their authority and accepted the challenge themselves. But the rather, they put themselves out of the matter and left God to take up the challenge. Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes

— the sign of distress and repudiation — and boldly testified to the faithfulness and power of God. God was before their hearts and not the children of Anak. All however to no purpose. The bankruptcy of the people as regards faith was complete.

To this moment Psalm 95 refers, quoted in Hebrews 3 and 4, and there the point is very clearly stressed that **unbelief** lay at the root of all. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." It is necessary to note this, for it shows their case was not one of forfeiting the blessing by backsliding, but of entering professedly into a calling for which they never had faith at all. This is the point of the solemn warnings that have so large a place in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The effacement of Moses cleared the way for God to act, as we see in verses 11 and 12, which plainly indicate the greatness of the sin and what the people deserved. They had provoked the Lord by breaking His law, by rejecting His captain, by disbelieving Him in spite of all the signs He had shown among them. The wages of sin is death, which would have reached them by a pestilence. If God had cut them all off, and maintained a posterity to Abraham according to His promise, by starting afresh through Moses, He would have been doing in principle what He did in destroying mankind by the flood, and yet preserving a posterity to Adam through Noah. But would such a seed through Moses have proved any better than the seed through Noah, or better than the seed through Abraham up to date? The answer,

which the New Testament gives, is NO. We read, "So then they that are in the flesh **cannot** please God" (Rom. 8: 8).

This offer, which the Lord thus made, must have been a real test to Moses. To become the father of a greater and mightier nation must have been a very attractive proposition. It would have been so to the flesh of any man. This makes his reaction to it very remarkable, and we see his meekness manifesting itself in striking fashion. His main thought was not of himself at all but of God and His glory. The rebellion of the people was primarily against God, but secondarily against himself, yet he thought only of how such a drastic judgment would be interpreted by the Egyptians and other surrounding nations; and in view of this and of the declared longsuffering and mercy of God, he boldly besought **pardon**. His plea prevailed and pardon was granted, as regards the death penalty.

Yet this grievous sin entailed **penalties** in the government of God. Verse 21 begins, "But as truly as I live . . ." which is the formula of an oath. The Epistle to the Hebrews, which records the immutable oath made to Abraham, also records how He swore in His wrath, "They shall not enter into My rest." The men who brought an evil report of the land should never enter it. Moreover the very next day the people were to begin a fresh journey, not into the land but away from it, thus starting a weary pilgrimage of no less than forty years, and verse 29 says, "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." The whole sad story might be graphically summed up by

saying — They rejected their unseen God by making a **calf**: they rejected their visible leader in proposing to elect a **captain**; and in result their **carcasses** fell outside the land of promise.

This solemn sentence applied, as verse 29 indicates, to all of twenty years old and upwards, and the little ones, on whose behalf they specially murmured, were the ones who would enter the land. Psalm 90, which is a prayer of Moses, alludes to this when he says, "All our days are passed away in Thy wrath . . . the days of our years are three score years and ten . . ." This would apply in very literal fashion to the people we are considering. The judgment on the ten spies fell at once as verse 37 shows.

The verses that conclude our chapter also have a very instructive word of warning for us. The action of God's government produced a revulsion of feeling among the people. They now acknowledged that they had sinned, but they wished to **evade the penalty** in God's government of them, and they started to go forward instead of going back. This simply meant disaster. Moses and the ark did not leave the camp, and those of the host who acted thus found that God was not acting on their behalf. They were left to their own resources and were heavily smitten.

If God be for us no one can be effectively against us. The converse of this was put most plainly to the disciples by the Lord Jesus when He said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5). A striking example of it is found in Samson. Immediately he disobeyed, and

broke his Nazarite vow, his strength was gone. But illustrations of the fact are everywhere.

The opening words of chapter 15 are certainly remarkable. The people had just been told that their wilderness sojourn was to be prolonged to forty years, and their self-willed effort to evade this, and push their way in immediately, completely repulsed; and the next thing is the issue of regulations to be effective, "when ye be come into the land of your habitations, **which I give unto you.**" In thus speaking, God made it plain that His purpose concerning them stood firm in spite of all that they had done, and that He would ultimately bring them in. The Lord then spoke particularly of certain subsidiary offerings that were to accompany the major offerings, and also of what was to be offered by way of atonement when anyone sinned through ignorance.

Verse 30 deals with presumptuous sins, in despising the word of the Lord, and no offering is prescribed for such. Then an example of such a presumptuous sin is given in the case of the man who broke the sabbath by gathering sticks. He was put to death. This was undoubtedly judgment of a drastic kind.

What is our mental reaction to it? Many unbelievers would denounce it as unwarrantably severe, just as they would the disastrous results that followed the sin of Adam, in eating the forbidden fruit. But sin is lawlessness — the creature asserting its own will and defying the Creator — and the element of defiance is never more pronounced than when the matter involved is only trivial. If Adam had been **forbidden** every tree save

one, instead of being **granted** every tree save one; or if Israel had been in a cold climate, and had not been given bread from heaven, it might have been possible to offer some excuse for both actions. As it was, in both cases the law of God was needlessly defied. To such a case as that before us Hebrews 10: 28 refers. The law was indeed "the ministration of death."

This episode gave rise to the instruction about the fringes and the ribband of blue to be worn on the borders of their garments, with which the chapter closes. It was to be a reminder of the sacredness of the commands of God, and a preservative against the doing of their own wills. As the centuries passed even this was perverted, as Matthew 23: 5 strikingly shows. The Pharisees, who displayed a false piety by enlarging the borders of their garments, were the men who were setting aside the commands of God in favour of their own tradition.

One of the most serious features of the wilderness journey comes before us in chapter 16. The fire of revolt that broke out in chapter 14 was still smouldering and broke out afresh in a new way. It was not now the making of a captain and returning to Egypt, but prominent men in the congregation rising up to challenge the mediatorship of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron; thus challenging the Lord, who had appointed both. Korah, being a Kohathite, belonged to the most distinguished group of the Levites, short of being a priest. Dathan and Abiram sprang from Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, who lost the leadership natural to the firstborn because of his sin. They therefore doubtless

felt they had a grievance.

Moreover, if we refer to the order in which the tribes were to encamp round the tabernacle, as given in chapter 2, and then turn to chapter 3, which gives us similar details as to the Levites, we find that both the tribe of Rueben and the Kohathites were placed on the south side, and as a result of this were close together to discuss and foment their imagined grievances. In claiming that both Moses and Aaron were upstarts, who had presumed to elevate themselves above the congregation, they denied that they were what they were by Divine appointment, using a specious argument.

It was quite true that all the people were "holy;" that is, they were a people that God had set apart for Himself — a fact nevertheless that they were constantly denying in their practices. It was true that the Lord was among them, as the people were very quickly to see in the judgment that followed. They did not realize that in challenging the leaders whom God had chosen, they were challenging God, who had chosen them.

For the second time, as verse 4 tells us, Moses met the situation by falling on his face — standing aside for God to act. Yet he knew what God would do, as we see in verses 5-7. Korah and his company would get their answer from God Himself on the morrow. They were to take censers with fire and incense, and present themselves at the door of the tabernacle, as though they were priests. Dathan and Abiram refused to come up and contented themselves in hurling insults and false accusations against Moses. Verse 19

shows that practically all the people supported Korah in particular. The situation was one of extreme danger.

How God acted is revealed in the middle of the chapter. In the case of Korah the judgment was direct from the hand of God in His dwelling-place. In the case of the others by the providential ordering of the forces of nature. Verse 32 tells us that the **men** belonging to Korah perished with Dathan and Abiram. We have to pass on to chapter 26: 11 to find that the **children** of Korah were not involved in the overthrow. Hence when we get to the Psalms we find a number that are "for the sons of Korah."

The direct allusion to this incident in Jude is very instructive. He traces the progress of the apostasy that he foretells, under three heads. First, "the way of Cain," which was a way of **self-will** in approaching God: He ignored God's way and came in his own way. Second, "the error of Balaam for reward." This was **self-seeking** under cover of religion. Third, "the gainsaying of Core" which was **self-assertion** in the things of God. Jude indicates that when the third stage is reached the opposers will perish. We can see these three stages in the sad history of Christendom. In our day the third has become all too manifest. Prominent religious leaders of our day not only refuse any authority to the writings of Moses and the prophets and the New Testament apostles, but boldly challenge the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The "perishing" that Jude predicts cannot be far off.

Further, it would appear that the Apostle Paul makes reference to this incident in 2 Timothy 2: 19. In our

chapter we have, "The Lord will shew who are His, and who is holy," said by Moses in reply to Korah and his company. In regard to Dathan and Abiram, he had to say, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs." These two utterances foreshadow pretty plainly the apostolic instruction for ourselves, when we are brought face to face with error that challenges the foundations of our faith, and has the effect of overthrowing faith in those who fall under the influence of the error. We are neither sovereign nor omniscient. God is both, and in due season He will manifest who are His. We are however **responsible** to act in conformity with His word, and avoid all complicity in the error and evil.

Here is an illustration of how the Old Testament Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. The fact is, of course, that human nature is the same in all ages. The out-breakings of the flesh, in men three or four thousand years ago under the law, are in their principle the things that the flesh in man will do today, though we are not under the law but under grace.

Being under law, the judgment fell with drastic rapidity in the case we are considering. For Christendom today, being under grace, it is otherwise, and God waits with much longsuffering. Nevertheless of such men, and the state of things they produce, the Apostle Peter has grave things to say, when he writes, "Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Peter 2: 3).

CLEARANCE AND ACCEPTANCE

A. J. POLLOCK.

How deeply important are these two aspects of the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He suffered for sins, "the **JUST for the unjust**, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3: 18). Without the former — **clearance** — how could the believing sinner be sure of his escape from the punishment his sins deserved? Without the latter — **acceptance** — how could he be sure of his standing in relation to God?

An illustration may help to make our meaning clear. Suppose a young man is convicted of serious offences against the law of the land. Suppose further this young man was the son of a bosom friend of the Judge. Strict justice was carried out; the sentence — a heavy fine or a lengthened imprisonment — was given. Out of respect for the memory of his old friend, the Judge determined to pay the fine. This accomplished, the young man was cleared of the offence, and no hand of the law could prevent the young man from walking out of the court a free man. Indeed, if the Judge had sought to hinder him by a single step, he would have been guilty of illegal action.

But suppose that as the young man left the court, he met the Judge in the corridor. The young man, greatly relieved at his clearance, approached the Judge, and offered his hand. The Judge responded by putting his hand behind his back, and looking severely at the young man, said, "Charles, you are cleared. I cannot prevent your leaving the court a free man, but I

am so thoroughly ashamed of you and the dishonour to your dead father's name, that I have nothing more to say to you." The young man, cut to the quick, walked away — **cleared but not accepted**.

But if, instead of acting thus, the Judge had grasped the young man's hand, and said, "Charles, I feel assured from your behaviour in court today that you deeply repent of your misdemeanours, and seeing this, I determined not only to pay the heavy fine, but to adopt you as my own son. Step into my motor-car, and I will take you to your new home and all its amenities are yours.

How delightful would such a situation be, not only **cleared**, but also **accepted**! And yet this is only a very faint picture of the happy position in which the believing sinner finds himself in relation to a Saviour-God.

Scripture itself furnishes in type a wonderful presentation of these two great gospel blessings — **clearance** and **acceptance** — through the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. We refer to Leviticus 1 and 4 — the Burnt Offering, the highest aspect of the death of our Lord, setting forth typically the **acceptance** of the offerer; and the Sin Offering, typifying **clearance**. This latter naturally comes first in the experience of those who seek salvation.

The Sin Offering.

The Sin Offering typified the death of our Lord from the view-

point of the sinner's need. It was an **obligatory** sacrifice because of man's sin. There was no other way for God to offer forgiveness of sins and salvation apart from a suitable substitute, taking the guilty sinner's place, and suffering in his room and stead. "Even so **must** the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3: 14). Hence that bitter cry of intensest anguish, "My God, My God, why hast **Thou** forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27: 46) uttered by our Lord when hanging on the cross of shame and woe, enduring the utmost wrath of God against sin.

The sinless Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, was treated by God as if He were the sinner. The wrath of God the sinner deserved was poured on His Head in fullest measure, satisfying the claims of Divine holiness on the one hand and the sinner's desperate need on the other. "For He [**God**] hath made Him [**Christ**] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5: 21). "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from **all** sin" (1 John 1: 7). In that death the believing sinner has received once and for all a complete cleansing from all sins. What a happy and blessed clearance!

The Burnt Offering

The Burnt Offering typically presents the death of our Lord Jesus Christ from the viewpoint of **The Great Offerer** — "Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9: 14).

Scripture shows in vivid contrast the difference between the Burnt Offering and the Sin Offering. The former was **voluntary**, the latter was **obligatory**.

The Burnt Offering was consumed on the Brazen Altar, as being "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the **Lord**" (Lev. 1: 9). The Sin Offering was carried "outside the camp," and there wholly consumed, showing God's abhorrence of sin, pouring His wrath to the full on the sinner's Substitute.

Again, the Hebrew word rendered Burnt Offering is **olah**, signifying that which goes up to God to His delight as a sweet smelling savour. In the case of the Sin Offering the Hebrew word used is **chattath**, signifying sinfulness, abhorrence on the part of God, hence His wrath in consuming the sacrifice.

The laying on of hands both with the Burnt Offering and the Sin Offering, setting forth the intimate connection of the offerer and the offering, was carried out with a widely different significance. In the case of the Sin Offering, all the **demerit**, all the sinfulness of the offerer was transferred typically to the offering; but in the case of the Burnt Offering all the **merit** and excellence of the sacrifice was typically transferred to the offerer; and in **God's acceptance of the offering the offerer was accepted**, as we read, "It shall be **accepted** for him to make atonement for him" (Lev. 1: 4).

Thus never in all our Lord's life on earth did He stand in greater favour, than when He offered Himself to God in all the perfection of

His holy obedience to God's will. His sacrifice from that point of view went up to God as a sweet smelling savour, securing God's glory in fullest measure. This aspect of our Lord's death when understood by us in the power of the Holy Spirit of God leads inevitably to worship, the very highest Christian privilege on earth, to be taken up in glory in fuller measure for ever and ever. That our Lord thought much of this is seen, when He told the woman at Sychar's well, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4: 23). May we all respond to this more and more!

The following Scriptures give us the fulfilment of the typical Burnt Offering of ancient times. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself [God], according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us **accepted in the Beloved**" (Eph. 1: 5, 6). "For through Him [Christ] we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2: 18). "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1: 12).

Here are our Lord's own words, breathed into His Father's ear, just before He went to the tragedy of the cross with all its unutterable woe. We read, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou,

Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and **hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me**" (John 17: 20-23). How perfectly unbelievable were these words, if they had not proceeded from the lips of the Lord Himself — that we are loved by the Father with the same love wherewith He loves His Son.

It is no wonder that some natives assisting the missionaries in the work of translating the Scriptures into their native tongue, found it impossible at first to believe such high and lofty truth, as is set forth in such passages, as we have just quoted. They declared that the greatest height of privilege would be to lie prostrate before the Saviour, and to be allowed to kiss the soles of His feet. But to be God's children, to be loved with the same love wherewith He loves His Son, they felt could not be true. It is indeed surpassingly wonderful, but when the missionaries assured the natives that these words were the words of God, with the tears of wonder and gratitude on their cheeks, they translated this wonder of wonders into their native tongue.

How feeble is the response the best of us make to such love! We can indeed wonderingly re-echo the words of the Psalmist: "Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psa. 66: 12).

STANDING, STATE AND SERVICE

F. B. HOLE.

THAT the creature has been called into existence to serve the will and pleasure of the Creator is a statement that hardly requires proof, yet the fact is plainly stated in Scripture, when we read, "O Lord . . . Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4: 11). When this sinks into our hearts, we begin to realize how great is the havoc produced by sin, in that corner of the universe into which it has entered.

Now, sin is "lawlessness," as 1 John 3: 4 should read. It is the creature asserting itself against the Creator, declining to be subject, striking out to do its own will and pleasure. At the outset and for many centuries rebellious man was left to himself, when he lapsed into such a state of violence and corruption that the earth had to be cleansed by the flood. In the succeeding centuries conditions rapidly deteriorated, with the added menace of idolatry. This state of affairs God met by calling out one man, Abraham, and from him raising up a nation, that should be under His special instruction.

When He sent Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, God said to him, "Ye shall **serve God** upon this mountain" (Exod. 3: 12). During the controversy with Pharaoh the word repeatedly was, "Let My people go, that they may **serve Me.**" And when the people were at Sinai, the word was, "Ye shall **serve** the Lord your God" (Exod. 23: 25). The law was given that the people might know God's will for them, and serve by obeying it.

But one thing the law was not designed to do. It did indeed give them a certain standing as the acknowledged people of God, but it could not produce within them that state, which would dispose them to obey. As the Apostle Paul writes, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. 3: 21); and there is no righteousness in the creature save in obedience to the Creator. So, if we are to serve God, we must not only have an assured **standing** before Him but also be endowed with a spiritual **state**, which enables us to do His will.

What the law could not do or provide has reached those of us who have believed the Gospel of our salvation, and who have consequently been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1: 13). Let us observe how this is worked out in the Epistle to the Romans.

The opening verses of chapter 5 not only declare our justification by faith, in virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ, which means we are cleared from all imputation of guilt before the throne of God, but speak also of "this grace [or, favour] wherein we stand." Our standing is in the favour of God, but inasmuch as there is nothing appealing to sight, in us or about us, declaring this wonderful fact, we only at present have access into it by **faith**. When the Lord has come and we are glorified with Him, the favour in which we stand will be manifest to the **sight** of all.

In the latter part of chapter 5,

further light is cast upon this favour in which we stand. We have received reconciliation by our Lord Jesus Christ, and even beyond this, He has become to us a new Fountain of life. Before conversion we were just living in the natural life we had derived by generation from Adam; now we have been brought into that "justification of life," of which verse 18 speaks, and look forward to "reign in life by One, Jesus Christ" (verse 17). In short, our standing before God is now "in Christ Jesus," and it is so stated in verse 1 of chapter 8. Our standing is of surpassing wonder; "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1: 6). Our service, then, without a doubt, must have an elevated character in keeping with it.

Consequently, we do not travel far into chapter 6 before we are confronted with the obligation to "walk in newness of life" (verse 4). We pass on into chapter 7, and in verse 6 find we are to serve in "newness of spirit." This is the obligation laid upon us, and the basis for it is found in the death and resurrection of Christ, both in chapter 6, and in the beginning of chapter 7. For us there is deliverance both from the service of sin and the bondage of the law. We have become "the servants of righteousness," and "servants to God."

This new and holy service is set before us as flowing from our new standing in Christ Jesus. This doubtless we all acknowledge, but at the same time we have to confess that at the outset we found ourselves painfully unable to serve as we desired. Hence the experience which the Apostle details for us in

the latter part of chapter 7. The flesh is still in us and proves its strength, so that we have to say, "when I would do good, evil is present with me." To dwell upon this painful experience is not our present object, but rather to pass on into chapter 8, where is expounded the Christian **state**, that corresponds to and is connected with the Christian **standing**.

The deliverance which is at last found, by the "wretched man" of chapter 7, is "through Jesus Christ our Lord," but also it is wrought in the energy of the Spirit of God. The believer receives the Spirit in order that He may take control. Too often we think of Him only as One who comforts us and is a Helper in our infirmities. He is all this, but He is more. Just as Christ is our sovereign Lord on high so the Spirit holds sovereign rights within us. The word "law" in verse 2 of chapter 8, has the significance it carries when we speak of "the laws of the universe," meaning thereby certain forces, ordained by the Creator, that exercise their power uniformly and constantly.

We have a new life — "life in Christ Jesus." But not only so, we have the Spirit, who gives energy to that life, indwelling us. And it is His controlling power that sets us free in experience and practice from the power of sin and death, that used to control us in our unconverted days; and that, apart from the control of the Spirit, would still work havoc in the life of service to God to which we are dedicated.

In keeping with this, we find the further statement in chapter 8 that while "they that are in the flesh

cannot please God," we are not "in the flesh, but in the Spirit," if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in us (verses 8 and 9). He indwells us that He may control us, giving us the capacity to walk in newness of life and serve in newness of spirit, producing thus within us a **state** that corresponds to our **standing** without. If "in Christ Jesus" expresses our standing, "in the Spirit" expresses our state.

The flesh still being in us, we may all too easily pander to it, and thus grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption, and this to our spiritual loss. We may also lose the sense and confidence of our standing in Christ, also to our spiritual loss, but no failure of this sort on our side impairs what God has wrought in His wonderful grace. In Christ we stand, no matter what our feelings may be. If we sow to the flesh we shall of the flesh reap corruption, but the Spirit as the Comforter abides with us forever, and if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. In Him we possess the power that enables us rightly to serve God.

Hence, though we have our service mentioned in chapters 6 and 7 of the Epistle to the Romans, it is not until the proper Christian state is revealed, in chapter 8, that the thought of our service is unfolded in detail. Immediately we reach chapter 12 it comes before us. The first step is the presenting of our bodies as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," which is described as our "reasonable," or "intelligent" service.

For every one of us the body is the vehicle of thought, speech and

action, but it is the Spirit of God who is to control us and not the body. The body is to be livingly devoted to God, as of old sacrifices were devoted to Him in death; and, thus devoted, the ways of the world cease to form us, our very minds are renewed; and doing the will of God, we prove how good, acceptable and perfect that will is. The way of God is ever to work from the within to the without. The diversion from the way of the world to proving for oneself the good way of God, is not something imposed upon us from without, but something produced as the fruit of the renewing of the mind within.

The rest of chapter 12, together with chapters 13, 14 and the early verses of 15, all give us the various forms that the service of God may take, in regard to ourselves, our fellow-Christians, governments, and the world without generally. Verse 18 of chapter 14 may be taken as applying to all these forms of service, inasmuch as they all lead practically to "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," which is the outcome of the service of Christ.

The Christian standing being of so elevated a character, and the Christian state being so far in advance of what was possible before the work of Christ was accomplished and the Spirit was given to indwell believers, it is not surprising to find that the service opened out to us has a character about it that was not known in earlier days. Like the Thessalonians we serve "the living and true God," who has been revealed to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be it remembered that though we distinguish between our standing and our state and consider them separately, we do not divide between them, as though it were possible to have one without the other. They go together. The entrance of sin shattered man's original standing before his Creator. It also disrupted him internally; his innocence was

lost and sin began to reign in his mortal body. In the work of Christ and in the gift of the Spirit both these disasters have been met, and **much more than met.**

Let us see that in the grace and power of what God has thus effected, our lives are devoted to the service of our Lord.

GOD'S PRESENT MINISTRY

J. WILSON SMITH.

(Reprint of a paper first published many years ago).

IT seems to me that, in a gracious superiority to all the petty conflicts and jarring voices of the day, the Spirit of God continues to unfold the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ to the hearts of His blood-bought people everywhere. For this is ever His ministry. "He shall take of Mine" (said our Lord in John 16), "and shall show it unto you." This ministry proceeds throughout the centuries, be they dark or bright; and, in thus bearing witness to our rejected Master, the Spirit of God works continuously. He will not be hindered by the power of sin or Satan. He is God. Now this is full of encouragement, and happy it is, in days admittedly dark and difficult, to trace His working, and to discover that the enemy is far from having things all his own way.

We are too prone, alas! to regard the triumph of evil and get under its power. This is depressing. It is not faith in God, but the result of looking at things seen and temporal with consequent feebleness.

"We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5: 7), and God

would have us regard "the work of His hand," and in so doing be strengthened. Now there is no question in the minds of those who have taken the trouble to appraise events, that during these later years there has been an unprecedented ministry of Christ, both as to the value of His death and resurrection, and also of His personal glories, whether as Son of God or Son of Man. He has been the theme and subject-matter, as never since apostolic times, of His more intelligent servants everywhere. Christ has been preached with a fulness unknown for long, and this, it is needless to say, is the direct and blessed work of the Spirit of God.

That He was loved and cherished, and followed by many a faithful heart through ages dark and cruel, we can easily trace. The page of history sparkles with the devoted lives and martyr-deaths of hosts to whom Christ was more precious than all things here. Of these the world was not worthy. They paved the way amid the darkness of their surroundings for the light which shines

on us today — a light so little appreciated!

The glorious Reformation (so called) was that work of God which drew universal attention to the work of Christ, and of our justification by faith thereby. This poured a perfect flood of light over the face of Christendom, and made the Word of God a new Book to countless numbers. It was the dawn of a holy liberty, and a death-blow to the corruptions of Rome. But what need to hold fast that which we have! What need to stand fast in that liberty and to hold to the Word of God! But, then, is our liberty everything? Can we feed on our own personal emancipation alone? Does the knowledge of justification (however precious) suffice for the soul? Has God no further revelation?

He has! What is redemption without the Redeemer, or salvation without the Saviour? What is the servant without his Lord? or the church without its Head?

Nay, what is Christianity without that Christ who, on ascending to the right hand of God, sent down the Holy Ghost to baptize into one body all who believed the Gospel, and to be the power of life and testimony in the saints till Christ shall take all hence to be for ever with Himself in the Father's House?

Absolutely nothing! As well have the solar system without the great and all essential orb of day. This were impossible. "A pleasant thing it is to behold the sun," and a far greater pleasure it is for the saints

of God to hear of the deep, boundless glories of His eternal Son!

I am bold to say that these glories have been, and are, the specific testimony of the Spirit of God during the last and undoubtedly closing years of this dispensation. The best wine comes last although contained in the original "firkin." The Word of God has His Son for the highest theme.

Nor do I doubt that this ministry is having the present effect of reuniting at least the hearts of great numbers of saints, who see in it something beyond traditions and mere ecclesiasticism, something that will eventually bind their hearts and minds and tongues together in common and eternal adoration in heaven.

Pity, a thousand times over, that such adoration should be broken up into fragments today by the unhappy "shibboleths" and warring factions into which the church is now divided! But, thank God, today will quickly pass, and then and for ever one all-commanding Object will fill our gaze, and bring about that concentration on Himself, who is the One Shepherd of the one flock and the Head of the one Body, which in our every heart we so ardently desire, and which, amid other things, He died to accomplish.

He "died for our sins" indeed, but notice He also "died to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad;" and the fulfilment of this is certain. That unity is bound to be brought about;

only may each of us seek, in his prayers, and ways and associations, to give personal effect to it now.

How cheering, how stimulating is

the truth! This is, most assuredly, part — and a very great part — of the ministry of the Spirit of God today.

SECTARIANISM REBUKED

J. HOUSTON.

THE Corinthians had fallen into a low moral state. This gave occasion to their disorderly walk, which called for censure, with an appeal to their consciences to amend their ways. It was with this ministry of **correction** that the Apostle had to occupy himself in this Epistle to them.

Pride, which so often ruins Christians in their testimony, wrought havoc amongst the Corinthians. They were "puffed up," and "reigned as kings," and in this inflated state, they were insensible to, and consequently unconcerned about, the gross sin of immorality in their midst, as chapter 5 shows. There were also other disorders, for which they were blameworthy. Thus pride, when it is allowed to act, blinds the eyes of Christians, so that they do not see what is due to God, while they bear His holy Name, and draw nigh to Him in His sanctuary. Holiness becomes His house for ever; and He will be sanctified in them that draw nigh to Him (see, *Psa. 93: 5; Lev. 10: 3*). His word to His people in all dispensations is, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (*1 Pet. 1: 16*).

The Epistle may be divided into two parts: from chapter 1 to 10: 13; then from 10: 14 to the end. The former is occupied with what concerns the house of God; the latter

with the body of Christ. The Church is the house of God, through the Spirit; and also the body of Christ, as united to Him the Head. The great thought of the house is **holiness** and **order**; and that of the body, **unity**. All through the Epistle we find truth connected with these facts clearly taught and insisted upon, calling for the obedience of all Christians everywhere. The Epistle is therefore universal in its scope and application, being addressed to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (*1 Cor. 1: 2*).

Before the Apostle takes notice of the evils into which the Corinthians had fallen, he presents the Church at Corinth, as seen in the light of God's purpose. It was, "The church of God . . . them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called . . . saints." This was how God saw His own work, perfect and infallible; and it is thus that faith sees it, and rests on it at all times, be the failure of man what it may.

The apostle also took notice of what God had done for the Corinthians, and what He would continue to do, till they were presented blameless in the day of Christ. They were enriched by Him in all utterance and in all knowledge; so much so, that they came behind in

no gift, waiting for the coming of Christ. God was **faithful**, however **unfaithful** they might be; and it was He who had called them into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Having made God's side clear, where there is no failure, the Apostle turned to man's side, where, alas! failure invariably is found. The first evil that met his eye was that of sectarianism. The Corinthians were dividing themselves into parties. Every one of them said: "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." Notice, they even made Christ the Head of a sect, as if He could be divided. How ignorant, and indeed shameless, is unbelief! They were forming schools of thought amongst themselves, much in the same way as did pagan philosophers. Pride was of course at the root of it all, with a pretension to wisdom, which was not of God but of the world.

Man, acting in pride and independence of God, arrogates the right **to think for himself**. Further, he **thinks for others**, who fall under his influence and follow him. Thus a school of thought is formed. It is all on the basis of **independent** thought, which is wilfulness and disobedience, the root principle of sin. Obedience on the contrary does the will of God, who alone has the right to an independent will.

The Corinthians were to speak the same thing, and be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. The word "same" is used three times in verse 10. It excludes everything of "**difference**,"

which is the opposite of "**same**." The Apostle will allow nothing of difference to exist in the Church, though there is diversity, as we see later on. He says, "**Who maketh thee to differ from another?**" (4: 7). If then difference is disallowed, since things are to be the same, there cannot properly be a composing of differences between one sect and another.

Mere agreement between two or more sects to surmount barriers by an amalgamation is wrong in principle. Sects, joined together by mere agreement, **still remain a sect**. Paul did not tell the followers of Apollos to be joined with those of Cephas. He showed to all of them that the Church was the body of Christ, in a unity, made by the Spirit, which allowed of no division. To this we must adhere by faith, and give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. We do not **make** unity; we keep by faith the unity that is **already made** by the Spirit in the body.

Then the Apostle is careful to show that the wisdom of the world, of which the Corinthians thought so much, had no place in the Church. The Spirit of God taught another wisdom, even the wisdom of God; a hidden wisdom, of which the princes of this world knew nothing. The Spirit of God searched these secret things, hidden in God's wisdom, and **revealed** them through the apostles to the Church. It was too by the same Spirit that these secret things were **communicated** to others; and also by whom others **received** them. Thus all was by the same Spirit,

who led the saints into all truth. And thus it must be; for, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

Paul would not use "excellency of speech," "enticing words," persuasive reasoning, or any such carnal things, when he declared to the Corinthians the testimony of God; so that their faith might not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. And as a chosen vessel, to bear the testimony of God to others, among whom the wisdom

of men had place, he was in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling — completely emptied of all that might mar the testimony he bore, so that it might be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. After all, it was **power** that counted and not **mere words**. How thankful we should be to have such instruction from God, in the Scripture, so that we may know how to act in reference to any service He may give us to do for His glory, and for the good of others.

BIBLE STUDY—NUMBERS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 16: 36—19: 22)

THE gravity of the sin of Korah and his company is emphasized by the instructions the Lord gave Moses, as recorded in verses 36-40. There was to be a perpetual reminder of their sin by their censers being made into a covering of the altar, composed of broad plates. For so long as the altar was thus covered no sacrifice for sin could be offered, and evidently the gainsaying of Korah, which was sin of a most wilful kind, had placed him beyond the reach of a sin offering.

The solemn warning that we have in Hebrews 10: 26, 27, may possibly be a reference to this incident. The words, "judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" would point to this. As we read earlier in our chapter, Korah and his company were "gathered together against the Lord;" that is, in challenging Aaron they had committed themselves to the position of adversaries against the Lord, who had appointed him. As Jude indicates in his Epistle a simi-

lar thing on a much larger scale will take place in Christendom just before the appearing of Christ. Many will gather together "against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psa. 2: 2, 3).

The closing verses of our chapter show that the spirit displayed by Korah, Dathan and Abiram had infected the whole congregation. In the presence of these displays of the power of God in judgment, they stubbornly refused to see the hand of God and accused Moses and Aaron, as though they had done these things by some occult power. They either could not, or would not, see the act of God. Truly they were "children in whom is no faith" (Deut. 32: 20).

Their rebellion was such that the Glory of the Lord appeared, ready to destroy them. For the third time in this chapter we find Moses fallen on his face. With God-given fore-

sight he realized what would happen, and directed Aaron to act as intercessor in a very striking way. The censers of Korah and his company had been decisively rejected. Now the **one censer**, divinely appointed in the hands of Aaron, avails to stay the plague between the dead and the living. Whether the 14,700 who died were special leaders in the evil we are not told. Sin is lawlessness—rebellion against God. And the wages of sin is death. The whole incident emphasizes this.

In Hebrews 3: 1, we are bidden to consider the Lord Jesus as both Apostle and High Priest. We have just seen both these offices challenged in their typical representatives — Moses and Aaron. The apostleship of Moses was continually being demonstrated, inasmuch as he was clearly the sent one of Jehovah, through whom all the Divine communications were made. The priesthood of Aaron was established at a later date, and needed to be reinforced in the minds of the people. Hence, this is what took place, as recorded in chapter 17.

There is no eliminating the miraculous from the early history of Israel. When God inaugurates a new dispensation, He manifests His power in such supernatural ways that men have to recognize the finger of God. It was so here. A rod is dead, being a stick severed from the living tree. Twelve such dead things, each with the name of a tribe on them, were laid up in the tabernacle before the Lord. On the rod of Levi the name of Aaron was written. The next morning eleven of the sticks were unchanged in their dead state. The twelfth, that of

Aaron, was living and even fruitful, since it not only blossomed but bore almonds. Now the almond tree is one of the earliest to bear fruit. In Jeremiah 1: 11, 12, there is a play on its name, which is almost the same as the word translated "hasten" in verse 12.

It may well be that we today can see more in the details of this incident than was apparent even to Moses, when it happened. Certain it is that it has typical meaning, and hence the fact, that the rod in which life out of death was displayed was to be laid up for a testimony, is mentioned in Hebrews 9: 4, as well as here. What was conclusive in those days was that the earthly priesthood was vested in Aaron and his sons, and in no one else, so that all question and murmuring among the people on that point might effectively be stilled.

What we can see is a foreshadowing of the fact that the Priesthood of our Lord Jesus springs out of His death and resurrection, and hence it is His "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7: 16). In the type there were not only buds and blossoms but fruit also, as we have noted, and in the Priesthood of Christ we find the guarantee of abiding fruitfulness.

We say this, thinking of such a scripture as 1 Peter 2: 4-9. True, the figure there is different, "Stone," and not "Fruit." But we lay the stress upon "**living**," both as regards Him and ourselves. Coming to Him as the living One, we become living ones, and as such are constituted priests, both "holy" and "royal." The Christian priest-

hood is not a dead, nor merely ritualistic thing. It is in the power of a life which is derived from Him — “the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb. 7: 28). It all hangs upon Him, and the eternal character of His priesthood guarantees the stability of all that He supports to all eternity.

Two things were now quite plain; that, on the one hand, this earthly priesthood had been vested by God in Aaron and his house; on the other hand, that the mass of the people had definitely committed themselves as “rebels.” In verse 10, God speaks of them as such. In the two verses that close the chapter we see them still displaying the rebel spirit. The Lord had just ordered the rod to be preserved as a token so that their murmurings and liability to instant death might be taken away. They at once unbelievably counter this by crying out that the presence of the Lord in His tabernacle brought death upon them.

This reminds us of the argument of the Apostle in Romans 7: 7-14. The tendency of sinners under the law was to try to throw the blame of their plight on the law. But the law was holy, just and good. The mischief has been wrought by sin, and the blame lies there and on the sinner. So it was here. The people found the presence of Jehovah in His tabernacle a menace, and wished to blame it and Him. The blame lay in themselves and in their rebellious hearts.

The whole of chapter 18 is occupied with regulations as to the offices of both priest and Levite. It is not difficult to see how appropriately these things come in at this

point. The priesthood had just been most conclusively confirmed to Aaron and his house, and the rest of the tribe of Levi confirmed in their proper place. Their responsibilities and their privileges are now clearly defined.

And first of all their responsibilities as we might expect, seeing they were under the law. The first 24 verses of the chapter were spoken directly to Aaron without the intervention of Moses, and he was told that he and his sons had to “bear the iniquity of the sanctuary,” and also of the priesthood. It is obvious, of course, that there was no iniquity attaching to the sanctuary itself, yet it was in the midst of a people marked by much iniquity, and the onus and weight, not only of their own errors but also of the errors and defilements of the people, when they touched matters of the sanctuary, would rest on the shoulders of the priests.

In verses 2-6, the responsibilities of the Levites are stated. They were to keep their charge, ministering to the priests, as given to them by the Lord, but they were not to touch the priest's office. To the priests belonged activities which were typical of worship, whilst to the Levites service was apportioned. The believer today is privileged to engage in both worship and service, and, being not under law but under grace, we are established in our privileges first, and then called upon to face our responsibilities.

In verses 8-20, we find what the Lord ordained for the maintenance of the priests and their families. We may sum it up by saying they were to live of certain parts of the sacri-

fices brought by the people — parts that were not consumed upon the altar. These things devoted to God were to have their sacred character preserved. Of certain sacrifices what remained was to be eaten only by the priests and in the holy place. What remained of others was to be shared by the whole of the families, sons and daughters alike, with the one stipulation that they were clean.

In all this we again see a type. Today the Christian in his priestly character may offer spiritual sacrifices to God, but in so doing he receives spiritual food for himself. Some of it we may enjoy outside the sanctuary in our domestic life, and some may be ours rather in the sanctuary of God's presence; but it is a point to remember that God has linked together what we offer to Him in the way of worship and what we receive from Him in the way of our spiritual upkeep.

We must not miss the point that is made in verse 20. Though it was a day in which God was leading a people into an earthly inheritance, there was no such inheritance for Aaron and his house. In verses 23 and 24, we find the Levites also had no inheritance among the tribes. They were devoted to the service of God, and though dwelling-places were assigned to them, they did not have a special part of the land allotted to them, for the call of God separated them from the common people. Today our calling is not to an earthly inheritance but to a heavenly, so we are not surprised to see in 1 Peter 2, that having been told of our priesthood, both "holy" and "royal," we are addressed as "strangers and pilgrims." Being brought so closely into touch with

God, our old links with the world-system are severed.

Verse 22 of our chapter makes the separate place of Aaron and the Levites the more pronounced. The mass of the people were not to come near the tabernacle. The word, "henceforth," shows that previously they had come nearer than was now to be permitted, since their "rebel" character had been so sadly manifested.

The verses that close the chapter give us details as to the system of tithing that was instituted. The twelve tribes were to give one tenth of their produce to God, and He handed it to the children of Levi as a reward for the service they gave Him, and thus they were to be amply provided for. Had the twelve tribes been about equal in numbers and possessions, then taking for the produce of each tribe 100 as a basis for calculation, each would have been reduced to 90, whereas the Levites would have received 120. But against this the Levites were to offer in sacrifice to the Lord a tithe of the very best they received, and this would reduce that which was for their personal use to 108. This short calculation may help to show us that God does not mean to underpay His servants.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 14), and we may see how the Lord did so by saying, "The workman is worthy of his meat" (Matt. 10: 10). This law concerning the tithes often seemed burdensome to Israelites. In a time of revival things went happily enough as recorded in

Nehemiah 12: 41-47. But in the very next chapter we see decline and neglect, and this increased until we get such a rebuke as is recorded in Malachi 3: 8-10.

As Christians we are not under the law but under grace, still we feel the rightness of what is often stated — that our response to grace bestowed should not fall below the level of response to the demands of law, but rather exceed it. Did all Christians give, as the Lord has prospered them, to the Lord and His service — leaving the support of the world's schemes, even the "good" and "charitable" ones, to the world that initiates them, and that can easily support them — there would be no lack for the genuine service of God.

As we leave chapter 18, we cannot but recognize how perfect a system was established in Israel for the support of God's throne in the tabernacle and of the priests and Levites who served there. All that was wanted was that order of "life" in the children of Israel, that would have disposed them to walk in obedience. Says the Apostle, "If there had been a law given which could have given life . . ." (Gal. 3: 21), then all might have been well. As things were, the law failed to accomplish what was desired, "in that it was weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3). The material on which it operated was flesh, which is dead toward God. The Christian is indwelt by "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and this makes all the difference, while it increases our responsibility.

In chapter 19, we have the provision that was made, so that any who

contracted defilement should not be excluded permanently from the congregation of the Lord. It is an important type inasmuch as it sets forth the washing of water by the word, of which the New Testament speaks, but which is too often overlooked by us. In Hebrews 9: 13, we read of, "the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean" which "sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;" that is, the bodies of men. In contrast to this the passage goes on to speak of the purging of **the conscience**, which is what we have today.

If the chapter be read with care it will be noticed that this slaying of the heifer is not spoken of as something to be repeated. What was to be repeated was the application of the water brought into contact with the ashes. As far as the type goes the heifer was sacrificed once for all — a fitting type of the sacrifice of Christ. The blood was sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle, while the body of the animal was burnt to ashes.

Now fire is typical of the searching judgment of God, and into the fire, when the heifer was burned, went cedar and hyssop and scarlet. Solomon spoke of trees from the cedar to hyssop, so evidently we have here the most lordly in the vegetable world and the most humble. Scarlet also seems typical of human glory. In type then we see all human glory from the greatest to the least consumed in the sacrifice of Christ. The reality indicated was expressed by Paul when he wrote of the Cross of Christ, "by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"

(Gal. 6: 14). The glory of the world was consumed in his eyes.

No type however gives the fulness of the reality typified. Here the fire totally consumed the sacrifice. We rejoice in the knowledge that, as far as we are concerned, Christ as the Victim has consumed the fire! This work has been accomplished once for all. The once shed blood was presented in sevenfold completeness before the tabernacle, which reminds us that the blood of Christ abides before God in its eternal value.

In the type the holiness of the whole proceeding was emphasized. Only those who were ceremonially "clean" had anything to do with its administration on behalf of the unclean. It is striking that all through the particular form of uncleanness mentioned is that of contacting death in various forms — a dead body, a bone, a grave. Yet the water into which some of the ashes had been put is spoken of as "a water of separation" and "a purification for sin." We carry still the flesh in us, upon which the sentence of death rests, to say nothing of living in a world of men who are dead in trespasses and sins.

How often then do we need this purification for sin; not now the cleansing from all sin, which is ours by the blood of Christ, giving us a never-to-be-forfeited and never-to-be-repeated standing in righteous-

ness before the throne of God, but that cleansing of thought and heart and ways, that fits us to live in happy communion with God. We need it again and again; daily, we may say. This, we believe, is the cleansing that is typified here.

Twice in our chapter — verses 13 and 20 — is it stated that if defilement was incurred and the defiled person refused or neglected this "water of separation," he would be cut off from the congregation, which would mean he was outside the camp and debarred the ordinary privileges of the Israelites. So let us take to heart that except we experience this repeated cleansing we forfeit communion with God, and may ultimately lose practical communion with the people of God.

And how does this repeated cleansing reach us? Ephesians 5: 26 speaks of "the washing of water by the word." Again in John 13 we have the washing of water in the symbolic action of the Lord in the Upper Chamber, the meaning of which becomes plain if we read John 15: 3. In Numbers 19 it is water that had been brought into contact with the ashes of the heifer. For us it is the word which is saturated, if we may so say, with the death of our Saviour and all that it signifies. As the significance of His death touches our hearts they are cleansed from all that is contrary to it. Happy are we if we know the cleansing power of the word of God.

Roman Catholicism makes the relation of the believer to Christ to depend on his relation to the Church; Scripture makes the relation of the believer to the Church to depend on his relation to Christ.

GOD'S CARE OF HIS OWN

A. J. POLLOCK.

WE have often pondered over the petition, "**Give us this day our daily bread,**" occurring in what is commonly called, The Lord's Prayer, recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. This prayer was given by our Lord to His disciples as a model prayer. The introductory remark in giving it, "**After this manner therefore pray ye,**" clearly proves this. Moreover, it was given in view of bitter persecution that would arise, when once our Lord was rejected, crucified and slain. Reading down the Beatitudes, Matthew 5: 4-12 shows this clearly. We read, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The Sermon on the Mount is universally admired for its ethical teachings. It is almost as universally misinterpreted. Such, as do so, admire the ethical teachings, and ignore the Person, who gave utterance to them, and how they were spoken in anticipation of His rejection by the Jewish nation, the instructions being given to His disciples as to their behaviour in His absence. To keep this in mind is essential to a right understanding of the prayer.

Many see no inconsistency in putting this ethical teaching into the mouths of heathen idolaters, as if it fitted in with their religious beliefs. The writer experienced a vivid example of this. On board ship in

tropical waters, a service was arranged to be held on the upper deck in the evening under powerful lights to discuss Christianity. A very mixed audience was present, including Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsees, etc. The leader of the discussion was a professed Christian. He based the whole defence of Christianity on the Sermon on the Mount. In doing so, he made not the slightest allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ, His Person, or His atoning work on the cross of Calvary. He avoided stressing the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Of course nothing he said was calculated to offend the religious susceptibilities of the various shades of heathen beliefs, that were present. If he had proclaimed the true meaning of the Sermon on the Mount, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Author of it, had he stressed the vital necessity for His atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, things would have been far different. What was praised as the breadth of the views of the leader of the discussion was in reality the very betrayal of Christianity. Thank God, there were present vital Christians, who upheld the truth in all its purity.

Our Lord in view of His absence spoke of His disciples as "the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5: 13) in a corrupt world; as "the light of the world" (Matt. 5: 14), truly in the midst of dense moral darkness. The true meaning of the Sermon on the Mount can only raise the bitterest opposition in a corrupt and benighted world.

In such circumstances how the tender care of our Lord for His own shines out most clearly in the petition, "**Give us this day our daily bread.**" It is easy to have a well-filled purse, and enter a well-stocked shop, and purchase what we need. It is quite another thing to be like the persecuted saints, described in Hebrews 11: 32-40, where we read of persecutions, scourgings, imprisonments, afflictions, wanderings in deserts, in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, when every single meal would be a matter of anxious wonderment, whence it was to come. How unspeakably comforting to have the ear of One, who loves, who knows, who cares, who is omnipotent, and who has the hearts of all men in His power.

We would call attention to another somewhat similar instance in Scripture. We read the inspired words of the Apostle Paul, "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. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time**" (1 Tim. 2: 1-6).

Note the extreme urgency of this exhortation. To the words, "**first**

of all" are added supplications, that is **intense** prayer, intercessions for others, and giving of thanks. The answer earnestly desired is that Christians might be able to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. This exhortation was framed in view of Christians living in a godless world. An unconverted master might instruct his Christian employee to do something dishonest in pursuance of his business. Hence we can understand the petition, that we might carry out our earthly calling in all godliness **and honesty**. And further we lose the proper understanding of Scripture, if our prayers are circumscribed to our own little corner, where things in a way may be going on fairly smoothly.

No, our earnest prayers are to go out to all men the world over. How many places there are in the world, even at this very time, where God's people are being persecuted. This prayer should be made for ALL men, that they may be restrained from making it difficult for Christians to find suitable employment, where they may earn that which is necessary for their support in the things of this life.

Then as masses of men put rulers at the heads of states, be they kings, princes, presidents or the like, we are exhorted to pray for those in high places of government to a similar end. How many parts of the world there are, where it is humanly impossible for a heathen man publicly embracing Christianity, to be able to earn his living. On the other hand, to show how

God can influence those, whom He will, He could say of a heathen king, Cyrus, king of Persia, "He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built: and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa. 44: 28). We know how it bore fruit in the days of Zerubabel and Ezra, in that nearly 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem from the land of their captivity, thus laying the foundation of a nation, in which our Lord was born at Bethlehem.

We read also that God will have all men to be saved and to come to

the knowledge of the truth. Christians are the only people in this dark and sinful world, who are qualified to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God worldwide. This earnest exhortation should make every Christian wish to spread the Gospel, the opportunities for which are boundless. Christians are left in this world for a purpose. Do we fulfil it?

This Scripture not only shows that God cares for His own, but that He also cares for the souls of men, and would use His people in the furtherance of His gracious designs for their eternal blessing.

RECONCILIATION

G. S. HEPBURN.

THREE things are true of every member of Adam's fallen race—they are sinners before God, they are more or less under the power of sin and Satan, and, worse than all else, they are enemies of God. A dreadful condition surely; but in the Gospel of God concerning His Son a perfect answer to it all is provided. When that Gospel is believed the sinner is justified and has peace with God; the captive is delivered and set free; the enemy is reconciled to God; and all in virtue of the work accomplished by God's Son when He died on the cross of Calvary.

In the remarks that follow I would draw attention to the truth of reconciliation as found in the writings of the Apostle Paul.

In Romans 5: 10, we read, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of

His Son." Not only has that death met the righteous claims of God against the sinner, and given relief to his guilty conscience, but in it God's love to the sinner has been revealed. "God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). And that love, shed abroad in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit, breaks down all the enmity and rebellion, and right relations are formed, the heart having been reached, and the affections won, so much so that the erstwhile enemy can now be, and is, designated as one who loves God (see Rom. 8: 28).

And such find their joy in God, not only in what He has done for them, though He has indeed "done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126: 3), nor simply because of what He has given,

though surely He has given all that love could give, but because of what He is, as revealed in the death of His Son. Hence we read, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the **reconciliation**," as Romans 5: 11 should read. What a mighty transformation!

In Corinthians the truth of reconciliation is linked up with that of New Creation. Man after the flesh has been judged and removed from before God in the death of Christ, so much so that we read, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh: yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath **reconciled** us to Himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 16-18). How important to realize that nothing of what we are, as after the flesh, has any place in what we are as in Christ, and thus reconciled to God, we may know what it is to live and move in a sphere where all is new and of God.

In Ephesians also we have new creation and reconciliation brought together. All distinctions in the flesh having been ended at the cross Jew and Gentile alike are subjects of new creation work "to make [**create**, same word as in verse 10] in Himself of twain **one new man**, so making peace" (Eph. 2: 15). The old adage, "It takes two to make a quarrel," is true. Further, "That He might **reconcile** both unto God in one body by the cross,

having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2: 14-18). Sinners are **justified**. It is enemies that are **reconciled**. In verse 15 the enmity was between Jew and Gentile, but in verse 16 it is against God, in both cases where enmity was, peace has been established by the cross.

Lastly in Colossians we find that things, as well as persons, will yet be reconciled. "It pleased the Father that in Him [**the Son of the Father**] should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1: 19, 20). This looks on to the eternal state. Not even in this world, or the age to come, age of glory though it be, shall this be fully realized. In it, though sin and death be the exception to the rule, not yet will they be non-existent (see Isa. 65: 20). And no sooner will Satan be loosed from the chain by which he has been bound during the age to come, than men, numbering as the sand of the sea for multitude, will range themselves under his banner, and march against the camp of the saints, and the beloved city, as rebellious against God as ever (Rev. 20: 7-9). Needless to say, such have not even been born again, much less reconciled.

But in the opening verses of Revelation 21: 1-5, Satan having been consigned to the lake of fire, never again to be let loose, the present heaven and earth shall have passed away, we read of a new heaven and a new earth brought

into being as a new creation. Sin, which is rampant today, shall have been put away in fulfilment of John 1: 29, and Hebrews 9: 26. Death, the result of sin, shall no longer exist, nor any of the things that sin and death bring in their train — sorrow, crying, tears, pain. In a word, a universe is called into being in which the Godhead can rest with complacency.

And nothing less than this would suffice to adequately set forth the perfection, the magnitude and the universal results of the work accomplished by the Son of the Father's love, when He shed His blood on

the cross of Calvary and rose again.

Meanwhile the saints of this Church period are a kind of earnest of the foregoing. "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet **now hath He reconciled** in the body of His flesh through death; to present you holy, and unblameable and unproveable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith" (Col. 1: 21-24). Three times we have the day of presentation mentioned — in 2 Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 5: 27; Jude 24. What a day will that be for Him and for us!

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE LAST DAYS

C. RICHARDSON.

IT is certain that the apostles expected that after their departure there would be a turning away from the faith, and a giving heed to seducing spirits.

Peter writes that as there were false prophets among the children of Israel so there would be false teachers among the Christians.

John writing to the babes in God's family says that not only was the antichrist coming, but even now there are many antichrists. He commences his fourth chapter by exhorting the saints, the "beloved" as he calls them, not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets had gone out into the world.

Paul's writings are just as pertinent. His earliest epistles speak of

the man of sin, and, one of his last — Philippians — tells us of professing Christians being the enemies of the cross of Christ. Even in his day false teachers followed him from city to city, corrupting his Gospel.

The declension of Christendom from the faith is calculated to discourage us all. Timothy, Paul's son in the faith, was like a fire that was burning low. Hence the Apostle's exhortion in his second Epistle to stir up the gift which had been given to him by the laying on of Paul's hands. This Epistle contemplates the last days.

Like Timothy we may be discouraged (who also wept, probably when he bid goodbye to Paul). Like Paul we may have to witness alone, having no man to stand with us.

Now the Epistle presents us with truth for our encouragement even though we be in the last days.

(1) We have been saved and called according to His purpose given in Christ "before the world began." What if everything drops to pieces? — the purpose of God stands sure. It is striking that what the Spirit gave to the Church at Ephesus in its best days is what we fall back upon in perilous times.

(2) Timothy is exhorted to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Have we not already been made familiar with this sentiment in the Lord's words to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee"? Yes, even in the last days.

(3) "Remember Jesus Christ . . . raised from among the dead" (New Trans.) How encouraging! If everything is based on the purpose of God, then everything is centred in Christ raised from the dead. Here is a further reason for our not being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord.

(4) It is, however, the last five verses of chapter 3 that we wish to emphasize. The prophetic Spirit through Paul could discern evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. What has He to say to this? First, that Timothy had to continue in the things he had learned, and been assured of, **knowing of whom he had learned them.** Is not this to some extent true of us, though we were never companions of Paul, and have been much helped by men of our own times? Still we have learned from Paul, and John, and Peter, and the

other inspired writers. And moreover, we have been assured of these things.

Let us see what they had to say about themselves and their ministry and writings, from which we have learned. **John** asserts: "He that knoweth God heareth us" (1 John 4: 6). Strange words if his was merely a human utterance. **Paul** assures the Thessalonians that when they received his preaching, they received it "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God" (1 Thess. 2: 13). He would also have the Corinthians know that his writings were "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14: 37). Whilst admitting the difference between ourselves and Timothy we can say, we know of whom we have learned the things we wish to continue in.

The remaining verses of the chapter are just as striking as these we have considered, for here we have one of the greatest gifts for the last days — the Scriptures — and these connected with Paul's teaching: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures." It is this reference to the Scriptures which leads me to put on paper these provisions for the last days. Most of us are aware of the beautiful incident given in Luke 24, when the Lord spoke to the two disciples from the Scriptures concerning Himself. But we may not all realize that apart from this the Lord put special importance on the written word. Take as example, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16: 31). And again, "If ye believe not his [Moses] writings, how shall ye be-

lieve My words?" (John 5: 4). This is even stronger than the extract from Luke 24, and should be pondered over. Hence the Apostle writes so strongly of the Scriptures here.

It might be thought that these verses would be more proper for other parts of his writings. But the fact is, that although a thousand voices may claim our attention, there is the inspired word given by the Holy Ghost, absolutely infallible to which we may turn for all we need in the last days.

We are not cast upon "spiritual men" or "The light of Christ within." These ideas may, and in some cases have, ended in a complete denial of much that is fundamental in the Scriptures. It is certain that the Holy Spirit within us would never teach anything different from the Scriptures He has inspired. Let us conclude this meditation with the words of Isaiah, "**To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them**" (8: 20).

THREE IMPORTANT DAYS

D. CHISHOLM.

(From Notes of an Address)

THE three days, beginning at John 1: 35, may indicate three circles of our Lord's glories, according to the way in which God is working out His purposes in the world. The features of the first day are marked by the intimacy of grace and nearness to Christ, so that a foreshadowing of the Assembly's place is not difficult to discern. It is also true, however, that the **individual** response is primarily evident. John, **looking** upon Jesus, received an impression of Him similar to a believer's first apprehension of the Saviour as the One who takes away sin, but now it was not a public proclamation, rather was it the feelings of his heart, finding its expression in the words, "Behold the Lamb of God."

The next movement in this incident is **following**; that is, following the Lamb of God. It is a characteristic of the saints in a future dispensation. "They follow

the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," but in John 1, the following leads to **abiding** with Him, and so we have at this point **looking, following and abiding**. At a later date the principle was laid down in this Gospel, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (15: 5). Andrew was one of those who illustrates this, for he first of all found his own brother Simon and "he brought him to Jesus."

In those four details we see the marks of one pleasing to the Father, and to whom the Son was now revealed — **looking, following, abiding, and bringing**. The path for the believer is clear enough if the eye be single, and features marking Andrew in his service show a ready eye to notice small matters that may be turned to His Master's glory:— see chapter 6: 8, 9; and 12: 20-22. No doubt there are many "Andrews" among the people of

God today, though not in the forefront, as his brother Peter was.

As to the foreshadowing of the Assembly in this passage, Christ is no sooner pointed out, than you have **two** gathering to Him as their centre. The Lord mentions this number in Matt. 18: 20, thus the figure of things to come, is clearly seen and particularly so is this true as our Lord's words, "Come and see," show. They came then, and abode with Him, but what was communicated to them between this point and the arrival of Simon we are not told.

The Lord's words to Andrew's brother indicated what was in His mind at that time. The "mystery" was still unsuspected by men, but a first indication appears, for when Jesus beheld Simon, He said, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." A stone set apart to be used later for a specific purpose. As the wonder of God's purpose dawns but slowly upon ourselves, so divine things opened gradually to the disciples. Consequently a further development on this line was made known in Matthew 16. Two revelations are mentioned in this second discourse. Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" was confirmed by the Lord as a revelation from the Father. Then the Lord revealed Himself as the Rock — as the foundation upon which the Church would be built, whilst Peter, along with other believers, would form part of the structure, divinely put together, against which the gates of Hades would not prevail.

Verse 43 mentions the second day, and from this point to the end of the chapter, the reader may note a distinctly Jewish atmosphere. The removal of the church at the coming of the Lord will leave the way clear for God to renew His dealings with Israel. Jesus Himself finds Philip, and Philip, with his Jewish testimony, finds Nathanael. In this testimony, Moses' and the prophets' predictions are stressed and also Jesus, as the "Son" of Joseph — His title to the throne as legal Heir. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him and knowing the spirit of repentance and sincere desire in Him, the spirit with which the godly remnant will seek their Messiah in the future day, says, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." The guile which so stamps the Jew today will then be absent. The reference, "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," has a national inference, as the fig tree is used figuratively to represent Israel.

Nathanael's confession of Christ as Son of God and King of Israel is touching, as these were the titles which the Jews denied Him at His first coming — the former in the presence of the high priest, and the latter, before Pilate. The receiving of the Messiah by the chosen nation in the coming day leads to great things for this poor world, and points on to the greater glories and wider sphere of blessing under the Son of Man. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." The Lord's closing words spoken on this second day, can hardly be dissociated from

the happy implications suggested in Jacob's dream, seeing in vision a ladder uniting heaven and earth, and the angelic messengers ascending and descending in the administration of a rule of blessing and glory.

The third day in John 2: 1-11, as we would expect, gives in figure a millennial scene of blessing and joy. The Lord draws attention to the necessity of His death, "Mine hour is not yet come." The old relationship was going, the new relationship would be established in the light of the third day — resurrection day itself. Indeed, a most marked accompaniment of our Lord's triumphant rising is joy whether in the Assembly or as seen in the restored nation, and that in its unflinching fullness. "And your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16: 22).

From the time of our Lord's miraculous birth until He came to the Cross, He was the one true Nazarite, sanctified to the Father's will in such obedience, that things

not sinful in themselves were not allowed of Him to interfere with His personal consecration. Morally, He was separate from sinners, outwardly, He was in their midst. The kingdoms of this world had been offered to the true Nazarite by its Prince when in the wilderness, but for the receiving of this, He waits the Father's time. In the interval there are glowing descriptive passages and images foretelling its glories in the Scriptures. This waiting on the divine counsel, is in accord with the Saviour's word at the Passover supper, "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come." The Nazarite vow will then be laid aside and every relationship and natural joy will be shared according to His desire, and God will have pleasure in men.

Then indeed all will say, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." May it be added, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus . . . and manifested forth His glory."

BIBLE STUDY—NUMBERS

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 20: 1 — 22: 41)

WE resume the story of the wanderings of the people as we open chapter 20. It would appear that what is given us in chapters 15-19 inclusive is not concerned with questions of time. This is clear if we refer to the detailed list of the camping places, given to us in chapter 33. The last verse of chapter 12 recorded their departure from Hazeroth, a place mentioned

in verse 17 of chapter 33. The first verse of our chapter places them at Kadesh in the desert of Zin, and in chapter 33 we have to pass on to verse 36 to find them there. Evidently therefore they were now not far from the end of their forty years in the wilderness.

Remarkably enough it was at Hazeroth that Miriam spoke against

Moses and was smitten with leprosy. Now at Kadesh she died and was buried. We know but little about her. No other sister of Aaron and Moses is mentioned, so we are probably right in identifying her with the elder sister who acted so wisely, as recorded in Exodus 2. She is called a "prophetess" in Exodus 15: 20, and she led the women of Israel in their triumphant song. But the point where natural feeling prevailed and she failed is no more hid from us than are the failings of her brothers.

At Kadesh Miriam disappeared and so did the singing, for there was no water. Unbelief once more prevailed and there was chiding instead. They blamed Moses for having brought them to an "evil place." Of course they had not got the pleasing fruits of the promised land for they had refused to go up into it and were suffering God's disciplinary action in the wilderness. Again, and for the fourth time, the leaders fell on their faces, thus putting themselves out of sight as far as possible, and the glory of the Lord appeared; not now for judgment, as was the case in chapter 16, but for mercy.

The instruction to Moses was that in conjunction with Aaron he should take "the rod." This was evidently the rod of Aaron that had budded, for Moses took it "from before the Lord," where it had been laid up, according to chapter 17. With this rod in his hand, typical of priestly grace, Moses was to speak to the rock in the presence of the people, and it would give forth the water to meet their need. We have to go back to Exodus 17, where we have

the account of the original smiting of the rock to bring forth the water. Once having been smitten, speaking to the rock sufficed.

If we turn to 1 Corinthians 10: 4, we find the Apostle mentioning "that spiritual Rock that followed them;" that is, the rock of Israel's history is conceived of as one, though many years passed between the two episodes; and Christ was typified thereby. No need for Christ to be smitten twice. Once sufficed, and rivers of life-giving water flowed to us. Moses with the rod of priestly grace in his hand represented God, and so on God's behalf he had but to speak, and again waters would be given. When our "Great High Priest . . . passed into the heavens" (Heb. 4: 14), He was, so to speak, laid up before the Lord, and when the word was given, what copious waters flowed from Him in the gift of the Spirit, as recorded in Acts 2. Had Moses contented himself with speaking to the rock, as instructed, the type would have been correctly given.

But what happened? Irritated beyond his endurance by the perversity of the people, instead of speaking to the rock Moses lifted up his hand and "smote the rock twice." He did this with "his rod," which we understand to mean that rod of authority with which he opened the waters of the Red Sea in Exodus 14, and rightly smote the rock in Exodus 17. This most highly honoured servant of God failed rightly to represent the grace that was typified by the rod that budded.

And it was not only a matter of what he did but also of what he

said. True enough, the people were sadly rebellious in heart. He was not inaccurate in addressing them as "ye rebels," but in saying, "must we fetch you water out of this rock," he presented himself and Aaron as the doers of the miracle, instead of leading the thoughts of the people up to God Himself. Hence, though God did not fail but gave an abundant response, His disciplinary action fell on both Moses and Aaron. Neither of them would be permitted to lead the people into the land.

What a blow this must have been to both, and particularly to Moses, who had given up so much, and gone through so much, with this end in view. Are we tempted to think it very drastic discipline? Let us remember two things. First, Moses had been specially commissioned to speak on God's behalf. What God had to say to the people came through his lips, since he came from God to them. Aaron as priest was commissioned to go from the people to God, and was not God's spokesman, so angry words from his lips would not have been so grave a matter. The failure of Moses was precisely at that point which was most important of all, as giving the word from God.

And second, we are now in a position to observe that the discipline had in it an element of mercy. If Moses had been spared to lead the host into the land, what further heart-breaks would have been his! When, after some fifteen centuries, he stood on the mount of transfiguration with Christ and spoke with Him of His decease, he was for that

moment in the land under far happier circumstances.

We may also note the typical import of this episode. Moses was the Apostle and Mediator of the law-system, and as such did not lead the people in. The good land of God's purpose, whether for Israel or for us, cannot be entered and enjoyed on the basis of law and law-keeping.

Verse 13 speaks of the place where all this happened as "the water of Meribah," which was the name given to the spot where the rock was rightly smitten, as recorded in Exodus 17: 7. Thus from the outset the two events were linked together.

In verses 14-21, we find a move forward towards the land is contemplated, and the district inhabited by the descendants of Esau, on the east side of the Dead Sea, lay right across their path. We have had no mention of Esau since Genesis 36. That chapter informed us that "Esau is Edom," and also that, "kings reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." The children of Esau had "dukes" in plenty, giving us an early example of what we find so often in Scripture and in our own experience, that the man who loves the world and ignores God, goes ahead in the world beyond the man who fears God.

Moses' request for right of way through the land of Edom was expressed in very discreet and conciliatory language, yet it was refused at

the point of the sword. Though fully four centuries had passed we see the character of Esau reproduced in his descendents. And if we glance for a moment at the short prophecy of Obadiah, written nearly a thousand years later, we find that people marked by the same proud antagonism to their "brother Jacob," and God's unsparing judgment against them. Moses however accepted the rebuff, for the moment of Edom's judgment had not yet come.

The time had now arrived for Aaron to disappear. As was the case with Moses a little later his death was notified in advance. He had no period of debility nor bed of sickness, for he could go to the top of a mountain in the sight of the people. There, stripped of his garments, which were placed upon his son, he died. The Aaronic priesthood, being for earth, was transmissible, "because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death" (Heb. 7: 23). This was the first time that the priesthood had to be transmitted, hence it was done in a very public way by God's appointment, so that no one could challenge Eleazar's new position. The type however is insignificant when compared with the Antitype. The priesthood of the Lord Jesus is heavenly, and it is, as the next verse in Hebrews tells us, an "unchangeable," or "intransmissible" one. Being the Son, He is "consecrated for evermore."

At this point the long conflict that was involved in the conquest of the land of Canaan, began. Moses had avoided fighting with Edom, since

the judgment of that people was deferred to a later day. King Arad in the south of Canaan took the initiative, and attacked Israel with some small success at first, but ultimately brought entire destruction upon himself and his people. So here for the first time we meet with the complete destruction of cities and peoples, that marked Israel's entrance into the promised land, which is not infrequently denounced by unbelievers as being an atrocity that should never have taken place.

In so saying, however, men are really challenging God, for He authorized Israel's action, and empowered them to carry it out. God has the **right** to judge men and take their lives, when they carry their sin to insufferable heights. He did it by the flood of waters, when the antediluvians had filled the earth with violence and corruption. When the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah had become very grievous, He did it by an eruption of some kind. In the days of Abraham the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full, but now it was full, and God elected to destroy them, not by flood or fire, but by the armies of Israel, who were to act as His "battle axe and weapons of war" (Jer. 51: 20). He will act thus again on two occasions: first, as the millennial age is ushered in, as is predicted in 2 Thessalonians 1: 7-9; and again at the close of the millennial age, as predicted in Revelation 20: 9. Who shall say Him, nay?

We now reach an incident in the wilderness journey that stands out in striking fashion, inasmuch as it furnishes the third great type of the death of Christ. The people grew

weariness of the way and tired of the manna. They had just seen God's power in the destruction of King Arad, yet it was forgotten. The trials of the wilderness filled their thoughts and they had lost their taste for the food from heaven, which was typical of Christ. Their flesh was still crying out for the delicacies of Egypt, typical of the world. They reached a point when the manna was positively distasteful to them.

So in the governmental ways of God they reached a spot infested by serpents whose bite injected a poison that acted like fire in their veins and ended in death. Can we not see at once a type of that "sin in the flesh," of which Romans 8: 3 speaks? In the Garden of Eden Satan not only lured man into an act of disobedience but he also injected into his moral constitution the poison of sin, which accounts for the fact that "the carnal mind," that is, the mind of the flesh, "is enmity against God." This having taken place spiritual death has supervened, and mankind lies by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Our state, poisoned by sin, lies at the root of the many offences from which we need to be justified. What has God done to meet that poisoned state?

The answer to that question lies before us in type. How Moses made a serpent of brass, erected it on a pole, so that any afflicted person might look and live, is very well known. We are concerned with its typical import. Our Lord's own words, recorded in John 3: 14, make it abundantly clear that in it His own death is indicated. The

particular aspect of His death typified is that found in Romans 8: 3. The brazen serpent was made in the likeness of that which was the source of the trouble; so, God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, but also as a sacrifice for sin, being Himself sinless.

The death of Christ, from this aspect, was the condemnation of sin in the flesh. Sin is the potent energy of lawlessness, and flesh — man's flesh — is the vehicle in which it works. The lawless nature of Israel's flesh had been demonstrated in the wilderness journey, and then came the episode of the brazen serpent. The hopeless lawlessness of the flesh in the whole of mankind had been proved, and came to its climax, in the cross of Christ; and just there God's condemnation of sin — the root principle — fell once and for all.

But the wonder is that death has, in the cross of Christ, become the way of life. The uplifted brazen serpent became the way of life to many; but **only** to those who obeyed the glad proclamation and turned their eyes upon it. The whole arrangement was of such a nature as to appear foolish to a reasoning mind and only appeal to faith. We cannot help thinking that the men of intellect in Israel would have been tempted to reason that the scheme was absurd; that there could be no connection between a glance at a piece of brass and release from the effects of poison; and therefore to ignore the proclamation. The child in its mother's arms, if told to look, would not have reasoned but would have looked and been cured. In keeping with this are the Lord's

words, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11: 25). **Faith**, not reason, is the way of blessing.

From this point the people "set forward," as verse 10 tells us; and there can be no doubt that it is when a Christian apprehends the death of Christ, in that aspect of it typified by the brazen serpent, that a forward movement of a spiritual sort begins. But before they really started for the promised land, there came the episode of the well to which they were conducted by the mercy of God, without their asking for it. Now here we have a type of the gift of the Holy Spirit, as we see by the Lord's words recorded in John 4: 14 and 7: 37-39.

It is very striking how the two types — the brazen serpent and the springing well — are brought together in this one chapter, just as the realities typified are found together in the opening verses of Romans 8. Only there the order is reversed. Verse 2 speaks of the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and verse 3 of the condemnation of "sin in the flesh;" that is, of the old life "in Adam." There is no more important lesson for a believer to learn than that his old life as a child of Adam has been condemned in the cross of Christ, and that the Holy Spirit indwelling him is the power of that new life, which is his in Christ, and upon which no condemnation can ever rest.

If we are to know the power of the Spirit in a practical way there must be the removal of what would quench or grieve Him. Like the

princes in verse 18, who laboured to remove the earth that would have hindered the free flowing of the water, we too must act. How often with us the things of earth are obstructive! Israel sang when the waters freely flowed, and when nothing obstructs the "springing up into everlasting life" of the well of water that Christ gives, and the outward flow from the believer of the "rivers of living water," there is indeed a song in the heart. The upspringing and the song go together.

During the wilderness journey the people sang three times. First, the song of salvation on the further banks of the Red Sea. Third, that of our chapter, which typifies the song of deliverance from the enslaving power of sin in the flesh. But between these two came the sad episode of the golden calf, when the people sang around it in nakedness, and in this we see the depths to which the professed people of God may sink.

As at the beginning of our chapter, so at the end, we hear the din of conflict. Sihon had smitten Moab but now he falls before Israel, and so too Og the king of Bashan, in spite of the fact that he was a giant, as we learn in Deuteronomy 3: 11. The events that typify victory over **the flesh within** are followed by the record of victory over **the foes without**. And this is indeed the way in which things work in our spiritual experience.

But these victories were followed by what we may call a counter-attack of the enemy. Though Moab had been smitten by Sihon it still existed as a kingdom and Balak its king was sore afraid. So he sought

for Balaam, who had a great reputation as a man who wielded "enchantments." This we see if we turn to chapter 24: 1. If we glance at verses 8 and 18 of chapter 22, we discover that this man managed to cover his enchantments, which were of course of the devil, with the appearance of reverencing Jehovah as his God. Balak hoped to bring a curse on the people of God by enlisting the help of this professed prophet of God, who was really a servant of Satan. An attack of that kind is marked by exceeding subtilty.

Chapter 22 is occupied with the preliminaries to the attack. As we are told in 2 Peter 2: 15, Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness," and longed to possess himself of the honours and wealth that was offered to him. On the other hand God intervened and forbade the mission, declaring the people to be definitely blessed. Balak persisting a second time, Balaam again referred the matter to God, and this time was given permission to go with the understanding he could only utter what God gave to him. Going, God's anger was kindled against him.

We may be tempted to wonder at this, but we must remember that God does not change **His purpose**. If, knowing this, we persist like Balaam, God may change **His dealings** with us, as He did with Balaam, and permit us to go so that in His discipline we may reap the bitter result of our own way. Even so, as with Balaam, He will give us ample warning of what lies before us.

The incident related as to Balaam's ass has excited much unbelieving protest and even ridicule, yet it is vouched for by Peter in that passage to which we have referred. If Satan could speak through a serpent words of deceit, God can, if He chooses, speak words of warning through an ass. The eyes of Balaam's heart were blinded by his avarice and his traffic with demons, and now we see that the eyes of his head were as blind as the eyes of his heart. The eyes of his head were opened so that at last he saw the angel as clearly as his donkey had done. But the veil over the eyes of his heart remained.

The angel that confronted him held a drawn sword in his hand. The significance of this, especially as it blocked his way, would, we should think, hardly be missed. Yet evidently Balaam was blinded as to its significance, and he went forward to his doom, as it ultimately proved. He never returned to his native land. The wealth and honour, if he ever got them, he never lived to enjoy. He fell by the sword, not of the angel, who at the beginning barred his way to Moab, but of the very people that he attempted to curse in defiance of the purpose of God, as recorded in chapter 31: 8.

Let us accept the warning that his history is intended to give us. It illustrates a part of the course followed by apostates in the Christian profession, for they go in the way of Cain; and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perish in the gainsaying of Korah, as we are told in the Epistle of Jude.

THE "KATALUMA"

H. WILSON.

NOTES OF A BRIEF ADDRESS

"There was no room for them in the inn [kataluma]." (Luke 2: 7).

"Where is the guest-chamber [kataluma], where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples" (Luke 22: 11).

I do not know Greek, but I often take the advice given once in my hearing, and look up a word in Young's Concordance. Here is a word which has interested me greatly, used when our Lord entered into this world, and once more, when He left it.

Houses were often built with a courtyard, the best rooms being upstairs, while on the ground floor there were smaller rooms called "kataluma." Visitors to the inn or house would be taken to the best rooms, while their servants might get a "kataluma." But when the Lord of Glory entered this world, Joseph and Mary found not only that the rooms in the inn were full, but even the "katalumas" on the ground floor were all occupied, and they were obliged to go to a stable at the back, where Jesus was born, and laid in a manger. I need not comment on this, but it is profitable to think of it. There was no room for them even in the "kataluma."

The next time the word is used is perhaps more remarkable still. Jesus had entered Jerusalem as King, as foretold by the Prophet, "Behold,

thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass" (Zech. 9: 9). He was acclaimed by the multitude, He was truly the King, but He was meek and lowly. After all the miracles He did, and His triumphal entry into the city, the best room in the best palace would not have been too good for Him. But instead of being proud and haughty, as some great men are, He was meek and lowly, and all He claimed was a "kataluma," a downstairs room where He could be alone with His disciples. But there was someone there who loved Him, and when Peter and John, probably carrying the passover lamb, which had been examined by the priests and slain, asked for a "kataluma," they were taken to "a large upper room, furnished," where they made ready the Passover.

The Lord has made a very modest request to us. He asks us to remember Him. And as we do this we are so grateful to Him that we want to give Him the very best room in our hearts. We can do this during the week, and think of Him at all times, and then, when we meet with others on the first day of the week to remember Him, He can come and find what was represented by "a large upper room furnished," and our hearts are filled with gratitude to Him and our lips opened in praise and worship to Him, our Lord, and to our God and Father through Him.

THE ENTRUSTED DEPOSIT

A. J. POLLOCK.

A LIFE-TIME of devoted and strenuous service for the Lord was rapidly drawing to a close, physical powers were waning, the Apostle Paul had become "Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Philemon 9). At Rome he was a prisoner of Nero, the cruellest and most despicable of the Roman Emperors. Paul, however, chose to trace his untoward circumstances to **first causes**, and gloried in being "the prisoner of the Lord" (Eph. 4: 1).

No longer the master of his own movements, day and night in charge of "a soldier that kept him" (Acts 28: 16), in the providential mercy of God he dwelt "in his own hired house, and received all who came in unto him" (Acts 28: 30).

Nor was he without grief in relation to his devoted service for the Lord. He wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, "This thou knowest that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes" (2 Tim. 1: 15). How bitter must his grief have been, as he recollected that Asia was the scene of the early triumphs of the Gospel — sinners converted in city after city, resulting in the formation of Christian assemblies.

But if he could no longer visit the assemblies in bodily presence, God could make use of his pen. Out of 21 epistles in the New Testament, 14 were the fruits of his **inspired** authorship, if we accept Hebrews as being written by him. Though men might fail, though saints abandoned

him, the truth of God remained as ever. He never went back on that.

One most solemn charge that the aged Apostle made, we would draw special attention to, never more needed than in these sadly broken days in connection with Christian testimony. We read, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust [**the entrusted deposit**, New Trans.], avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen" (1 Tim. 6: 20, 21).

The Apostle Paul clearly had in mind the truth concerning the Gospel of the grace of God, the foundation of all Christian blessing; and the truth concerning the Church of God, specially communicated to him, and passed on to us in his inspired epistles. Scripture tells us he was appointed of God to be "a minister of the Gospel of the grace of God (Col. 1: 23); and also a minister of the Church of God, even of "the mystery, which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1: 25-27). Through his epistles we may learn what **the entrusted deposit** was.

The very words are arresting. First, the word, **deposit**, indicates divine truth, finding a lodgment in the heart of the believer. Secondly, it is **entrusted**, showing that we have the privilege and responsibility of ordering our lives in agreement with it. How deeply important it is, that we should acquaint ourselves with what the Scriptures unfold.

On the negative side we are warned to avoid "profane and vain babblings." Of these there is a sad superabundance in the world today. Take a flagrant example. **Christian Science** teaches us, that "man is incapable of sin, sickness and death" (**Science and Health**, p. 475). This book is described as "A Key to the Scriptures," whereas it stands in flat contradiction to them. In the Scriptures the word, **sin**, occurs nearly 600 times, the word **death**, nearly 400 times, whilst there is overwhelming evidence to sin, sickness and death on every hand. And yet there are hundreds of thousands of foolish dupes who are prepared to believe this pitiful lie of the Devil.

We are also warned against "oppositions of science falsely so-called," which is **always** opposed to the truth. **True** science and the Scriptures can never be at variance, for God is the Author of them both. A flagrant example of "science falsely so-called" is that of **Evolution**, which teaches that man owes his origin to a bestial ancestry. This evil teaching, which has done an immense amount of spiritual damage in the world, has now on the highest evolutionary authority been acknowledged to be a burst bubble, a theory, a guess, without one single solid proof whatsoever in its support.

On the positive side this article will not have been written in vain, if it succeeds in putting into Christian minds a deeper sense, that God has committed a sacred trust to every one of us, leading us to the searching out of the truth as to it, and the carrying out in practice

what that teaching involves. Assured we are, that if Christians everywhere in the power of the Spirit of God, answered in their lives to the truth of God, there would be a remarkable revival in the Church of God, and the impact on the world in Christian testimony would be immense.

On the day of Pentecost there took place the great event of the descent of the Holy Spirit, indwelling each believer, linking each believer one with another, and above all vitally with their glorious Head in heaven, even our ascended Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, thus forming the one body of Christ on this earth. So we read, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 13). It is further said of the Holy Spirit, that "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16: 13).

Christian fellowship was thus instituted. Believers are never looked at in Scripture as solitary units, but as members of the one body of Christ, here to perpetuate His life on earth. And that, particularly as holding the Head, "from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Col. 2: 19).

There are distinctions of gifts, but the **same** Spirit; distinctions as to services or ministrations, but the **same** Lord; distinctions as to operations, but the **same** God, which worketh all in all. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor.

12: 4-7).

It is insisted in Scripture, that all this is to be carried out, not by man's will and arrangement, **but by God's**. We read, "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the **body, AS IT HATH PLEASED HIM**" (1 Cor. 12: 18). Again we strike the same insistent note, "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally **AS HE WILL**" (1 Cor. 12: 11).

And further, it is laid down clearly in Scripture, that every believer on the Lord Jesus is a priest to God and His Father, not merely by the utterances of the lip, but as brought into nearness with God; the highest privilege the Christian can enjoy. To a poor abandoned sinner our Lord indicated this: "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4: 23).

We also read, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, **an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ . . . ye are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood, an holy nation**" (1 Peter 2: 5, 9). Again we read, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us **kings and priests unto God and His Father**; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1: 5, 6). This is a truth we should hold most tenaciously, and seek to carry it out in practice. This truth embraces every believer on the face of the earth,

whether brother or sister, whether young or old, whatever the nationality. All Christians alike are embraced in these precious Scriptures. Are they not to be acted upon? What losers we shall be, if we refrain from doing so.

The Scriptures are open for our study. Heart acquaintance with them is the greatest safeguard against profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions of false science, just as in banking circles the best training to enable counterfeit notes to be detected is gained by an intimate knowledge and expert handling of genuine notes.

In the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle unfolds to us in detail the features of the Gospel of the grace of God. In the Epistle to the Galatians he most strenuously denounces the believer who puts himself under law, as "fallen from grace" (Gal. 5: 4). In the Epistle to the Hebrews he contrasts the **shadows** of Judaism, which had their value in Old Testament times in the way of prophecy and type, with the **substance** of Christianity, surely embracing "a more excellent ministry . . . a better covenant . . . better promises" (Heb. 8: 6). Then there are the prison epistles, as they are often called, especially Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, which are especially relevant to the subject of this article. 1 and 2 Corinthians also throw much light of a practical nature, such as the celebration of the Lord's supper, assembly discipline, church order and the like. These have more than ever a voice to us in this day of widespread departure from the truth of God.

How happy for believers to seek to give the Holy Spirit of God His proper and true place in assembly activities, as the indwelling power for praise and worship. How very deeply must the Lord value the answering response of His people, when He will vouchsafe His presence even to the two or three who gather to His name (Matt. 18: 20).

We read of the apostles, who, browbeaten before the Chief Priests, being let go, "went to **their own company.**" We do not need to ask what company that was. What a cold empty world this would be were there not the assembling of ourselves together, and all the more so as we see "the day approaching" (Heb. 10: 25).

There is no more heroic figure in Scripture than that of the aged and dauntless Apostle Paul, chained possibly to his guardian soldier, spending his last moments on earth

penning such epistles as Ephesians and Colossians, preaching the kingdom of God to all, who came in to listen, and teaching those things which concern our Lord Jesus Christ. Soon came the last ordeal. The tired head was laid down on the executioner's block, and in a moment of time he was in the presence of the Lord, who had met him on that ever-memorable day, on the Damascus road, had sustained him right up to that moment, and then welcomed His warrior servant to his eternal rest.

In conclusion; let us study the Scriptures prayerfully and earnestly, and great will be our blessing, and much may abound to God's glory. May we emulate the zeal of the heathen convert who had been introduced to the Scriptures, and who wrote to the missionary, that he was reading the word of God, and **behaving** it.

OUR WALK ON EARTH

J. HOUSTON.

IF corrective ministry, such as we have in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, does not raise us to the height of our calling in heaven, it certainly provides us with important instruction and correction for our walk on earth. And if the unspiritual state and disorderly walk of the Corinthians which called for the correction, does not give us a pleasant subject for our meditation, it holds out to us nevertheless a needful warning against our lapsing into the same state, and committing the same disorder. Hence the great value of this epistle.

thians to follow men. At best, men in the church are called and gifted of God as **His servants**, responsible to Him for the service given to their charge. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but **ministers** by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" And, using the scriptural figure, Paul planted, Apollos watered, but it was God who gave the increase. The work of planting and watering could not of itself avail anything; everything depended upon the increase of God. So it is with ministry in the church today.

It was very foolish of the Corin-

The Corinthians were God's hus-

bandry and God's building. Obviously the planting and watering had to do with the former; constructive work with the latter. Paul was gifted as a wise masterbuilder, or architect; and he laid the foundation of the building. Others added to the superstructure; some with gold, silver, precious stones; some with wood, hay, stubble. All was to be submitted to the test of fire, and each receive his reward, whether of gain, or of loss. "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon," is the fitting warning. And, it is added, "if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire." The Corinthians, moreover, were God's temple; and the Holy Spirit dwelt in them. This temple was holy. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." It does not say specifically **who** may defile it; nor does it state **how** the defilement may be made. It simply says, "any man," — the usual way of expressing individual responsibility. Thus in few words our responsibility in the church, as to our building, is stated in simple and clear language. All this is in chapter 3.

The Corinthians were Paul's children in the faith. He dearly loved them. But they did not give a worthy response to his love. With grief he had later to say to them, "though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. 12: 15). False apostles in their midst had alienated their hearts from him through pride, and they discredited his authority as an apostle. He could, of course, have easily vindicated himself by **the rod**; but, in order to **spare his child-**

ren, he refrained. This was evidence of true love that would sacrifice self, and shield its objects. His children evidently had many instructors — some bad ones, no doubt — yet they had but one father, who would "very gladly spend and be spent" for them. Chapters 4 and 9 reveal these things.

In chapter 5, we have a bad case of fornication, which called for severe discipline. It was so bad and exceptional that it was a kind, "as is not so much as named among the Gentiles." And alas! they were "puffed up," and did not so much as mourn, that the person who committed such sin might be taken away from among them. When pride acts in Christians, how insensible they can become as to the care of God's house, and the holiness that befits it. It need hardly be said that when the man was put under discipline, it was in view of his restoration. In fact, he was restored, much to Paul's comfort, as we see in 2 Corinthians 2: 4-8. All this surely is a lesson for us at all times, since holiness becomes God's house for ever.

In chapter 6, Paul forbids the Corinthians to go to law with one another before the unjust, and not before the saints. It was **brother** against **brother**, in litigation before **unbelievers**. How unbecoming it was! He asks, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" A further question is asked, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Had they been moved by brotherly love, they would have rather suffered the wrong, and refrained from going to the law

courts. Had they maintained the dignity of saints, they would have been high above the strife of this world, breathing the atmosphere of heaven.

Chapter 7 deals with the subject of marriage. Are Christians to marry? This seems to be the question raised in the chapter. The answer is as conclusive as it is brief: "let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." In the case of those who are married, it is clearly and firmly commanded, "Let not the wife depart from her husband . . . and let not the husband put away his wife." And again, "If she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband." The indissolubility of the bond is to be maintained; in keeping with the words of our Lord, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19: 6). As things are today, how very needful it is for Christians to obey God's commandment, and maintain inviolate the bond of this holy institution.

Chapter 8 shows the knowledge that puffs up, as contrasted with the love that builds up. The Corinthians had much of the former. Said the Apostle, "We all have knowledge." Yes, but of what kind? Does it puff us up or does it lead us into self-denying service

to others? Should we imagine that we know anything, we clearly show that we know nothing, as we ought to know. This strikes at the root of pride. Elsewhere we read, "For vain [that is, empty] man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11: 12).

Knowledge that occupies us with **ourselves** will surely puff us up. Knowledge that occupies us with **Christ** will surely humble, and lead us **out of ourselves**, to live as He lived, in lowly, gracious service to others, as moved by love. How different is this knowledge! Moreover, the Corinthians as puffed up, offended their weak brethren, and this was sin. "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" And he adds, "When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."

Is there no danger of our being puffed up with knowledge? May not we offend weak brethren? We may be well instructed in the Bible: we may know all about the church: we may have ability to expound the Scriptures; we may be gifted in speech, like the Corinthians. And yet, with all this, we may lack the one important thing; the love, that takes us out of **self**, to live for **others**. This fact comes powerfully before us when we read and ponder over, chapter 13.

For so long as Job was occupied with himself and in the presence of his friends, his word was "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go." (27:6). When brought into the presence of Jehovah, and occupied with Him, his word was, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42: 6). Only then did he speak, "the thing that is right," and receive rich blessing from God. It is for us to reach "the end of the Lord," even as Job did.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Extracted from a paper published 120 years ago

TO a single mind which has known the value of God's love, and which views things in the light in which they are put by that blessed knowledge, it would not seem that in the midst of a world lying under condemnation, yet visited by this love, aught beyond spiritual qualification was needed for any one to declare to those whom he sees around him ready to perish, the remedy, that Jesus has died for sinners. **Man** has been pleased to set up restrictions, but the point with the disciple is to know whether the **Lord** has done so, and what is the warrant for precluding any from full liberty of preaching to whom He has given His Spirit for the purpose: seeing that if it had been so given, there is infinite loss in the hindrance, and the Spirit of God is grieved . . .

The point to be proved by those who are opposed to the unrestricted preaching of the word, is this — either, that none who are not in prescribed office, have the Spirit of God in testimony, or, that having it, the sanction of man is necessary for its exercise The question is not whether **all** Christians are individually qualified, but whether they are disqualified unless they are what is commonly called ordained

Let us then try the question by the light which the word affords us upon the subject. There are only two cases upon which the question can arise — namely, as to their speaking **in** the Church, or **out of** the Church; amongst the “congregation of faithful men,” for their common profit and building up in

the faith; or as evangelists, declaring to the world, wheresoever God may direct them, the message of that “grace which has appeared unto all men.” If these are admitted, all anomalous cases will readily be agreed in.

First then, as to speaking of Christians in the Church. And here I remark that the directions in 1 Cor. 14, are entirely **inconsistent** with the necessity of ordination to speak. There **is** a line drawn there, but it is not between ordained or unordained. “Let your women keep silence in the Churches;” a direction which never could have place, were the speaking confined to a definitely ordained person, but takes quite another ground; and which implies directly, not that it is right for every man to speak, but that there was preclusion of none, because of their not being in any stated office. Women were the precluded class; there the line was drawn. If men had not the gift of speaking, of course they would be silent, if they followed the directions there given Does he then say none ought to speak but one ordained? No — “let all things be done unto edifying.” That is the grand secret, the grand rule We have then distinction, not of **ordained** and **unordained** but of those, who from their character — **women**, are not permitted to speak, **and the rest are**; being also directed in what order to do so, and the ground of distinction stated. And this is **God's** plan of decency and order. For the rest they were all to speak, that all might learn, and all

be comforted. Not all to speak at once, not all to speak every day, but all as God led them, according to the order there laid down, and as God was pleased to give them ability for the edifying of the Church

But the question becomes more important when considered in the second case, viz., as to speaking **out** of the Church, because it precludes the testimony of the gospel by a vast number of persons who may have faithfully borne it to others. Let us enquire into the scriptural facts. In the first place then, all the Christians preached — “They that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word;” (Acts 8: 4) and those who were scattered were **all**, except the apostles The first general preaching of the gospel which the Lord blessed beyond the walls of Jerusalem, knew no distinction between ordained and unordained Paul preached without any other mission than seeing the glory of the Lord and His word; in a synagogue too, and boasts of it. And he gives his reason for Christians preaching elsewhere — as it is written, “I **believed**, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and **therefore** speak.” (2 Cor. 4)

My object has been simply to show the general liberty of Christian men to speak, whether **in** or **out** of the Church, according to the several gifts which God may bestow upon them, without need of the seal of human authority; and I say that the contrary assertion is a novelty in Christianity And here I will advert to that which is commonly adduced upon the subject — the case

of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. It is remarkable that those who rest upon it should pass by a case immediately preceding, bearing upon this immediate subject; that of Eldad and Medad prophesying in the camp, though they had not come up to the door of the tabernacle, because the Spirit rested upon them. “Would God,” said the meek man of God, “that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them.”

That which was here typically proposed, the pouring out of the Spirit upon all, was in principle fulfilled in the Christian dispensation. Then, subsequently, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, acted not under the influence and energy of the Spirit in testifying to the people, but would have assumed authority — the kingship of Moses, and the priesthood of Aaron. This was their fault, which very outrage is committed by those who attempt to defend themselves by urging the case before us: seeing that they are taking to themselves that kingship and priesthood which are Christ’s alone, and setting up themselves as the only legitimate channels of blessing; and usurping His authority again on the other hand by excluding those who have the Spirit of God from exercising that which they have by the authority of God Himself. These things here spoken of were typical of our dispensation, as also the apostle states; and the conclusion is, that they make universal preaching desirable, and the assumption of priesthood a sin

I would make one further observation, suggested by the present question. In observing the infinity of

contending interests with which the Church is now filled, "the wars and fighting" amongst brethren — the restlessness of those who are spending their power and spirituality in defending one human system against another, — the inquiry solemnly forces itself upon us whilst witnessing the surrounding scene of excitement. For what are **we to contend**? The apostle has answered the question — "contend earnestly for the faith which was **once** delivered to the saints." Let the enquiry then be calmly proposed to all our minds — for what are we contending? If it be for anything of **secondary** derivation, God cannot own it: the contention is **for our own**, and not **for the things of Christ**; for nothing **since** delivered is of His Spirit. The

preceding considerations tend to show that opinions, supported by ever so fair an appearance of antiquity are worthless — are deeply injurious to the glory of God, unless based upon His word And let it be observed that in this, as in all things, this liberty of the believer is not the spirit of insubordination, but of entire subjection to the Spirit and the Church of God, wheresoever they may be found; not the spirit of enthusiasm, but of a sound mind — of a mind **at one with God**, which alone gives righteous judgment. And let the people of God be waiting upon Him for His guidance.

J. N. D.

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ONESIMUS

R. THOMSON.

THE brief Epistle of Paul to Philemon is a personal letter, written from the prison in Rome about the year 63 A.D. Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ is interceding on the behalf of Onesimus, a slave to Philemon, who, having robbed his master, had absconded to Rome.

While there, he had heard the preaching of the Glad Tidings of God from Paul the Apostle, who was given a certain amount of liberty, which he used for this purpose. Onesimus, hearing the Word, was convicted of his sin by the Spirit of God, and along with his repentance toward God, he turned in faith to Christ, receiving Him as Saviour and Lord.

Such a bond of friendship and intimacy sprang up between Paul

and Onesimus that Paul speaks of him as, "my son . . . whom I have begotten in my bonds." He now besought Philemon to receive Onesimus not merely as a servant but as a brother beloved, both in the flesh and in the Lord. As for the question of reparation, Paul said, "Put that on mine account . . . I will repay it" — the only "I.O.U." we find in Scripture!

In this short letter of twenty-five verses three things of much importance strike us. There is first of all **a singular instance of Divine grace**. He who was a thief and a fugitive from justice was seen by the eye of God and **called** in saving grace. The great and noble were passed by, as also the wise and prudent, that the sovereign mercy and love of a Saviour God might make of Onesi-

mus a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work.

Then, hearing the Gospel of God's grace, offering free pardon in Christ Jesus, from the lips of Paul, Onesimus is not only convicted of his sin but he is **converted**. This was the beginning of the Christian pathway for him, and the commencement of a life toward God.

Also we view his **character**. Once he was marked by robbery, and disgrace; now through God's grace made helpful, useful and profitable. Paul desired him as an associate, for he saw in him the marks of a diligent servant, seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. However Paul would do nothing as to retaining him until he knew the mind of Philemon. Hence the writing of this Epistle.

We may now consider the second thing of much importance; **an instance of sin being overruled**. In every case, and in whatever character, sin is hateful to God. In certain cases, however, we may see that sin is overruled for blessing in the mercy and wisdom of God. This is one of those cases.

In the case of Joseph, God overruled the cruelty of Jacob's sons for worldwide salvation from famine, but the sin of his brothers remained. The Lord Jesus was taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain; but God took occasion thereby to work

out His counsel for blessing and salvation to the ends of the earth. As for Onesimus, his wrong-doing led him to run to Rome, where hearing the Gospel, his conscience was reached and conviction produced, followed by repentance and conversion.

The third thing of much importance we observe is the striking **instance furnished of how relations were improved** by being lifted on to a higher plane. The wonderful working of God's grace teaches us to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. A believing master will treat his servants with fairness and kindness, not seeking to dominate them dishonestly. A believing servant also will act rightly, endeavouring to serve with humility and sincerity, as unto the Lord.

Philemon is exhorted by Paul in a most loving and brotherly way to receive Onesimus, not now as a slave, but as a brother beloved. Both master and servant, brought into the family of God by the same precious blood of Christ, have now common interests. The servant will respect his master, and the master will appreciate his servant.

Thus there would be exemplified the word, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4: 28).

Our natural relationships have been instituted or allowed of God. The Gospel does not obliterate them, while we are on earth, but rather beautifies them.

BIBLE STUDY—NUMBERS

F. B. Hole.

(Chapters 23: 1—26: 65).

THE last verse of chapter 22 shed light upon the evil power that animated Moab and Balak their king. They had in their midst the "high places of Baal." So when in the first verse of our chapter we read that Balaam said, "Build me **here** seven altars," we at once see that this man, who professed himself to be a prophet of the Lord, was really in league with the powers of darkness. When in conflict with Baal, Elijah repaired the **one** altar of the Lord that was broken down, and he prevailed. In contrast with that, we are now to see that the **seven** altars of Baal can prevail nothing against the blessing of God.

Balaam however, as verse 3 shows, treated the offerings burned upon the seven altars as being Balak's, while he himself went off to a solitary place, if perchance the Lord would meet and instruct him there. He evidently had no sense of the supreme power and glory of Jehovah, while he knew that no power could prevail against His word. To him Jehovah was only the First among many, and not the supreme and only God.

God however did meet him, and put into his mouth words, that he was compelled to utter in the presence of Balak, which are recorded for us in verses 7—10. Though Balak had called him to curse, and for that had offered him great reward, he found himself unable to do it. God had neither cursed nor defied them, so his mouth for that purpose was closed. The rather

he beheld them from the heights, and so considered them as God saw them, from the standpoint of His purpose. That being so he had to announce three things.

First, the **separation** of the people. God had called Abraham out from his kindred and country, and they, who were descended from him through Isaac the child of promise, were to share in this calling and maintain it, though over four centuries has passed. To this day the Jew is separated from the Gentiles, or nations, for what God ordains is not affected by time nor by the schemes of men.

Second, the **multiplication** of this chosen and separated people. Their number should be beyond computation. Knowing this, the adversary all through the ages has aimed at reducing their number, and in the process has used many evil human instruments, of whom in our days Hitler has been the last, and one of the worst. But, in spite of all that the adversary can do, this prediction will be verified in the coming age.

Third, their **beatification**, using this word in its proper meaning, and not the meaning it has been given by the Romish religion. Abraham died "the death of the righteous," and so too have those who were truly "the children of Abraham," (Gal. 3: 7), and not merely his children by natural descent. But in this prophecy Israel is viewed in the light of God's purpose, and so viewed, his "last end" will be in the glory of

the millennial age. Balaam might well desire such an end, but he never took the road that leads to it. Similarly, many today may desire the end of the Christian, while turning away from the life that we have found in Christ.

Hearing all this, Balak naturally remonstrated, and Balaam reaffirmed that he was under control to the Lord. Balak no doubt believed in many gods, each with his special localities or high places; and so, regarding the Lord as only another of these, he thought a change of place might produce the cursing he desired, but again the Lord met Balaam and put in his mouth the words he had to utter.

His preamble this time is very striking, and of a more positive nature; in it he contrasts God with man. Of man it can be said, "they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58: 3). Moreover the wisest of men frequently commit themselves to actions that prove to be wrong, and they have to **repent** and retract. Now it is impossible for God to lie, as we are told in Titus 1: 2, and His word stands, so that, when He speaks, He makes it good. God's blessing rested on Israel and no power of the adversary, that Balaam could wield, could prevail to reverse it. The blessings conferred upon the church are far higher than those given to Israel; so as we consider the spiritual and heavenly blessings that are ours in Christ, let us rejoice in the assurance that these verses give.

This time Balaam is forced to pronounce in the first place the **justification** of God's people, speaking as one who only saw God's side of the

matter, for the statements of verses 21—23 must be read in the light of the words that close verse 23, "What hath God wrought!" We recognize the prophetic character of these utterances. When he spoke, God had indeed brought Israel out of Egypt with great strength, but His mighty work which would furnish the righteous basis for the justification of the people, in whom so much iniquity was found and so much perverseness manifested, was not accomplished till Christ came. Nor was "the shout of a king" made effective, according to God.

This is the first positive mention of a king in Israel, for in Genesis 36: 31, the word is mentioned in a purely negative way. David was raised up as a king, typical of Christ; but only when Christ Himself returns in glory will "the shout of a king" really be heard in their midst; unless indeed, we are permitted to apply these words to that moment when on the cross Jesus uttered the loud cry and said, "It is finished," while above His sacred head stood Pilate's title, "The King of the Jews."

The power of God had so laid hold of Balaam that he saw and spake of nothing but God, and what God had wrought. The deliverance of the people from Egypt and their passage through the wilderness was all the fruit of His strength. Moreover He would endow the people with His strength, so that ultimately they too should overcome all their foes. This is evident as we read verse 24. They should be not only **justified** and **delivered** but also **overcoming** in the power of God.

Disappointed though he was, Balak gave Balaam a third opportunity to utter a curse. In his ignorance of the commanding power of God, he still thought something might be gained by a change of place with its further altars and sacrifices. As for Balaam, the opening verse of chapter 24 reveals that though previously he had spoken of going forth that he might meet the Lord, he had really gone "to seek for enchantments." He sought that, but he did not get it, since the Lord restrained the powers of darkness and **met Balaam Himself**. Something similar is seen in 1 Samuel 28, when the witch of Endor essayed to call up Samuel through her "familiar spirit," who would have impersonated him; but in result God held in check the demon and allowed Samuel himself to appear. God can thus restrain the adversary as seems good to Him.

As Balaam opened his lips for the third time he spoke of himself in a remarkable way. In saying that now his eyes were opened he confessed that they had been shut, and therefore he had been in the dark. The Spirit of God had come upon him, and he was saying what the Spirit forced him to say. It does not follow therefore that his opened eye meant that he had turned to God: indeed his subsequent history proves that he had not done so. But his prefatory words are intended to assure us that he did indeed speak as a prophet, and the words he uttered were the words of God.

Previously he had been impelled to state that Israel was a people whom God had separated for Himself, and then that He had justified

them in spite of their natural sinfulness. Now he has to declare that God had **beautified** them. In Psalm 90 we have the prayer of Moses, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Here we find how abundantly God answered that desire, and how He added **victory** and **exaltation** to the beauty. Again we have to remind ourselves that the prophecy speaks of what God has in His purpose for Israel, which in due season He will bring to pass. What that nation through the ages would prove themselves to be is not the theme here. In the New Testament we find that God speaks in the same way of ourselves — the church of God. See for instance, Romans 8: 29, 30; Ephesians 2: 1—7; where the purpose of God is in view and not our practical state while in this world.

Balak was left with the statement that to curse Israel was to bring a curse on the head of the one who uttered it. This angered him and he wished to summarily dismiss Balaam, only to find that the Lord was about to give further utterance through Balaam's lips, to which he had to listen. He had summarily dismissed him in anger, and though Balaam spoke of departing, he found himself compelled to predict Israel's future, and particularly what they as a people should do to Moab in the latter days. So Balak had to hear not only Israel's present blessing but also their victorious destiny.

Ungodly though he was, for a fourth time Balaam was forced to utter inspired words, and verse 16 is instructive as to what is implied by inspiration. He not only "**saw**," and "**knew**," but also "**heard** the

words of God." Evidently he was verbally inspired. Moreover he used three names; not only "God," but also "The Most High," a name that seems specially connected with His supremacy in the millennial age, and also "The Almighty," the name by which He revealed Himself to Abraham, from whom Israel sprang. Had Balaam really known God for himself in the way these names indicate, he would have been arrested in his evil course. He furnishes us with a solemn example of what good things a man may utter while he himself remains in "the bond of iniquity," like Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8.

Bearing verse 16 in mind, the "Him," at the beginning of verse 17 is "the Almighty." Yet in his First Epistle to Timothy Paul tells us that God is "invisible," One whom "no man hath seen, nor can see." Balaam was inspired however, and the Deity that he is going to see is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, though, as he says, "not now," and "not nigh." Yes, when Balaam stands before the great white throne he will have his only sight of the One we have learned to love. In contrast with this we are to see Him "as He is," and be "like Him."

The "Star" and the "Sceptre" plainly refer to Christ; the former in His first advent, the latter in His second. It is quite possible that this prediction concerning the "Star" was remembered in the East, and handed down from generation to generation, and so furnished the "wise men from the east" with the idea that the remarkable star they saw indicated the birth of the King of the Jews.

Here again then, the Lord Jesus is predicted in a figurative way. In Genesis 3, He was indicated as the "Seed," but of "the woman." This presented Him as truly Man, yet not of Adam's fallen race: the most fundamental fact of all. Then in Genesis 49, we had old Jacob's prophecy in which He was prefigured as the "Shepherd," to gather and control God's sheep; and the "Stone," upon which Israel should ultimately be built up, and, as we know when we come to the New Testament, all God's purposes should be founded. Now He is the "Star," shining with promise and hope for Israel; and the "Sceptre," who will finally rule in the midst of His people for the deliverance and blessing of the whole earth. We may add that, in consequence of His rejection by Israel, when the star shone over His birth in humiliation, He is going to shine as the "Bright and Morning Star" for His waiting church.

The words of Balaam, however, were mainly concerned with the way in which the "Sceptre" would smite and destroy Moab and the other peoples who were Israel's opponents. His utterances finished, Balaam departed "to his place." This does not mean that he returned to his own land, for in Revelation 14 we learn that it was he that instigated the evils that occupy the next chapter, and we presently find that when Moab and the Midianites were destroyed he died amongst them.

Before proceeding to chapter 25, let us recapitulate for a moment, so that we may observe how truly the law had "a shadow of good things

to come." The good things made known in the Epistle to the Romans have come before us in their right order by these shadows.

In Exodus 11, we had indicated the "no difference" doctrine of Romans 3; and in Exodus 12 the blood of propitiation, which gave Israel shelter from the judgment of God, also found in Romans 3.

Then in Exodus 14 and 15, we had the shadow of what is stated in the end of Romans 4 and early verses of chapter 5. A way has been Divinely made through death on to resurrection ground, which has broken the power of the enemy and brought us to God Himself in peace, and rejoicing in the hope of glory; just as on the further shore of the Red Sea, Israel sang of God bringing them to His holy habitation in the promised land.

This was followed by the sorrowful experiences of the wilderness, when the utter perversity of man's flesh, as seen in Israel, was fully proved; only to be followed by the incident of the brazen serpent. In Romans 7 the sinfulness of the flesh, as revealed in Paul's own experience, is set forth at length, followed by the condemnation of "sin in the flesh" in the sacrifice of Christ, who came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," as stated in Romans 8: 3. But in this very passage too we find the Holy Spirit given as the power of the new life in Christ, just as the shadow of this, the springing well, is found in the same chapter as the incident of the brazen serpent.

And now we have had the attempt of the adversary, which signally

failed, to bring a curse on the people, and thus defeat God's purpose as to them. Here is the shadow of the triumphant passage toward the end of Romans 8, where we are assured that nothing can defeat the purpose of God concerning His saints, since everyone foreknown is glorified, and nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To the Jew, before Christ came, all this was history of much interest, and much condemnation as regards their forefathers. Until the substance was revealed in Christ and His Gospel, its "shadow" character did not appear. It is we who are in a favoured position, which enables us to discern the shadow character of the history. How great must be the Person and the work to cast a shadow extending over thousands of years. The tip of the shadow appeared in the Garden of Eden, where sin first entered. In the events we have been considering the shadow is broad and deep.

As we commence reading chapter 25, we descend from Israel, viewed according to God's purpose, to Israel, as they actually were at that time in carnality and unbelief. Balaam is not mentioned in the chapter but, as we have noted, he was at the bottom of the evil, instigating Balak to promote it. In result, "Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor." The "whoredom" involved in this was doubtless committed in honour of Baal, and so its wickedness disguised in their minds. Not all the people were involved, but enough to make it an act of apostasy that deserved and got severe and immediate judgment.

At the outset of his prophecy Balaam had declared the separation of Israel from all nations. Now comes the diabolical effort of this evil man to defeat his own words by seducing them into alliance with Moab. He did not succeed of course in defeating God's purpose, but he did seduce many, and so brought condign punishment upon them. There was a display of grief on the part of those not involved in the sin, as we see in verse 6, and of zeal for the glory of God, as displayed by Phineas. Not only did twenty-four thousand of the people die, but it brought a sentence of death on the Midianites at the hand of Israel.

Of all Satan's devices against us none is more effective than the temptation to ally oneself with the world; hence the searching words of James 4: 4, and of 2 Corinthians 6: 14—18. In such an alliance the men of the world **cannot go** the Christian way; they have **not** the life which would enable them to do so. Having the flesh in him, the Christian **can go** the world's way. Hence the result of the tension, that is produced, is a foregone conclusion.

Chapter 26 records the numbering of the people that the Lord ordered after the plague had subsided. The book of Numbers began with the numbering that took place in the second year after they came out of Egypt; now we have that which was taken just before they entered the land. It is marked by rather more detail than we had in chapter 1, and it is in this chapter we learn how that the children of Korah were spared when the judgment fell on their father.

If the two numberings be compared, we find that there was only a very small decrease in the total at the end of the journey, yet there were several large variations in the case of individual tribes. For instance Simeon fell to considerably less than half, which is significant in view of verse 14 of the last chapter. Others decreased in lesser degree. Some increased; notably Manasseh, since its total went up by just over 20,000. We know nothing that accounts for these other variations save that the small decrease in the case of Reuben may be accounted for by rebellion of Dathan and Abiram.

The Levites were excluded from the first numbering, save that they were counted later so that they might be substituted for the firstborn of all the people. In the second numbering they were counted, and the total was only slightly in excess of the earlier time. It is emphasized in our chapter that though the inheritance of the tribes was to be according to their number, and by lot, they were to have no inheritance amongst the others, since they were separated to the service of God.

One striking fact emerges at the end of the chapter. Amongst all these males of twenty years and over, numbering just over 600,000, there was not an individual left alive, who had been in the earlier census, saving Caleb and Joshua. We turn back to chapter 14, and again reading verses 20—32, we see with what absolute exactitude God fulfils the word He has spoken. A solemn fact for the unbeliever, but one in which we who believe can heartily rejoice.

THE FORERUNNER

A. J. POLLOCK

WHEN kings arrive in state, it is customary that officials of high rank precede them, as forerunners or announcers of majesty. Our Lord was not without this honour. Centuries before the birth of the forerunner of our Lord, then nameless, the prophet Isaiah foretold his entrance into the world (Isa. 40: 3-8). When this took place Scripture indicated the event with meticulous care and exactitude, showing heaven's deep sense of the great importance of such an event.

It took place in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, one of the greatest of the Roman Emperors. And, as if that were not enough to fix the date, Scripture goes on to make assurance doubly sure by giving a list of the rulers of the land of Israel at that particular time. Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judæa, Herod of Galilee, Philip of Ituræa, Lysanius of Abilene, and finally Annas and Caiaphas were High Priests at Jerusalem (Luke 3: 1, 2).

To trace the steps that led up to this is most impressive. In Judæa there lived a couple of godly Jews—Zacharias, a priest, and Elizabeth, his wife. "They had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were well stricken in years" (Luke 1: 7). In their old age, however, an angel of the Lord informed Zacharias, that he would have a son, whose name was to be John. He told him, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's

womb" (Luke 1: 15). The birth of John the Baptist was most certainly miraculous.

Whoever wishes to be Christian must be prepared to believe the miraculous. In our Lord's genealogy we have the miraculous birth of Isaac, the son of Abraham's old age, as also the perfectly unique birth of our Lord of a **virgin** mother (Matt. 1: 23). Thus would God show most manifestly, that these events cannot be explained away, as being the product of ordinary human nature, but are the outcome of His own almighty and special intervention.

The time came when we read, "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (Luke 3: 2). Those words are few and simple, yet they record what was positively dynamic. Filled from his birth with the Holy Spirit, John received this special and highly honoured commission from God to be the forerunner of our Lord. Such was his zeal in carrying it out, that our Lord described him as "a burning and a shining light" (John 5: 35), and declared that "among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11: 11).

John himself was very conscious of the high honour put upon him. When he was challenged by the multitude, he replied, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will

thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner, but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable" (Luke 3: 16, 17). In another place when challenged, he replied, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John 1: 23); and in yet another place he testified, "I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him . . . He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3: 28, 30). What an example for all who would seek to serve the Lord! Humility, self-effacement, marked John the Baptist. No wonder that his burning words came with convincing power. Multitudes heard the good news of the coming King. The gospel of the kingdom of heaven sounded in their ears. Multitudes were brought to repentance, and were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

To carry out this commission outstanding courage was needed, yea, **divine** courage wrought by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the forerunner. There stood on the height of Mount Moriah the gorgeous Temple at Jerusalem. There reigned the High Priests. There the imposing system of the Jewish hierarchy held sway, the hollow sham of outward orthodoxy.

Who then was the unknown lad from the wilderness of Judæa to dare call to repentance a nation wrapt in spiritual sloth, and of empty ritual. For long centuries Ichabod (**the glory departed from Israel**) was written over its portals (1 Sam. 4: 21, 22). Did not even our Lord lament at the end of His ministry on earth, "Behold, your

house is left unto you desolate"? (Matt. 23: 38).

Thank God, the brave ministry of John the Baptist was rendered without flinching. Multitudes heard the burning call to repentance that flowed from his lips. Great indeed was the spiritual harvest he reaped for eternity. Yet he paid the price, for the last glimpse we have of this intrepid servant of our Lord, was to behold his bleeding head in a charger in the hands of the wicked daughter of Herodias, who, at the bidding of her wicked mother, demanded this reward for the passing pleasure her dancing had given to King Herod.

Just as the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, was announced with great care and exactitude, so also was our Lord's birth announced with similar care. For this nothing less than the whole Roman earth was taxed, or enrolled. This took place in the reign of Caesar Augustus, Cyrenius being at the same time Governor of Syria. There was a curious law operating at that time, that enrolment was demanded, not at the place of residence, but at the place of birth. Thus it came to pass, that the whole Roman world was affected to bring about the birth of our Lord at Bethlehem, the city of David, as prophesied in Scripture (Micah 5: 2).

So also it was with the atoning death of our Lord, for we read, "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him . . . Him, being delivered by **the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God**, ye have taken, and by wicked hands

have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2: 22-24).

Viewed from the standpoint of what man did to our Lord, His death on the cross constitutes the blackest crime ever perpetrated. But what a far different note this Scripture strikes, when we read that it was by God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge that our Lord was delivered into their hands. In this we find how absolutely unique was the death of our Lord. It set forth the boundless love of God to sinful man.

We have been drawing attention to the wonderful ministry of John the Baptist, as the forerunner of our Lord. We read the testimony of the people in his day, "John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this Man were true. And many believed on Him there" (John 10: 41, 42).

But here is a wonder of wonders, **Jesus is our Forerunner**, having entered into that, which is within the veil, that is, He is in the presence of God for us (Heb. 6: 19, 20). We read that Christ "by His own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9: 12). This means that the blood of our Lord was not needed for Himself personally, but for us. And, mark it well, if He went into heaven for us, it was as our **Representative**. The blood therefore was necessary, and thank God the blood sufficed. "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7). His presence there

is the sure and certain pledge that every believer will be there — **as surely as He is there Himself**.

The blessing the believer enters upon is amazing. We are told that, "By two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6: 18). And what are these two immutable things? The blessed answer is, God's counsel and God's oath. His word is enough surely. It is impossible for God to lie. He will ever be true to His word, but, because we are slow to believe, He graciously stoops down to our weakness, and confirms the immutability of His counsel by an unchanging oath. In this way believers have a strong consolation, a divine hope, likened to an anchor with two flukes, "sure and steadfast," an anchor which can never fail, so that the believer finds divine **hope** is as certain as divine **possession**. The anchor is dropped already inside the veil, in that our Forerunner, our Representative, is already in the presence of God, the pledge that where He is, we shall be also (John 14: 3).

There are certain words or phrases in Scripture that necessitate a second word, or phrase. High Priest plainly infers an order of under-priests; Chief Shepherd infers under-shepherds; whilst here Forerunner infers after-runners.

How wonderfully blessed it is that our Lord is our Forerunner, and that every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is an after-runner, and is bound to be in the place which

our Forerunner has won for us by His atoning death on the cross of Calvary. Not one will be missing when the day comes, when we shall

hear the summoning shout of our Lord, calling us to be for ever with Himself in the Father's house on high (John 14: 1-3).

TEMPTATIONS

E. W. DIEHL.

How interesting to see the conditions and surroundings of the first man Adam, when he was tempted of the Devil; and then of the second Man out of heaven, when He was tempted, and the result of those temptations. "The first man is of the earth earthy; the second Man is the Lord from Heaven" (1 Cor. 15: 47). Nevertheless He was real Man, tempted as we are, yet without sin. He was the sinless, spotless Holy One of God, yet Man.

Adam was placed in the garden of Eden, the earthly paradise of delights, with everything that could possibly plead for God against the tempter; a place surrounded with all the beauties of God's creation, the trees each yielding fruit for his refreshment and most pleasant to look upon. Then there were all kinds of herb for food; no lack for the blessed God had indeed placed man in a most delightful place.

Yet there was only one condition for man to be happy and enjoy the sweet communion with the Creator; that was **obedience**. "And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Then in chapter 3 of Genesis we get the first temptation, and with it Satan's lie. "Ye shall not surely

die: ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The first man would become as God, in contrast to the second Man, who, being God, emptied Himself. In verse 6 we read "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." Does not this remind us of 1 John 2: 16, which mentions the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life? So the first man failed, having listened to the tempter though in such delightful circumstances. Through Adam's sin death rests upon mankind. How very solemn.

Now let us for a moment look at the temptations of the second Man our Lord Jesus Christ, and note the conditions and circumstances that surrounded Him. As soon as the second Man appeared upon the scene, then Satan appeared also. Christ had undertaken the mighty work of God and to glorify Him on the earth by destroying the works of the devil, and redeeming His people. Hence at the very opening of His public career, He went to the wilderness and there to be tempted. It was a wilderness, not a garden of delights with everything to please man, a wilderness with no food to sustain. The wilderness is a type of all that disordered and barren state of things on earth which has come about as a consequence of man's sin.

God never created a wilderness, though, praise God, it will "blossom as the rose" in the coming day. The Lord Jesus could say when He came into the world. "Lo, I come to do Thy will O God;" how different this to the first man! So Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, "Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing; and when they were ended, He afterward hungered." We do not read that Adam hungered, for he had more than enough.

The Lord Jesus had the same temptations brought before Him as those we found in Genesis 3. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. But He could say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me," (John 14: 30). He was ever and always the obedient and dependent One. He never left the subject place that He had taken in His Father's business. Satan in the wilderness tried, but in vain, to make Him leave it. He would obey, and was obedient unto death. He would use only the word of God in each of the temptations, "It is written." There is no doubt that the blessed Lord felt these temptations deeply for we read, "Behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matt. 4: 11). How different to the first man!

When the devil had ended all the temptations he departed from Him for a season. By the victory in the wilderness the strong man was bound not destroyed; hence we see the devil again trying to tempt the Lord Jesus at the close of His pathway; this time in a garden and not a wilderness. He appeared in another character, even as one who

had the power of death, which was brought before our Lord in all its terrible intensity. Death terrifies the soul of man, and it is evident that Satan was permitted to put forth special power, in order if possible to hinder Him by the power and all the terrors of death. The Lord said "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." (Matt. 26: 38). Again we read that, "Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly." (Luke 22: 44). We shall never comprehend the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. How different from the first man, Adam who was **disobedient** unto death. The second Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, was **obedient** unto death, even the death of the cross. With all the horrors of death before Him, He said, "Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from Me, nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done."

Even in sorrow and suffering He was pre-eminent; as indicated prophetically in Psalm 69: 20 "I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Yet our blessed Lord did not turn aside from the death of the cross. Praise His Holy Name. He would glorify God in all things. His attitude ever was, "Not My will but Thine be done."

**"Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles,
Or suffering, shame, and loss,
Thy path, uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the Cross."**

So He would go to the cross, not only to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but that all who believe may be forgiven and be par-

takers of the divine nature and have the power of the Holy Spirit, to enable them to overcome when tempted and live to the glory of God. There was no failure with our blessed Lord, He was ever and always the perfect, holy Man. We fail often, but He is able to succour all them that are tempted. Look at the temptations which the devil, knowing that his time is short, brings before the young Christians, and even the older ones, today. They are far more than years ago. Things which in themselves seem to be harmless

yet are most **subtle**. His main object is to turn us away from the path of God's will, so that we may not be known as Christ's disciples.

Oh! may we all know what true separation is from these fascinating snares and wait upon Him, who, has taken our place as our Great High Priest before God, and is ever interceding for us. He is able to keep us from falling and to present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 24). For this let us praise the Lord.

WORSHIP: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

W. R. DRONSFIELD.

To a simple Samaritan woman, the Lord gave a revelation which is of great importance to us. He showed that the place and character of worship was to be changed. Jerusalem was no longer to be its centre, and its character was henceforth to be "in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 23).

It may be asked: If the worship of the saints in the Old Testament was ordained of God, why is the style now altered? Has God changed His mind? No, indeed, God has not changed, but the position and calling of the true worshippers are now quite different. Israel was an earthly people, their hopes and aspirations were towards glory on the earth, and the promises they had received from God were all of earthly blessings. Their mode of worship was therefore suited to their outlook. We, on the other hand, are a heavenly people for all

our ultimate blessing is to do with heaven. Our Lord is rejected on earth and is now in bodily presence a Man in heaven, absent from the place of our earthly pilgrimage. God has set aside the Jews for a season because of their unbelief, and the Church has taken their place as worshippers, although they are conscious of being only sojourners and strangers on the earth.

Firstly, there is a change of **place**. Jerusalem was trodden down by the heathen Gentiles, and the temple of God was destroyed. The Church has no headquarters on earth, its Head is in heaven. The Lord Jesus is the centre of worship and His people should now gather to His name alone, for they believe His promise that He will be present in spirit whenever they are so gathered. No place on earth is to be considered especially holy in this dispensation.

Next there is the change of character. Worship is to be

In spirit.

The way into the holiest is now open. We now "worship by the Spirit of God" (Phil. 3: 3, New Trans.), and we can now worship the Father in all the joyful fulness of reconciled hearts as we see in Hebrews 10: 19-22. As a heavenly people the saints of today worship after the manner in which they will worship in heaven.

In old time this was not so, and men who had their hopes on earthly things needed material stimulation of their natural senses before they could give praise to God. Their worship, therefore, was soulish as well as spiritual. It was stimulated by their sight, in the grandeur of the temple and the beauty of the priestly robes; by their smell in the burning of the incense; by their taste in the various feasts; by their hearing, in that musical instruments were used freely; and by their general senses of touch and muscle co-ordination in the ecstatic dancing (Psalm 150: 3-5).

The tendency is always for the unspiritual to re-introduce these things as aids to worship. For example, the love of music is said to be a spiritual feeling, and yet the fact is that even animals — which have bodies and souls but no spirits — are sometimes influenced by music to a small degree. The snake is entranced by its charmer's pipe! Some very godly Christians are not able to sing three notes of a scale, while atheists may be very musical.

Also worship is now to be

In truth.

This does not mean that the worship of old was in untruth, but that the whole truth had not been fully revealed. Where they had the shadow, we have the substance. The blessed One who is truth has been revealed to us and we know Him and are in Him.

In the days before the cross, all Israel was commanded to worship the Lord and there was no question raised concerning the individual's conversion. Even Saul "worshipped the Lord" (1 Sam. 15: 31). They were, as God's earthly people, to acknowledge Him nationally in order to avert Divine governmental displeasure. Only truly converted children of the Father can worship in spirit and in truth, and they do not do so in order to avert God's displeasure or obtain His acceptance, but because acceptance and favour are already theirs through the atoning merits of the sacrifice of Calvary, which alone has abiding value in God's sight.

The Future.

During the millennium, when the Church has been translated to heaven and the kingdom is established on earth, worship will revert to its old pattern once more. The centre will be at the temple in Jerusalem and the priestly offices with animal sacrifices will be revived: see, Ezekiel, chapters 40-46 and Malachi 1: 11. All men will be commanded to worship: see, Psalm 22: 27-29; 86: 9, 10; Isaiah 66: 23; Zephaniah 2: 11, but all flesh will not be converted as is indicated in the margin of Psalm 18: 44.

Some find it difficult to understand how animal sacrifices can be offered again, as they believe the Mosaic ritual was abolished consequent to the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Cross being completed, but nowhere in the Scriptures do we read that the Mosaic ritual has been finally abolished. The blood of bulls and goats never had any value in itself, as stated in Hebrews 10: 4, and will not have any in the future. The blood will again be

shed in commemoration of the death of Christ.

There is really no more difficulty in understanding commemorative sacrifices than anticipative ones. Since the normal way of worship for those whose hopes are bounded by earth is by sacrifices, they will once again be offered when the earthly people are publicly owned as the holy nation of the Lord.

AN OUTLINE OF THINGS TO COME

N. ANDERSON.

FIRST, the Lord will come for His own, as stated in 1 Thessalonians 4. This is commonly spoken of as "the Rapture." The dead in Christ will rise first: the living will be changed; and all caught up **together** to meet the Lord in the air. "We shall be like Him." This will be manifested when He is manifested, but it will have taken place at the rapture.

Referring to 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, we may connect "The Lord Himself" as uttering His "shout" for the Church; the "voice of the archangel" for those of Israel who were of faith; the "trump of God" for those Gentiles who died in faith during the past dealings of God. Not alone shall the Church be caught up to have part in this blessed first resurrection; but **all** those that "are Christ's at His coming."

This will be followed by the Judgment Seat of Christ, of which we read in 2 Corinthians 5, and

other scriptures. Then will take place a review of our lives in the light of His perfect judgment. No penal punishment here, for we shall then be "like Him," and the word, "shall not come into condemnation [judgment]" (John 5: 24) stands true. Everything that was of God in life and service will meet with manifest, Divine approval. Everything contrary will receive disapproval. Individuals will receive reward or loss, as stated in 1 Corinthians 3: 13-15, and in the parables of Luke 19 and Matthew 25.

At this time God will have resumed on earth His work and dealings amongst the Jews. His ways with Israel have long been in abeyance. He had last of all sent His Son, saying, "It may be they will reverence Him when they see Him." They replied, "This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours" (Luke 20: 13, 14), and so they crucified Him. On the cross He prayed

for them — " Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Hence they had been mercifully treated, as having sinned ignorantly. Presented consequently with the glorified Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Stephen, by his martyrdom they sent an embassy after Him, saying, " We will not have this Man to reign over us."

Thus, during the out-gathering of the Church, according to eternal purpose, Israel was set aside. Now that the Church is removed, God reverts to His promises to Israel, and raising up messengers He calls a remnant in heart and conscience to Himself. His witnesses will go out in resumption of the testimony given once to His disciples, but interrupted, as is indicated by Matthew 10: 23. Their testimony will be effectual in the earth, and the sealed remnant of the tribes of Israel together with the innumerable host from amongst the Gentiles, as recorded in Revelation 7, are the fruit of this testimony.

A tremendous movement will simultaneously be taking place amongst the nations. Roman imperialism will revive in its final ten-kingdom form, as we see in Revelation 13, 17 and 18. The nations, controlled by Satan, will produce " the beast."

Apostate Jewry will produce Antichrist, the false prophet, the second beast.

Apostate Christendom will produce in its full corruption the harlot, who rides the beast — " Mystery, Babylon the Great."

The political beast in league with the religious beast will enter into a

covenant with the Jews for seven years — the seventieth week of years, predicted in Daniel 9. In the midst of this week he causes sacrifice to cease by claiming divine honours for himself, bringing in thus the overspreading of abominations and consequent desolation. Then shall burst forth the time of " Jacob's trouble," the great tribulation, which rages for the last half of the week.

We must note that the great tribulation, whilst having particular bearing against Israel in the land, will be world-wide in its effects. It shall come " upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth;" or " the earth-dwellers." It is these and not the Church that are thus to be brought into trial.

Israel had refused their Messiah, when He came in His Father's name. Now they believe the devil's lie, and receive him who comes in his own name, with dreadful results. But, on the other hand, the time has come for a godly remnant to cry, " Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Then Messiah shall come. Scriptures which tell of His coming " to His holy temple " shall be fulfilled. " The Deliverer " shall come out of Zion. " Shiloh " arrives, " and to Him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49: 10). At His coming in power and great glory this unparalleled trouble shall be cut short for the elects' sake, for, had it not been, no flesh should have been saved.

At His coming the " beasts " will be destroyed. But just before

this the Roman beast with his confederate kings will have unseated and destroyed Babylon, "the whore." All heaven will rejoice at the overthrow in "one hour" of this religious corruption of the ages. The spurious "church," the counterfeit "bride," is thus overthrown.

Meanwhile in heaven Satan, the "accuser of the brethren," is discomfited by seeing the triumph of Christ in His saints, the judgment seat having taken place, and their fidelity having been recognized in spite of his seductions and opposition to them. He is now cast out from the heavens to the earth, and soon to be banished into the abyss.

All heaven is now moved for the marriage of the Lamb is come. Then Christ with His Church, united to Him, rides forth triumphantly through the opened heavens; and hence the overthrow of all the antagonistic powers, whether the Roman, or the Assyrian, or Gog and Magog.

The glory of the Millennial age will commence by the Son of Man purging out of His Kingdom, by angelic means, all offences and those who practice lawlessness, as indicated in Matthew 13. Then His angels

will "gather together His elect . . . from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24: 31). Moreover the two houses of Israel, Judah and Ephraim, shall be united. Instead of being two sticks they shall be "one stick, and they shall be one in Mine hand" (Ezek. 37: 19). Then, "The Lord of Hosts shall reign . . . before His ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24: 23).

The Son of Man will have received from the "Ancient of days" an "everlasting dominion" (Dan. 7: 13, 14). The holy temple will have been built according to the Divine plan given in Ezekiel, and it will be filled with His glory, while His vice-regent, a prince of the house of David, will act for Him in Jerusalem — see, Ezekiel 44: 3.

Then, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14). His people shall be "willing" in the "day of His power" (Psa. 110: 3), and the scripture will be fulfilled which says, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee . . . will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3: 17).

I HEAR a good deal about testimony. I am uncommonly thankful when the gospel sounds out; . . . but what I desire is testimony of life. We want living to Christ — this will make the heart yearn for the sinner that does not know Christ. As time goes on we shall find that what strikes the consciences and minds of men most is life, divine life, led by a man consistently

BIBLE STUDY—NUMBERS

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 27: 1 — 36: 13).

IN verse 33 of the previous chapter it was noted that Zelophehad of the tribe of Manasseh had no son, but daughters only. In chapter 27 we find that this gave rise to legislation in Israel, though as yet they had not reached the land where the inheritance was to be. Evidently then these daughters were women of faith who relied on the promise of God. They took it for granted that the inheritance would materialize, and asked that their father's portion should not be lost. The answer of God was, "The daughters of Zelophehad **speak right.**" Faith is always **right** and it commands a **blessing**. The inheritance was to be theirs.

But the latter part of the chapter confirms the fact that Moses in the disciplinary ways of God was not permitted to lead the people into the inheritance. Accepting this discipline, he besought God to appoint the man who should lead them in, and Joshua was indicated. His qualification consisted in that he was, "a man in whom is the Spirit." Yet, as verse 21 shows he was to differ from Moses in being more dependent upon Eleazer the priest, who had the Urim and the Thummim, through which counsel and judgment should be given.

Here then we have in shadowy outline a type of Christ as "the Captain" of our "salvation," who by His Spirit is "bringing many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2: 10). Only here, as so often, the Antitype so

far exceeds the type that we are struck by the contrasts rather than by the resemblance. The Lord Jesus is Himself both the Captain and the High Priest: not only the Possessor of the Spirit but One who sheds Him forth upon others: the Leader to glory above, and not merely to an inheritance below.

By laying his hands upon Joshua, Moses identified himself with him in a public way, and thus his appointment was confirmed in the sight of the people. Yet we do not reach the historic record of the death of Moses until the end of Deuteronomy. From this point therefore we meet with but little in the way of recorded history, and are occupied mainly with further legislation and with moral instruction.

In chapters 28 and 29, we have very full instructions as to the various sacrifices that were to be offered — day by day, both morning and evening; on the sabbaths; at the beginning of the months; and on the occasion of the great feasts that marked the Israelitish year. In verse 2 they are spoken of as "My offering," "My bread," "My sacrifices." Thus God claimed them as His right. They were not optional but compulsory.

In the main they were burnt offerings with their accompanying meat and drink offerings, all of which were "a sweet savour." They set forth typically the excellence of Christ in His sacrifice,

which is such a delight to the heart of God. But with these there was also an offering for sin, which shows that the sinful state of the people was never forgotten, but was met by sacrifice.

The feasts of the Lord were specified in Leviticus 23 and the offering of sacrifices mentioned, but now we have these given to us in full detail. Nothing was left to the discretion or feelings of the people; rather God was to be acknowledged and honoured according to His pleasure. In this we see a principle of importance. We draw near to God today and worship Him in another order of things. Later in Israel's history one of their prophets said, "Receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips" (Hosea 14: 2); thus recognizing that something coming out of their hearts through their lips would be more acceptable than the mechanical presentation of an animal. Today, they that worship God "must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 24). And the way in which spiritual worship is publicly to be offered is prescribed in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14. It is not left for us to prescribe for ourselves.

When we reach verse 12 of chapter 29, we come to the offerings for the feast of Tabernacles, which sets forth in type the Millennial rest, for which Israel still waits. If we examine the succeeding verses we notice the steady reduction in the number of bullocks offered from the first day to the seventh. If the bullocks indicate the appreciation of God's benefits in Christ on the part of the offerers, this fits in with what we learn of the "thousand years"

in the Revelation. As the centuries pass there is deterioration, which culminates in rebellion directly Satan is once more active.

Verse 35 brings us to the eighth day of the feast, which according to Leviticus 23 was "an holy convocation," and "a solemn assembly." On this day only one bullock was to be offered, and the lambs only seven instead of fourteen: similar to what was ordered for the day of atonement in verse 8. So we are carried back in thought to that great day.

It was however, we understand, "that great day of the feast" (John 7: 37), on which Jesus cried aloud as to the rivers of living water, which would flow as the result of the indwelling Holy Spirit. No dwindling, no depreciation of energy here!

We pass from what was compulsory to what was optional when we read chapter 30. The making of vows was not imposed upon any, but, if made by a man, the vow was binding; if by a woman, it might be disallowed by father or husband. It has been remarked that in Scripture a woman often stands figuratively for a system or a community, and it may be so here. Israel as a community pledged themselves to obedience to the law of God. This vow of theirs was not disallowed and to this day they suffer the governmental consequences of their failure. On the other hand, when our Lord said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," there could be no annulment, had He desired it. He did not desire it, or say, "Father, save Me from this hour," He said rather, "Father, glorify

Thy name," as we read in John 12.

In chapter 31 we resume a little history. Moses was not to pass off the scene until the Midianites, which included Moab, were destroyed. The normal path of Israel was to pass peacefully through these peoples that dwelt in lands on the fringe of the land of promise, just as the normal path of a Christian is to be an unoffensive pilgrim on his heavenward way. But here were the people that had seduced Israel to fornication, which is a figure of that unholy intercourse and alliance with the world-system, which is such a danger to the Christian. In our chapter, death fell upon every male and only the youngest females were allowed to live. Baalam died also. A portion of the spoil had to be offered to the Lord.

The weapons of the Christian are not carnal. He does not slay the foes who tempt him but learns to apply the death of Christ to himself, so that in practice he becomes dead to sin. Only then is it that there is fruit of a kind that can be offered to God. We may give of our substance for the work of the Lord and His workmen in such a way as to be, "a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (Phil. 4: 18); as well as offering "the sacrifice of praise . . . the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name (Heb. 13: 15).

Typical instruction of a very searching sort is brought home to us as we read chapter 32. Two tribes, Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh petitioned Moses to be allowed to settle down on the conquered lands to the east of Jordan and not find their portion

in that which was definitely the land of God's promise. What particularly moved them to desire this was the abundance of cattle that they had acquired. The good things that God had granted took away their desire for Canaan.

We have already seen how unbelief excluded multitudes from the land, though afterwards they wanted to go in. We now see how the good things of earth may lead people to exclude themselves. If the land was to be entered the Jordan had to be crossed, and the crossing of Jordan, which is recorded in Joshua 3, is typical of death and resurrection with Christ, as the way of entrance into the realization of the heavenly portion to which we are called, as we see in Colossians 2 and 3. Then it is that we can really seek those things that are above and not on the earth, setting our minds upon them, and finding our portion where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

The proposal made by the two and a half tribes, which was finally accepted by Moses, was that, while their wives and children together with much cattle and other possessions should settle comfortably in the land of Jazer and Gilead, the men should cross with the other tribes in order to help fight their battles and see them settled in the land of promise, yet find their own inheritance outside the place of God's promise.

The lesson that is furnished by this type is very clear, and should be inwardly digested by each of us. In the New Testament we are plainly told that those that have riches enter with much difficulty in-

to the kingdom of God, and that not many wise and mighty and noble are called; but here we see that the rich and good things of earth make it difficult for those who possess them to lay hold upon their heavenly possessions. It is so easy for us, while we assent to the truth of our heavenly calling, to settle down in our comfortable earthly circumstances, and fail to lay hold upon it as a matter of faith's experience.

These men had had experience of battles, which by the power of God and at very little loss to themselves, had been easily won; so they were not averse to more fighting in the land. Some of us may be like them. We are told to contend earnestly for the faith, and to some of us a bit of controversial fighting makes an appeal; but — mark it well — it is possible to contend earnestly for what we may call the heavenly side of truth, and yet be living lives mainly governed by the good things of earth which we have by the mercy of God. We may accept the fact that, "Our conversation [associations of life] is in heaven" (Phil. 3: 20), and yet have the practical associations of our lives very much in earthly things.

One thing more we must observe. When Israel declined, captivity began with the two and a half tribes. Even in the days of Ahab Ramoth in Gilead was in the hands of the Syrians, and later those parts were the first to fall captive to Assyria. Just so, the earthly minded Christian is captivated most easily by the spirit of the world.

The people now being on the very edge of the land, Moses was com-

manded to put on record all the places where they encamped during the forty years of their wanderings, and a long list it proves to have been, occupying the first 49 verses of chapter 33. God marked all their wanderings, and they were never to forget them, inasmuch as all bore witness to the forbearing and providing kindness of God. At the end of this chapter they are directed to dispossess completely the nations of Canaan, when they went in, and destroy every trace of their idolatries, and warned that if they did not do it, it would be their own undoing. There was to be no compromise with the power of Satan reigning there. Similarly, as Ephesians 6 shows, there can be no compromise with the world rulers of this darkness and the spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

Chapter 34 assumes that the people have arrived victoriously in the land and obtained possession, and so the borders of the land are specified, and how it was to be divided. It is noticeable that the border eastward was to run from the east side of the sea of Chinnereth — the Lake of Galilee — down the Jordan to the east side of the salt sea. So the portion of the two and a half tribes was not included in it.

The division of the land among the other tribes is not mentioned here: what is mentioned is the provision of cities for the Levites and then the provision of cities of refuge for the manslayer. Both these things occupy chapter 35.

The males of the tribe of Levi were specially called to the service of God and therefore they had no definite section of the promised land

allotted to them. They were to be given forty eight cities and these were to be scattered throughout the portions given to the other tribes. Moreover they were to possess land round each of these cities extending to a depth of 2,000 cubits — which means at least 1,000 yards, and probably a little more. This land was to be for their cattle and for their goods; that is, we suppose, for their subsistence by reason of cultivation. The land attached to each city may seem to us restricted and insufficient, but we must remember that these cities were very small, judged by our standards, as has been demonstrated by the recent excavation of ancient Jericho.

In these provisions we see the gracious care of God for those whom He calls to devote their lives to His service. We have already seen how they were to be supported by the system of tithing that was instituted and now we find that their very dwelling places were divinely arranged. God places His servants as it seems good to Him. He does not leave them to pick and choose for themselves.

All this, we are assured, contains salutary lessons for ourselves. There is of course this important difference; the Levites were called in the mass to service without any stipulation as to their spiritual state. Their position stood upon a tribal basis. God has His servants today, but their calling rests upon another basis altogether — neither national nor tribal, but spiritual. Only those who have been redeemed and born again have the ability to serve Him, and even so, the effectiveness of their service depends upon their spiritual state.

Of the forty eight Levitical cities six were to be selected as cities of refuge, as the latter part of the chapter indicates. The law concerning them is also given in full. The prime thought underlying the whole matter is that life belongs to the God who gave it. No man has any right to take it away. Hence in verse 30 the death penalty is plainly pronounced upon anyone convicted of murder on the testimony of two or more witnesses, thus reaffirming the primitive enactment of Genesis 9: 6. The death sentence upon the murderer is to be executed by properly constituted authority. The wilful shedding of man's blood pollutes and defiles the land, and it is only cleansed as the blood of the murderer is shed. So it is stated at the end of our chapter. In the light of this, we are clearly living in an earth that is terribly defiled, and that supremely by the death of the Son of God.

But many cases would occur, accidental in nature, where man's will had not been at work, and for such manslaughter the cities of refuge were to be provided. There sanctuary was to be found from the avenger of blood available until the death of the high priest of those days, after which sanctuary would not be needed. We have to pass on to Joshua 20 to find the names of the six cities, and if we read that chapter we shall note how wisely they were selected. They were distributed on both sides of Jordan in such a manner that the manslayer would never be very far from one of the cities, no matter where the accident took place. Here again we note the tender mercy of our God.

These things have a typical import as is made quite plain by the closing verses of Hebrews 6. Palestine has been defiled by the shedding of blood, and supremely by the blood of God's dear Son. Was His death to be accounted as murder or manslaughter? The dying prayer of our Lord, recorded in Luke 23: 34, was in effect a request that it be treated by God as manslaughter only; and Peter's declaration, recorded in Acts 3: 17, was in effect an announcement that God had accepted the prayer. Hence in the exaltation of Christ in heaven, before He comes in glory to crush His foes on earth, a city of refuge has been opened. When the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, Jews who had believed could be described as those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." The hope set before the manslayer, incarcerated in a city of refuge, was the death of the high priest. Our High Priest can never die, but there will be a change in the exercise of His priesthood, when He comes again in glory, and this is the hope set before the believer today.

One thing more let us note: the refuge was provided, but the manslayer had to make the effort to avail himself of it. If he did not, his blood would be upon his own head. This exactly figures the situation as the Gospel is preached today. Take for example, Paul's address in the synagogue at Antioch, reported in Acts 13. In verses 38 and 39 he showed that refuge was provided, but in verses 40 and 41 he warned those

who were inclined to ignore or despise it.

The last chapter of Numbers reverts to the daughters of Zelophehad, and provision was made as to their marriage affairs so that the inheritance vested in them should not be alienated from the tribe to which they belonged. This might seem to us a trivial matter, but God took notice of it and provided for it. It was included among the "commandments and judgments" that the Lord laid down through Moses. Nothing that concerned His people was overlooked by Him.

Reaching the end of the Book of Numbers, we ask our readers to note that the first word of Exodus is, "Now." The first word of Leviticus is, "And." The first word of Numbers is, "And." That is, there is no real break between the first four books. Deuteronomy however does not so begin. It evidently inaugurates a new series, which does not end till we finish the Second Book of Kings, since again the books begin with a similar copulative expression. Deuteronomy is concerned with the farewell words of Moses, in which a recapitulation of their history has a large place.

If permitted to continue these studies, we may therefore pass from Numbers to consider the book of Job, which carries us back to, or even beyond the time of Moses, rather than continue with the recapitulation afforded in Deuteronomy.

THE difference between real Christians is not in pardon and acceptance, which is the portion of all true believers, but in the degree of consecration to God.

A DANGER TO BE AVOIDED

F. B. HOLE.

THE formation of the church of God is recorded in Acts 2. The power that marked its earliest days, though it was from the outset in the place of rejection by the world, is recorded in chapters 3 and 4. Then in chapter 5 we have recorded the first evil that was manifested in the midst of it. This was the sin of **pretentiousness**; of posing as though a higher standard of spirituality and devotedness were possessed than really existed.

Many were selling their possessions and devoting the proceeds to the Lord. Ananias and Sapphira sold theirs, and presented a part of the proceeds as though it were the whole. Ananias **acted** the lie. Sapphira **told** it. They desired to acquire a reputation of being more heavenly-minded than they were. Pretension to higher spiritual condition was the **first** recorded sin, then, in the church's history. It will also be the last, as we shall see.

This sin of pretension began with individuals, and it is a danger which threatens every Christian as an individual; this is made very plain in the Epistles. We quote a few passages in support of this assertion.

"For I say . . . to every man that is among you, not to **think of himself more highly** than he ought to think" (Rom. 12: 3).

"If any man **think that he knoweth anything**, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8: 2).

"Let him that **thinketh he standeth** take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 12).

"If any man **think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual . . .**" (1 Cor. 14: 37).

"If a man **think himself to be something**, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6: 3).

Those were the days when indeed there were men who knew the things of God, if anyone ever did. There **were** those who stood, who were prophets and spiritual, and therefore **were** something in the Divine way of reckoning, but these were just the ones who were happily occupied with Christ and His service, and not **thinking** of themselves. Those who were doing the **thinking**, and making **claims** for themselves, based on that thinking, were largely pretenders. This the Apostle's language indicates. In two instances, above cited, he plainly says, "he knoweth nothing," "he is nothing;" in the others he plainly infers that the pretenders were by no means all they thought themselves to be.

But the most striking exemplification of the point we are considering is found in the addresses of the Lord to the seven churches of Asia, recorded in Revelation 2 and 3. In six out of the seven this sin of pretension is alluded to.

To Ephesus He speaks of "**them which say they are apostles**, and are not." He characterizes them as "liars."

To Smyrna: "**them which say they are Jews**, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

To Thyatira: "that woman,

Jezebel, which **calleth herself a prophetess**, to teach and to seduce . . .”

To Sardis: “thou hast a **name that thou livest**, and art dead.”

To Philadelphia: “the synagogue of Satan, **which say they are Jews** and not, but do lie.”

To Laodicea: “**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.”

In these scriptures notice several things.

First of all, the claimants here are companies rather than individuals. It is “**them**,” which say. Jezebel is a typical woman, representing more than an individual. To Sardis and Laodicea it is “**thou**,” but this is said to the “**angel**,” who represents the church, so that it indicates virtually the whole church, with the exception of a small remnant.

Then it is “**say**” here, and not merely “**think**.” The evil has intensified since the day of Paul’s epistles. An hour had arrived when these pretensions were not only in people’s minds, but said boldly out in the ears of all.

Further, viewing these addresses to the churches as prophetic, it appears that the evil deepens as the history proceeds.

Ephesus was troubled with a little band of men who claimed apostleship. This was a claim likely to deceive in the days when most of the genuine apostles had been removed by martyrdom, and the

canon of Scripture was hardly complete. The same dangerous claim has however been raised in our day on behalf of men, who are deemed to be “**spiritual**,” and whose utterances in properly convened meetings are therefore to be accepted as almost, if not entirely, as authoritative as Scripture.

In the age of Smyrna there was trouble and bitter opposition from a certain clique, who claimed a place analagous to that of the Jew. They were truly a “**synagogue**,” but it was of Satan. They were religionists and ritualists without reality.

There is a distant lowering with Thyatira. Jezebel called herself a prophetess, and she indicates, we believe, the Romish hierarchy, who claim the exclusive right of interpreting the Scriptures, and thus of voicing the mind of God. Jezebel is **suffered**. The pretender here is thoroughly inside the church and is in power.

Out of this state of things Sardis springs. Protestantism — using the word in the largest sense — has a far more respectable exterior and has established for itself a certain reputation, or “**name**.” Yet it is pronounced to be dead. This God-given movement soon got linked up with worldly powers and politics, so that its very life was drained away in wars as well as internal contentions. It is no longer the pretensions of a clique, but the whole church is indicted, though a few things remain not yet dead.

In Philadelphia we get a little glimpse of the brightness and reality which marked the church

at the beginning. Once again pretension is confined to a clique outside its pale rather than inside. The religionists, who love to claim a place on **earth**, again appear.

In Laodicea we reach the sad climax. The whole church is infected, as in the case of Sardis, but there it was only a claim to live, whereas here the church actually claims to be a paragon of perfection! The claim ends, "I have need of nothing." Could pretension go further? And could the Lord's condemnation be more severe?

Notice one thing more. **In every case** the Lord, who scrutinizes the churches with eyes as a flame of fire, disallows the claims, and that in most incisive language. In not one case is there the smallest foundation in fact for that to which they lay claim. The very reverse. "Liars;" "Synagogue of Satan;" "Dead;" "Wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked;" are some of the terms He uses.

Now all this has a very distinct voice to us. We live in an age which more and more is taking on the character of Laodicea. And more than this, alas! Many of us, who have aimed at walking in the truth, and having our church life in accordance with the order laid down in Paul's epistles, are conscious how this spirit of pretension has been displayed in such circles, and of how we ourselves may have become infected by it.

Looking back over the years, we have heard claims to be "the spiritual," or, "a new lump," or, "Gideon's three hundred." Or, to

possess "the new light," or "the needed truth," or to be "bearing the ark of the testimony" or "standing for God."

It is a fact, thanks be to God, that there are today spiritually-minded saints, who in their measure are standing for God, bearing His testimony and ministering needed truth. He knows them all, and their secret approbation is with Him, as is also their public recognition in the coming day, as Revelation 3: 9 shows. But let us beware of trying to label them, lest we fall into the folly of labelling ourselves thus. Never let us forget that **to claim** to be, or to have, these things is **certain proof** that we are or have **nothing of the kind**.

What then is becoming in the Laodicean age? Just that which is indicated in these verses (14—22). First, to recognize the Lord as He presents Himself to us here. He is the "Amen;" the One in whom is found the completion and perfect response to all the purposes of God. He is "the faithful and true Witness," who stands forth as the complete and full representation of all that God is, when the church in its witness has failed. He is "the beginning of the creation of God," for in Him, risen from the dead, God has made a new start. He, and not the church, is the foundation of all. Thus all human pretension is demolished.

Second, be it ours to accept the chastening, spoken of in verse 19, and with zeal in our hearts — the opposite of lukewarmness — to repent. Now repentance works such a salvation from the things repented

of as is permanent and abiding, as 2 Corinthians 7: 10 indicates.

Third, as we hear Him knocking at the door of our hearts, to swing that door open, that He may enter. Then will be established communion of the sweetest and most heavenly sort. He will condescend to our table that He may know our things, and lift us to His table that we may enter into and enjoy His things.

If in any measure this experience is ours we shall not only find

“the things of earth” growing “strangely dim,” but our own selves, in our natural self-importance, will disappear, “in the light of His glory and grace.”

It is evidently possible to enjoy such communion with our risen Lord even in the last days of the church's history. In the measure in which we do so we shall be marked by the repentant spirit and the avoidance of that self-occupation which leads to pretentious claims.

“THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT”

A. J. POLLOCK.

THERE is one most assuring Scripture, which tells us, that what God promises, He will most certainly perform, and bring to pass. In human life promises are made, and always they carry with them an element of uncertainty, but this is not so with Divine promises. Scripture describes divinely promised hope as “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Heb. 6: 19). “Sure and steadfast” have been likened to the two flukes of an anchor, that lay hold of the ground firmly. Our Scripture speaks of two immutable and unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, so that we might have a strong consolation. Hence we may have, as the Scripture so happily phrases it, “Full assurance of hope unto the end” (Heb. 6: 11). So we read, “All the promises of God in Him [**our Lord Jesus Christ**] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Cor. 1: 20). How blessed is God's “yea,” God's

most emphatic YES!

Another Scripture is most assuring. It tells us the Christian will not be called to pass through tribulation above that, which he is able to bear. So we read, “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 make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10: 13).

How good it is, when we are racked with pain, or confronted with circumstances, that seem ready to engulf us, that we can pillow our souls on the blessed words, “God is faithful.” Will He fail us? Nay, a thousand times, Nay! He did not fail the three Hebrew children, when they were flung bound into the fiery furnace, that slew the very soldiers, who flung them in. All that the fire did was to burn their bonds, and liberate them to walk unharmed in the

flame in happy company with their Lord. They would not have missed the tribulation for anything, for did it not prove the faithfulness of their God, giving them such a mighty deliverance? (Dan. 3: 19-30). He did not fail Daniel, when he was flung into a den with savage and hungry lions. God shut their mouths, leaving him untouched by a single scratch, whilst his persecutors next day fared very differently, for we read, as soon as they were flung into the den, "The lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den" (Dan. 6: 24).

Indeed in the case of the Apostle Paul and Timothy, his companion, we read, that "they were pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2 Cor. 1: 8-10). What a deliverance! Past, present, and the full assurance of future deliverance! More than conquerors through Him that loved them (Rom. 8: 37). Experience of God worketh 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" (Rom. 5: 5).

We have often marvelled at the uncomplaining courage, and cheerfulness of spirit, that the Lord's afflicted ones so often possess. We remember a particularly sad case. A strong healthy man in his early

fifties, chairman of a public company, which was prospering under his skilful management, a highly esteemed brother in the assembly with which he was connected, an acceptable gospel preacher and Sunday School worker, a valued help in the Bible readings, was suddenly stricken down with paralysis, leaving him without power of movement, save that he could turn his head a little. There he lay on a water-bed, unable to feed himself, a pitiable sight, moving one's heart to deepest sympathy.

The writer was asked to visit him, and shrank greatly from doing so. Standing before the bed in robust health and vigour, what could he say in the presence of such affliction? What comfort could he minister to him in such a condition? Would not his words sound as empty platitudes, as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol? He got, however, the greatest surprise in his life. He stood rebuked because of his little faith in the power and love of God to sustain His tried ones. The tables were completely turned. Instead of the writer, seeking, as best he could, to minister comfort to our brother, our brother ministered richly to him.

This brother's joy in the Lord was most manifest, showing that the Scripture, which tells us God's children will not be called upon to suffer beyond their power of endurance, was literally true. God's enablement by the power of the Holy Spirit, was his, showing that through the sore trial "a way to escape" was being ministered to him, enabling the trial, heavy though it was, to be borne to the glory of God. The writer learned

a lesson that day, which he never can forget, and for which he can praise God.

Not only is God "the God of all comfort," He is also "The Father of mercies" "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of MERCIES, and the God of ALL comfort" (2 Cor. 1: 3). What fulness is here! We are not told how many mercies of which God is the Father, for they are innumerable. We read, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works, which thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (Psa. 40: 5). We may well say Hallelujah!

We are told that five sparrows are sold for two farthings, yet not one is forgotten before God, and we are reminded we are of more value than many sparrows. That the very hairs of our head are all numbered (Luke 12: 6, 7); that the very tears, the saints shed, are all recorded in the book of God's remembrance (Psalm 56: 8); that if the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow in the oven, is clothed by God, how much more will He clothe us of little faith? (Luke 12: 28) Is it any wonder that His comforts and mercies are innumerable? "Hear me, O Lord; for Thy loving kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies" (Psa. 69: 16). What grace upon grace! Not only mercies, but "**tender mercies,**" and that a multitude! How many? No one can say!

Moreover God comforts the tried and afflicted saints in order that they in their turn may comfort others, who are in any trouble, with the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God (2 Cor. 1: 4). How true the words:

**And many a rapturous minstrel,
Among the saints of light,
Will say of his sweetest music,
I learned it in the night.**

**"And many a rolling anthem,
That fills the Father's home,
Sobbed out its first rehearsal
In the shade of a darkened
room."**

It may be a new thought to some, that the hymns and sacred poetry that have ministered comfort to them in their sorrow and times of trial, have been begotten through sorrow, it may be with many tears, on the part of the writers. How often we have sung the hymn with joy that begins with the words:

**"Through waves, through clouds
and storms,
God gently clears the way;
We wait His time; so shall the night
Soon end in blissful day.**

**"He everywhere hath sway,
And all things serve His might,
His every act pure blessing is,
His path unsullied light."**

What an experience must Paul Gerhardt have had before he could write his blessedly experimental song of deliverance. And what was Gerhardt's experience in his day, may be ours in our day. We learn precious lessons on earth, which we cannot learn even in heaven. How touching are the lines,

"We know Him as we could not know

Through heaven's golden years;
We there shall see His glorious face;
But Mary saw His tears.

"The touch that heals the broken heart

Is never felt above;
His angels know His blessedness,
His way-worn saints His love."

There will be no tears in heaven,

nor broken hearts, but here we learn lessons precious beyond words, and which wean us from earth and draw us heavenward. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, power and dominion, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

UNKNOWNABLE YET KNOWN

A. H. STORRIE

(The Substance of an Address)

IN one of the grandest passages of Holy Writ we are presented with the utmost **inscrutability** and with the greatest **simplicity**. The passage is Matthew 11: 25-30. That which is inscrutable is the Person of the Son, for no one knows the Son but the Father. Also, we read, no one knows the Father "save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." In speaking of the Person of the Son, our safety lies in doing so in the very words of Scripture. In both ancient and modern times some of the most learned teachers, men of profound minds, have erred in attempting to scrutinize the inscrutable; no one knows the Son except the Father.

What is sublimely simple in our passage is the Son's offer to rest all who come to Him. His invitation reveals His Deity, for no mere man dare take such words upon his lips. The Father's things, the things of eternal truth that the Son came to reveal, are hid by the Father from

the wise and understanding and revealed unto babes; and the rejected. Jesus rejoices that it is so. Oh, the warmth and the blessedness of His words: "Come unto Me . . . and I will rest you . . ." This more literal translation, "I will rest you," is very beautiful. Not as though rest were something apart from Himself; Tyndale (1526) translated it: "I will ease you." It is the "babes" who come to Him and whom He rests, notwithstanding the inscrutability of His great and mysterious Person.

He is capable of resting the most heavily burdened soul that ever felt the weight of human labour and perplexity. He imparts rest to mind, spirit, soul and conscience, to a man's entire being. And it is as we come to Him — we who are glad to be as simple-hearted and as simple-minded as babes — and take His yoke upon us, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart, that we find rest to our souls, the rest

that comes as a consequence of doing God's will. Our Lord ends this great passage with the words: "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." What yoke and burden did He bear? That of doing God's will. Therein is rest.

The Son remains unknown to us as regards the mystery of His Being, yet well known as being the One in whom we find rest.

The Apostle Paul was the pattern saint, as he tells us in 1 Timothy 1: 16. And prayer played a great part in his life; hence his success. The Christian who neglects prayer risks failure, for prayer keeps us in touch with God, and helps to the maintaining of a good conscience. We have two of Paul's prayers recorded for us in Ephesians, chapters 1 and 3. The first concerns our standing in Christ, the second our practical state. And do not let us think that posture in prayer is of little or no account; it is very important. Paul, although no longer young, got down on his knees in his Roman prison to pray about the believers' practical state.

And what a prayer he offered! How desirable to be strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith! That we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to apprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled into all the fulness of God! To quote another: "We find in this galaxy of glory ourselves perfectly intimate with the Person who is the Centre of it all. He dwells in the heart by faith."

"Of the vast universe of bliss,
The Centre Thou and Sun;"

We are to know the love of Christ—which is far greater than the scene of which He is the Centre and Sun, for His love exceeds all understanding. Thus it is we are filled into all the fulness of God. A basket let down into the sea cannot contain the ocean, yet it is filled with the ocean. We know the love of Christ, yet it passes knowledge.

The book of Revelation may well be termed "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ." In chapter 19: 11-21 we see Him unveiled as coming to subdue the earth by judgment. There is much about Him that can be known. He is called Faithful and True. The majestic description given of Him is as coming forth on His white horse—the symbol of victory. We know Him to be the Son of Man to whom all judgment has been committed. His name is the Word of God, for He now manifests divine judgment. Nevertheless, "He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself." Although unveiled and known, we are reminded, as in Matthew 11: 27, He has a glory that is essentially His own. He Himself has the conscious power of that glory, but it remains unknown to us. As another has written: "His revealed name was the Word of God. As revealing God in grace or power so as to make Him known, we know Him. But His Person as Son always remains unsearchable. His name is written, so that we know it is unknowable—not unknown but unknowable."

One more Scripture on this line of thought remains to be considered. We read as to the reward of the

overcomer in Pergamos these precious words: "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the white stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2: 17). Historically, Pergamos obviously gives us the professing church of the time of Constantine, gaining favour with the world. Yet there were true saints, such as Augustine and his saintly mother, during that period. How comforting and how heartening to see that the portion of the overcomer, even in Pergamos, remains inviolate! And how may any one of us today become an overcomer? By being occupied with the great Overcomer Himself!

How encouraging His promise! Our thoughts are taken far back to the wilderness days of Exodus, to the golden urn containing manna laid up in the Ark of the Covenant. Christ humbled here is the food for pilgrims. And the hidden manna promised (to be enjoyed in spirit now) sets forth His personal approbation of the overcomer in a Pergamos state of things. In that coming day He will privately express to such an one His appreciation of the saint's appreciation of Himself as the humbled Son of Man. The new name on the white stone and known only to the recipient, foretells further individual secret delight that the overcomer will have in the Lord's own blessed company.

NEARNESS

T. D. BELL.

IN the Old Testament the nearness of the Lord in the experience of the saint is often expressed in ways which appear to advance beyond the proper boundaries of that past dispensation. Deuteronomy 33: 27 is a case in point, when Moses said, "Underneath are the everlasting arms." So also is the striking phrase used by Abigail in 1 Samuel 25: 29, "The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God."

In the Psalms such thoughts tend to run together and form their own channel of soul-experience. How sweet and intimate they are! Every possible expression is found there, drawn from our daily life, to exhibit the soul's desire for, and sense of,

the Lord's presence. In the small compass of Psalm 23, the Psalmist is not only led by the still waters in the Shepherd's company, but knows the Lord with him in the valley of the shadow of death, and reclines at His prepared table in the presence of enemies. Again, he is guided with the Lord's eye upon him, as in Psalm 32: 8, and is so near that his instant reply to "Seek ye My face," in Psalm 27: 8, is, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

An expression of a peculiarly intimate nearness occurs in Psalm 17: 8, where the phrase, "Keep me as the apple of the eye," appears to be literally, "Keep me as the little man, the daughter of the eye." The figure used here, so difficult ade-

quately to translate, is that well-known one of the image in miniature of a person, when closely regarded by another, appearing reflected in that watching eye. This image — “the little man” — is also called here, “the daughter of the eye,” being born, so to speak, of that close and intimate look.

In the previous psalm there is One who speaks of the pleasant places in which His lines have fallen, and consequently the saints that are in the earth are before Him. Here however is a far different experience. The Psalmist is compassed by deadly enemies — the men of the world and not the saints. Not as lost to sight amongst the multitudes of the men of this passing age would he be regarded, but as individually, ever reflected in the Lord’s all-seeing eye, and hidden under the shadow of His wings.

How true is the instinct with us to find these sweet expressions rising to our lips in moments of joy, as also in danger and pressure. It is right surely that it should be so, for such in holy perfection was the way of the Lord Himself, and in this way He led His disciples, the remnant of Israel in His day. The variety and profusion of such expressions in the Psalms indicates one of their functions. It is surely to teach the faithful, the remnant of Israel, whether in the past or in the coming day, as well as ourselves today, the spirit of that language, which is so alien to the flesh — that language of submission and holy confidence and joy in the sense of nearness to the Lord. As a child first learns its native tongue at home, and expresses its joys in intimate things before well-known faces, so

we find encouragement to use such language which the men of this age know not, and which expresses our joy in that which is our own.

We need to remind ourselves, however, that though this is so we cannot find here the expression of nearness in its full Christian character. Christ is now risen and ascended. The indwelling Holy Spirit from the glory unites the believer with the risen Christ. What a profound effect this has upon every true experience of the soul! “Keep me!” “Hide me!” “Lead me!” express so often the desire of Old Testament saints. “The Lord is at hand,” (Phil. 4: 5), is the positive, confident assertion of faith today.

Nor is it only the soul’s experience of nearness which marks the difference between the saint of former days and the Christian today. Now, blessed fruit of the Spirit’s day, every true believer in Christ is spoken of in a way that surpasses every Old Testament thought of nearness. “Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5: 17). Nearness, how good for the heart to experience it: but “in Christ,” there is now new creation, where “all things are of God.”

It may be humbling for us to realize that many saints of a by-gone day habitually used these expressions that only occasionally may rise to our lips, yet it is true that individual soul-experience is always led this way. The tendency of the present day is for believers to get often together in meetings, conventions and large gatherings. This is good. May it not be that the Lord is getting us accustomed to increasing intercourse

with beloved saints in view of our "gathering together unto Him" (2 Thess. 2: 1), which surely is now very near. How necessary, however, it is for every one of us to reflect that if intercourse with others becomes the main or only habit of our souls, who can measure our present loss?

The cry of the heart of Joseph to his brethren, "Come near to me, I pray you" (Gen. 45: 4) is surely typical of the present drawings of the love of the heart of Christ towards us. The only true response to this comes from answering affection on our side, and in the measure

that this is so we find ourselves alone with the Lord. This means constant self-judgment in His presence. And the effect of this, because it is in His presence, is the learning ever more of God's thoughts concerning the cross of Christ.

Is not this the deepest secret of soul nearness to Christ? Learning it, even though in a feeble measure, we are taught truly to sing,

"That we may now the nearness
Of the Beloved know,
And brought to Thee as children,
Our children's praises flow."

BIBLE STUDY—JOB

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS I--7).

WE regard it as little short of a miracle that this very ancient book should have been accepted by the people of Israel as part of "the oracles of God," which were "committed" to their hands (see, Romans 3: 2). Job may have been a contemporary of Abraham but he was certainly not of Abrahamic stock, and therefore a Gentile, and yet introduced to us with such words of commendation as we hardly find accorded to any son of Israel. In the book moreover is no allusion to the law in which the Jew made his boast. There was therefore in it nothing that would particularly appeal to the Jew, but rather that which might offend. Yet there through the centuries it has stood, and been handed down to us.

In this we see not only the wisdom of God but His mercy also. Directly sin entered the world a

baffling problem presented itself in the slaying of righteous Abel. Why should the godly suffer? If a man's life really pleases God, why should that pleasure not be indicated by special good being his in this life? There is, of course, the alternative problem, Why should the ungodly prosper? — and this is dealt with in Psalm 73. But long before the days of the Psalmists God saw fit in His mercy to solve the enigma for us by permitting extreme disaster to come upon Job, and then causing the story to be recorded and preserved in an inspired writing. The solution was given as soon as "the oracles of God" began to appear.

In the very first verse the inspired writer — whoever he was — makes the exceptional character of Job very clear, and in verse 8 he records that a precisely similar description of him had come from the

lips of Jehovah Himself, but with the addition that in his piety he surpassed his contemporaries, for there was "none like him in the earth." Of all men, therefore, here was the man upon whom the smile of the Almighty should rest.

And indeed he had been greatly prospered in the providence of God. He had a well favoured family, and immense possessions of those animals, in which wealth consisted in those days. He was the **greatest** among the men of the east, as well as the **most godly**. His piety embraced his family as well as himself, for he offered burnt offerings for them in the days of their festivities lest they should have in any way offended. Such is the picture presented of this remarkable man.

In verses 7-12, we are granted a glance behind the scenes of this world. Satan, though a fallen creature, still is permitted access to the presence of God. His casting down to earth, mentioned in Revelation 12, is still future. He is spoken of in that chapter as, "the accuser of our brethren," and that is just what we see him doing here: he does not change. He accused Job of self-seeking in his apparent piety: in other words, that he was in large measure a hypocrite — just what presently we shall find the three friends insinuating. He virtually challenged God to test him by some catastrophe, when Job's skin-deep piety would be broken through, and he would curse the God whom he professed to regard.

The Lord accepted Satan's challenge and permitted the adversary to act against all that he had, but not against himself. Satan promptly

acted and the disasters fell with devastating effect.

It was a most instructive scene. We perceive three **causes** and two **effects**. The great First Cause is God. The second inferior cause is Satan. The third still lesser cause — or rather, causes — the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, and what men would call the forces of nature. The first effect was a complete sweeping away of all Job's family and possessions: the second and ultimate effect was a crushing blow delivered against Job.

What must have made it so crushing to Job was the fact that four different agents were employed. If one gigantic calamity had engulfed the lot, the effect on his mind would probably not have been so great. But **four** separate calamities, **all in one day**, and two of them what we should now call "**acts of God,**" must have made Satan's malicious deed staggering beyond all our thoughts or words. We venture to think that such a collection of catastrophes, falling upon one man in one day, has never been equalled in the whole history of the world.

The piety of Job was proved not to be skin-deep merely. God knew how to sustain His true servant, and he stood the test and did not curse God. Satan was proved a liar and defeated. Job's words, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," have been repeated millions of times by sorrowing saints, who also have blessed God instead of cursing Him, even as Job did.

Satan, however, returned to the charge, though God could again

give His testimonial to Job's remarkable character. He knew very well that a man's own bodily self is nearer and dearer to him than all he may possess, so he said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." This remark of the devil was once quoted in court by a barrister, wishing to further his case. He prefaced it by saying, "As a great authority has said . . .," feeling he was quite safe in his authority since he quoted from the Bible! The judge knew his Bible better than the counsel, so he quietly said, "I am interested to observe **whom** the learned counsel quotes as, 'a great authority!'"

It will be useful therefore to remind our readers that in this book we have quoted not only the words of Satan, but also many words of men, some of them true enough, as other scriptures show, but others much open to question. None of these men who spoke were inspired in their utterances, though we have an inspired account of what they said, so that the picture presented is perfectly true. We must never overlook the difference between **revelation** and **inspiration**. All Scripture is inspired of God, but not every word found therein is a revelation from God. When Solomon wrote, for instance, "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink . . ." (Eccles. 2: 24), he was not uttering a **revelation** from God but rather his own foolishness — **inspired** to put it on record for our warning.

But to return to our story: given permission by God, Satan afflicted poor Job with as virulent a disease as has ever been on record, though not permitted to take his life. His

state became so fearful and repulsive that his own wife urged him to the sin that Satan designed to lead him into. She only was left to him, and thus she became, perhaps unwittingly, an abettor of Satan's design. But again, supported by God, Job stood the test and did not sin with his lips. The record of Job's reaction is this time more negative than positive, we notice; still Satan was defeated, and from this point he disappears from the story.

Here, therefore, the story might end, if the point of it were only to show us how the power of God triumphs over the malign doings of the adversary. This is indeed made clearly manifest, but there was the further point of demonstrating how that same power, coupled with His searching kindness, triumphed in the conscience and heart and life of His tried saint, ultimately turning the blackest disaster into rich blessing, of a spiritual sort as well as material.

As a first move toward this, Job's three friends appeared on the scene. At the end of chapter 2, they are introduced to us, and what is recorded indicates that they came full of sympathy and with the best of intentions. The record of his disasters and the horror of his bodily state moved them to tears, and so staggered them that for a whole week they sat in his presence speechless. The reality of it all far exceeded what they had heard. Dreadful it must have been to reduce them to this speechless condition. The expressions of sympathy they intended to make froze upon their lips.

But the week of silence had to end. Their presence, their tears, their rent mantles, the dust upon their heads, affected Job, and led him at last to break the silence. He opened his mouth and cursed his day. He did not curse God, be it noted. He called down a curse upon the day he was born; deploring the fact that he had not died when his mother gave him birth. He anticipated that, had he never seen the light, he would have "been at rest," and not in this dire affliction. In Job's day there was not much light as to the unseen world, yet he knew that death did not mean extinction of being, but for the saint rest, and freedom from the trouble caused by the wicked, such as he had experienced by Sabeans and Chaldeans. "There the wicked cease from **troubling**," (3: 17); from troubling other people, not from being troubled themselves. There those, whose strength is worn out, are at rest.

Amongst mankind, almost universally, a birthday is an occasion of remembrance and rejoicing. To poor Job it seemed a moment to be deplored and cursed. In his days of prosperity he had feared some kind of adversity might supervene. Now it had come upon him with unparalleled force. His agonized utterance, recorded in chapter 3, surely moves our sympathy as we read it, some four thousand years after it was spoken.

The silence of a week being broken, Eliphaz was moved to speak. His earliest words, at the beginning of chapter 4, have a gentle and considerate spirit. He acknowledged that Job had been a helper and sustainer of others, but

asked a pertinent question in verse 6, which in Darby's New Translation is rendered, "Hath not thy piety been thy confidence, and the perfection of thy ways thy hope?"

Here, we believe, he did put his finger upon the weak spot in Job, as is shown in the remainder of the book. That Job's character and ways were excellent has been guaranteed by God Himself, but that being the case, how subtle the snare to make them the basis of one's confidence and hope, and to build everything upon them, before God as well as before men. It is what many a very godly saint has done since the days of Job.

But in his next paragraph (verses 7-11) Eliphaz completely misunderstands the situation. He asks, "Who ever perished, being innocent?" Doubtless he had no knowledge of Genesis, that book probably not having been written in his day, yet ancient things were known by carefully preserved tradition. What about Abel? He perished being innocent. Why, the first disaster recorded after sin entered the world disproved the position Eliphaz took up. The righteous Abel was cut off. Hence the idea, which he elaborated by his figure of the lions, broke down. The reaping of disaster does not mean of necessity that those who reap, "plow iniquity, and sow wickedness."

From verse 12 onwards, the standpoint that Eliphaz takes comes more clearly to light. He begins to relate a rather terrifying experience of his own, when he saw some spirit apparition, and received a word of warning as to man's

frailty and impurity in the presence of his Maker. What he heard is perfectly true. No mortal man can be more pure or just than God. In both he falls infinitely short of God's glory.

As we open chapter 5, we find Eliphaz continuing on this note, and again he refers to what he had seen. Verse 3 begins, "I have **seen** . . .," and if we turn to chapter 15, where his second speech is recorded, again we find him saying, "That which I have **seen** I will declare" (verse 17). It is evident then that his argument mainly rests for its validity upon his own powers of **observation**. In those powers he trusted for his opinion of the meaning of the calamities that had fallen upon Job.

Some of the sayings of Eliphaz in this chapter are perfectly true: for instance, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward," in this world of sin. Again, it is certainly true that God, "taketh the wise in their own craftiness," and that, "Happy is the man whom God correcteth." But we can see that all these facts are advanced in a way that turned them against poor Job. He had **seen** men taking root and then suddenly cursed; but these were "the foolish." And further, their children were smitten, and robbers swallowed up their possessions. It is obvious that all these remarks carried an insinuation against Job. He had appeared to be wise but was now taken in his craftiness — so it appeared to Eliphaz.

The advice given toward the end of his discourse was good. Job should not despise the chastening of

the Almighty, but rather accept the correction, and then the tide of evil would turn and blessing come in. The closing verses speak of God's deliverance coming in; of renewed prosperity. Verse 24 has been rendered, "Thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace; and thou wilt survey thy fold, and miss nothing." Verse 25 speaks of a numerous posterity, and verse 26 of Job himself coming to his end in ripe old age.

These things did indeed mark Job's latter days as we know, but the insinuation was that the absence of any such prosperity at that moment was **punishment** from God for his sin, which had lain beneath the surface of his life in the past. Eliphaz closed by confidently asserting the truth of his remarks. "So it is," he declared, for he had **searched it out** and **seen it** for himself.

By all this Job was stirred to reply, and he begins by acknowledging that the arrows that had smitten him were from the Almighty, but these friends of his had no proper sense of the weight of his calamity and grief. Well fed animals do not express distress by braying or lowing, so he did not cry out without ample cause. He was being fed on "sorrowful meat," and he desired that God would cut him off completely rather than prolong his misery.

From verses 14-23, Job upbraids his friends. He was the afflicted one to whom his friends should show pity, if they desired to walk in the fear of God, but on the contrary they were beginning to deal deceitfully with him. They were like streams that dried up in the

heat, just when they were most needed by caravans of Tema or Sheba.

At verse 24 a more direct appeal begins. He challenged his friends to leave vague insinuations for direct accusation. Let them show where he had erred, so that, taught by them, he might hold his tongue. He rightly remarked, "How forcible are right words," but what did Eliphaz's "arguing," or "upbraiding," effect? How often among brethren in Christ have vague insinuations, or even accusations, wrought havoc, where "right words," based on specific facts, would have proved forcible and wrought good.

Job's reply continues into chapter 7, and here his discourse seems to divide into two parts verses 1-10, and, 11-21. One cannot read the first section without being struck by the pathos of his plight. He felt it deeply himself and hence expressed it in moving fashion. "Months of vanity" and "wearisome nights" had been his portion, so that, just as a servant or hireling longed for the shadow of evening and the wages, he was longing for the end. Like the weaver's shuttle his days fled away and he was hopeless. His pathetic state is most vividly described and his friends should have been more filled with compassion.

But in the second part Job evidently turned Godward, and began to address Him with his bitter complaint. He realized his own littleness. He was not something great as a sea or a sea-monster, and, in verses 13-16, he cries out that his very nights are a torment with dreams and visions of terror which, he feels, come to him from God. He

loathes his present life and tells God that he desires to die.

But it is noticeable how the tone of his complaint and cry changes, when he turns to God from the presence of his friends. He at once is made to realize the insignificance and even the sinfulness of mankind. His cry is, "What is man . . . ?" and though he could not answer the question with the clearer light vouchsafed to David in Psalm 8, or the full light of the New Testament, he knew enough to admit that man is not what he ought to be, and that it is a wonder that God should set His heart upon him.

In verse 20, he goes even further. He realized God would not let him alone and he confesses to sin. The New Translation renders the opening of that verse, "Have I sinned, what do I unto Thee, Thou Observer of men?" and we understand that "Observer" and not "Preserver" is the correct translation. He knew he was under God's eye, who could perceive error where he was hardly aware of it. And why did God not grant pardon and remove the weight of his load?

Thus from the outset Job admitted some consciousness of guilt, but as yet, fortified by a life of piety and outward correctness, he did not realize its greatness. God was beginning the process which would lead him to see how deep and black it was.

What have we seen of the same thing in ourselves? Have we reached Paul's confession, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7: 18)?

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

R. McCALLUM.

Notes of an Address on Luke 24: 13-27, 32.

EVERY true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will gladly acknowledge that throughout the Old Testament Scriptures there are clear foreshadowings of Christ. We may miss them and but feebly apprehend the import of others, but we may be sure that if we could in measure discover the wondrous revelation of Himself, given in that discourse to the two journeying to Emmaus when, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," we too would find our hearts aglow.

A prophecy in the sense of **prediction** is a miracle of utterance, and gains significance the further removed it is from its fulfilment, so that it is interesting to find the prophecies concerning Christ running from the early pages of Scripture right on to the concluding books of the Old Testament. Since we know that a gap of at least 400 years separated its closing pages from the opening pages of the New Testament, it is clear that there could be no possibility of collusion or conspiracy between the prophets and the One in whom their prophecies are fulfilled. Divine wisdom has allowed such a break to exist that an irrefutable witness might be borne to every intelligent being who will be at pains to consider, that the Bible is unique, that its authorship is Divine, that God has looked into the future, that all things are "naked and open" to Him, and that we might recognise in Jesus

the Christ, the **Messiah**.

In Genesis 3, we have the account of the temptation of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Disbelief and disobedience brought in their wake the judgment of God. Sin, disillusionment, sorrow and death entered; innocency and unbroken felicity fled. God pronounced sentence upon those concerned — the curse upon the serpent; the curse upon the one who had used the serpent as his instrument; sentence upon the woman and the man; and a curse upon the ground. It is interesting to note in passing that the curse upon the earth has been signally confirmed by the following facts given on the authority of Sir J. W. Dawson, the eminent Canadian geologist, namely that "thorns and thistles" are not to be found before the advent of man and that everywhere the world over, they spring up where man tills the soil.

But of far deeper import and of more striking fulfilment is the curse passed upon the one who had used the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." There is no mention here of the man's seed, but there will arise One, peculiarly the woman's seed, who will enter into conflict with the seed of the serpent. Nor will the issue be left there; the victory will be made secure and complete by dealing with the author of evil himself.

The struggle is portrayed in a wonderful pictorial metaphor — it is the picture of a man with his heel crushing the head of the serpent while the serpent casts its venomous fangs into his heel. He is crushing its highest point, its most vital part, while it is wounding His lowest point. The prediction is clear to faith:— One is promised, the woman's seed (the first intimation of the virgin birth) who will enter into deadly conflict with evil's author and will triumph over him; howbeit in the hour of triumph He Himself will be a sufferer. It most certainly points to Christ, to His suffering and to His victory, and it has been well said, "That prediction is God's hall-mark upon this, the only history which man has ever had of his origin and of his fall."

It can hardly fail to attract notice that in "The Book of the generations of Adam," found in Genesis 5, we read only of Seth and his descendants; there is no mention of Cain nor of his seed. The reason is clear — Seth was the one son of Adam whose line was to be perpetuated, for Noah and his sons were Sethites and all other male descendants perished in the flood. Of Noah's descendants Shem is marked out for special favour: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant" (9: 26, 27). Much has been written about this wonderful prophecy — it must suffice here, however, to note that it is to the Semites that God will specially be revealed as Jehovah Elohim, the strong and

faithful One, "the self-existent One who reveals Himself." But the God of Shem is our God; we dwell in the tents of Shem for we enjoy the revelation that was primarily his while in the New Testament Scriptures, penned by Jewish writers but written in a Japhetic tongue, we have presented to us the full revelation of God in Him who was of the seed of Shem, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we proceed we find Abraham, the son of Terah, a Semite, marked out as the one through whom blessing will come to the sons of men. It is a most remarkable fact that more than three-quarters of the entire book of Genesis is henceforth devoted to the history of three men — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To Abraham the promise was given "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed" (22: 18). Before Isaac was born it was said, "I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant" (17: 19), while to Jacob the promise was repeated, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (28: 14), so that the prominence given to them is due to the fact that the Deliverer would come from them. He would be of the house of Jacob and through Israel — smallest of the nations — God decreed that He should come to whom would be the gathering of the nations and through whom salvation would come to the ends of the earth. Nor should we forget the New Testament commentary on the promise made to Abraham — "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3: 16).

Let us turn for a little to the story of Abraham and Isaac on that momentous day when, in response to the command of God, Abraham journeyed to offer up his only son Isaac whom he loved. We have in this record a prophetic type, just as miraculous as a purely predictive utterance. There are those who count it strange that God should test in such a way a faith which He held precious, but God passed Abraham through a fiery furnace of testing that he might stand attested; that the faith of Abraham, which the eye of God alone could discern, should be manifested to us in his deeds so that with James we can say, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (2: 21). And as we look to the Antitype, the query of unbelief, "Could such a command have been given by God?" is silenced by the question, "Could it have been given by any but God?"

Let us consider some of the details. The place of the sacrifice was Mount Moriah, the place of the crucifixion. Abraham's son, by divine direction, was to be offered just where the Son of God was to die for the sin of the world. One lesson which stands out very prominently in this wonderful narrative is that God's people are saved by substitution, for had Isaac died that day, the entire race of Jews had perished. Throughout his long rejection of Christ the Jew then has borne witness to the truth that the people of God are saved because a substitute was found. Bear in mind too that the shadow of death lay heavily upon Abraham from the

moment he set out until he lifted up his eyes and saw the place where the sacrifice was to be offered and, at the end of three days he received him again as alive from amongst the dead.

Then you remember that near the cross there was a garden, and in that garden there was a tomb in which never man had been laid? It was Joseph's tomb, but our blessed Lord was laid in it and for three days this earth was the bier of the Son of God. With what wonder the angels must have watched it revolving in its course — the body of its Architect, its Creator within a grave! But on the third day the shadows broke away and the light dawned; despair in the hearts of the disciples gave place to joy for He rose a **Victor**. You will notice too that these two went with their servants and the ass, but the time came when the two went together in solitude and communed about what was going to take place on Mount Moriah. And do we not hear the Lord saying to His disciples in His deep sorrow, as He anticipated the cross, that the time was coming when they all would be scattered and He left alone, "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16: 32).

Another point in the story is this — the son had done nothing worthy of death; there was no wrath in the father's heart; Isaac was the apple of his father's eye; there was no sacrifice which the father would not have made to spare his son, but it was the divine plan that this should take place. Abraham's blessing was in view, and if we exercise a small fraction of the faith that

Abraham was called upon to exercise, we shall receive the blessing which he doubtless received, for you remember how the Lord said, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8: 56).

Now when we come to the 49th chapter of Genesis we find another limitation made. You will see how the promise is limited: first of all a man, the seed of the woman, the seed of Isaac, of the seed of Jacob — but Jacob had twelve sons — there, then a choice must be made, and the choice falls on Judah. And if you will read the verses in the 49th chapter of Genesis, you will find that Judah should become pre-eminent amongst the tribes of Israel. Judah was to have legislative authority, and at the time of David it did rise to a pre-eminence unequalled since the days of Joshua. We find too from the chapter that that pre-eminence was to be long standing; it was to continue until Shiloh should come. We find that although dynasty succeeded dynasty amongst the ten tribes of Israel, in Judah there was never wanting one to sit upon the throne of his father David. David's seed succeeded to the throne, and even after the captivity Judah

again became supreme. Jerusalem was the centre of the Holy Land and the centre of authority for the Jews, and the Nobles of Judah were the ones who were highest amongst the people.

But then, it says, there is going to be a time when this will end. It was not going to continue for ever. It was to continue until Shiloh would come, the Prince of Peace. And we find forty years after the crucifixion of Christ that the Jews had been dispersed, led captive, taken into exile. They were scattered and peeled and there was no such thing as a central authority for them. That hour which Jacob described is going to be the time of Shiloh's glorification when the glory shall depart from Judah and go to Shiloh, and, instead of having a gathering of the tribes to Him, He shall have the gathering of the peoples, the gathering of the nations. And, without looking on to the future when He shall be glorified on earth, we see even now those from amongst all people and tribes who have bowed the knee in willing subjection to Him and proclaimed Him to be their Lord and the coming King.

To be concluded (D.V.) in our next issue.

THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

IF we examine the brief reference to Melchizedek in Genesis 14, in connection with Hebrews 7, we see that there are seven distinct features in the narrative, which have a typical reference to Christ, and to be fulfilled in Him. We find: (1) the **name**, King of righteousness: (2) the **place**, King of peace: (3) the **union** of the **kingly** and the **priestly** offices: (4) the **absence** of any **genealogy** or reference to his **death**: (5) the **bestowment of blessing** by him on Abraham: (6) the **payment of tithes** by Abraham to him: (7) his being **prior** to the line of the Aaronic priesthood. All this is most significant as giving us a true key to unlock Old Testament Scripture.

THINGS ETERNAL

G. S. HEPBURN.

Substance of an address

I THINK all will agree that teaching must precede the Christian experience and practice that is stressed in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, so I wish now to say a few words on Paul's teaching.

One prominent feature is his frequent use of the word "Eternal." In 2 Corinthians 4, he mentions Eternal things in a general way, thus, "Though our outward man perish yet the inward man is renewed day by day . . . while we look, not at 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**."

This is indeed a blessed experience, but it will be ours only as our heart and mind are occupied with the "things eternal;" and the question arises here, what the these? I find that Paul throughout his epistles uses the word eternal in a specific way some twenty times and in no fewer than eleven different connections, as follows:

In Romans 1, we have the **eternal power and Godhead** of the Creator; on that I need not dwell at the moment, so I pass on to Ephesians 3 where we have "the **eternal purpose** which He [God] purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." This opens up a vast sphere and range of things, but at present I only mention that God's purpose for us, which is well known, is sonship which in all its blessedness involves complete conformity to the image of God's Son in heavenly glory,

spirit, soul and body. But in order that this might be effected redemption was an absolute necessity; on this all counsel and purpose depend for their fulfilment, so we read that Christ, "through the **eternal Spirit** offered Himself without spot to God," thereby obtaining "**eternal redemption**" (Heb. 9: 12-14). Oh, the value and the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ! The magnitude of His redemptive work and the glory resulting to God therefrom, these things the new heaven and new earth alone will be sufficient to adequately express.

And what of the blessings resulting to us therefrom? "**Eternal salvation**, Hebrews 5: 9. **Eternal life**—some ten or a dozen times Paul mentions this blessing. **Eternal inheritance**, Hebrews 9: 15. **Eternal glory**, since — "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and **eternal weight of glory**. (2 Cor. 4: 17). What a marvellous Scripture this is, and how wonderful that Paul should refer to his afflictions as light and momentary.

Again, "I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with **eternal glory**." (2 Tim. 2: 10). I take this to refer to the elect not yet brought to light.

Included in the list of our blessings is an **eternal house**. "We know" — it is not "we believe," much less "we think," but **we know**, with absolute assurance, that if our earthly house (our present bodies) be dissolved (by death) "we

have a building of God, an house not made with hands, **eternal** in the heavens " — (2 Cor. 5: 1).

On the other hand, and how tremendously solemn it is to contemplate it, Paul also speaks of "**Eternal judgment**" — (Heb. 6: 2).

And lastly, "Now unto **the King eternal**, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen." (1 Tim. 1: 17).

Here I would remark, for I think it most singular, that while "Eternal life," is one of John's main themes he never once uses the word "eternal" in any other connection. And no one who believes in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures will doubt that there is design in the Holy Spirit's choice of words and reason for the design.

In concluding, let me recount some of these eternal things. Eternal

purpose; Christ's offering of Himself to God in the power of the eternal Spirit, the eternal redemption thus obtained with all the infinite glory resulting to God therefrom, and all the infinite blessing resulting to the believer in Christ and His work; eternal salvation; eternal Life; eternal inheritance; eternal glory, and an eternal house in the heavens.

And let me submit for your consideration that Paul's ministry is principally concerned, not with the passing things of time, but with things eternal, things that remain. The more we are occupied with those unseen eternal realities, the more shall we have the blessed experience of being renewed in our inward man **day by day**, and the better able, I am sure we will be, to respond to the words of exhortation to live as Christians should live, and if need be, to die as Christians ought to die.

PHILADELPHIA AND LAODICEA

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE Book of the Revelation gives prophetically the unveiling of the happenings of the last days. Beginning at Chapter 2 and up to the end of Chapter 20, the happenings are all earthly and governmental, ending with the judgment of the great white throne, the earth and the heaven fleeing away, the second resurrection, that of the wicked dead, taking place — the final settlement of evil. (Rev. 20: 11, 12). Then we read of the new heaven and the new earth. Time will be no longer. Eternity will have begun. The fixed eternal state will have arrived, when He who sits upon

the throne will say, "Behold I make all things new" (Rev. 21: 5), a blissful scene marked by the absence of sorrow, pain, tears, and death itself. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. 15: 26).

But in chapters 2 and 3 we have to do with the history of the Church of God on this earth, using the actual state of seven assemblies then existent, as illustrating differing phases the Church will pass through during its earthly pilgrimage, to end at the second coming of our Lord Jesus when His saints are

raptured to glory. (1 Thess. 4: 13-18). The Apostle John, the inspired writer of the book, is himself an illustration of the Church's rapture to glory, when he heard the words, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (Rev. 4: 1).

Seeing the addresses to the assemblies at Philadelphia and Laodicea is our theme, it will suffice to introduce the subject by pointing out, that all the failure of the Church of God, fully to maintain the testimony confided to it, can be traced in the address to the assembly first mentioned, Ephesus, a highly gifted assembly in the Apostle John's day, where we read, "I have somewhat against thee, **because thou hast left thy first love.**" (Rev. 2: 4). The Lord's love is ever set upon His people, but how touching it is that He counts on the answering response of our love. The language used to describe this is pathetic indeed. We read the exhortation, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. 2: 5). It was as if the Church had fallen from a lofty eminence, and lay bruised and bleeding at its foot. Evidently **first love** is something very precious to our Lord. This indeed ever has its appeal, even to the writer and the reader at this present time.

It may be happily illustrated by the intense love that marks the newly married couple. How sad it is when that love wanes, and weakens and even disappears, giving way to the setting up of one will against another. We see the "first

love" at work in the early days of the Church's history as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost and after. Alas! the candlestick of testimony at Ephesus was removed, and that phase of the Church's history closed to be succeeded by other phases.

In the testimonies rendered to the sixth and seventh assemblies, Philadelphia and Laodicea, we find in the case of the former the greatest revival of first love; in the case of the latter the greatest departure from it. These two greatly contrasted testimonies are found in the last days, remaining up to the time of the second coming of our Lord, and existing even now.

Philadelphia is credited with having little strength, keeping the Lord's word, and not denying His name (Rev. 3: 8). And this was no mean praise. There were to be withstood the blasphemous doctrines of "the synagogue of Satan," a system professing to be of God and the truth, and yet an emanation of the bottomless pit. The day would come when such faithfulness would be rewarded, when those, who claimed to be Jews and were not, would be made to worship at the feet of those, who had withstood their wiles and persecutions. The Lord assured the church, that He set before them an open door, and that no man was able to shut it. What a comfort in their weakness would this assurance be! How often have we wondered at the tenacity of some weak assembly, continuing year after year in their testimony, and seen in them a fulfilment of this promise.

Meanwhile in these last days pro-

fessing Christendom is moving on rapidly to the time when the judgments of the Lord will fall upon it, as set forth in the book of Revelation, chapters 5 to 20. Will the church be called upon to share in these awful times? No, we plainly read, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the **HOUR of temptation**, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3: 9). Nay further, they were told, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3: 11). What a cheer! What a blessed prospect! Perhaps to-day this happy moment may arrive. It is nearer now than it has ever been. One moment we may be tried pilgrims in a scene where everything is against God, the next moment we may be with glorified bodies in the Father's house. Happy prospect!

We are told that the coming tribulations, the chastening hand of God upon the nations, are to come upon **all the earth**, that no part of it, however remote, is to be exempt. This means that to be kept from the **HOUR of temptation**, the church of God must be far removed from time, and find their comfort and joy and rejoicing **in eternity** with their Lord in the Father's house. Such is the ending of this phase of the church's history upon earth. See 2 Thess. 1: 7.

What then can be said about the address to the church at Laodicea? Here we find the greatest departure from first love. Their spiritual condition was marked by lukewarmness, the only time this word occurs in the Scriptures. Does it not re-

mind us of the awful state of the professing church of God to-day? Multitudes, profess to be Christian, but their testimony lacks the ring of reality. In the words of Scripture, they are characterised by "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3: 5). The influence of such is soul-withering, and at the bottom most antagonistic to the real article. How soon we can tell a speaker that is giving forth truth, that has entered his own soul, and gripped his own life, before seeking to pass on to others the truths, that command his whole being.

The most absolute conceit marked the sad and closing testimony of this church. Here is **their estimate of themselves!** Hear their braggart assertions! "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Here is **the Divine estimate of them**, "Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3: 17). What a stripping! How utterly devastating!

And what will happen at the second coming of the Lord? Then **ALL** true Christians will be caught up, not one will be left behind. In Laodicea **ALL** false professors will be left behind, save the few, who may have responded to the Lord, knocking at the door of their hearts, whilst He is outside of the professing church, and have let Him in.

Our Lord's language in addressing them is very definite and very sorrowful, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. 3: 16). The spueing

will be accomplished when all empty profession is **left behind** for judgment at the second coming of our Lord. We are hastening on to the time when this will happen to an apostate Christendom.

Meanwhile the contemplation of these things is a clarion call to us all. "Awake thou that sleepest, and

arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5: 14). Let us be uncompromising in our Christian testimony. Let us eschew world-bordering with all its subtle snares, and be "like unto men that wait for their Lord" (Luke 12: 36). God grant it for His Name's sake.

BIBLE STUDY—JOB

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 8-14)

As Job closed his reply to Eliphaz, he made the confession, "I have sinned," realizing that God is the Observer of mankind. We might have expected that Bildad, as he began to speak, would have made some allusion to this, but he does not appear to do so. Instead he accused him of uttering words like the blowing of a strong wind, and, to maintain the rightness of all God's judgments, he insinuated that Job's children must have been cast away as the penalty of their transgression. This must have been a bitter stroke at Job, since he had so regularly offered sacrifice on their behalf. Nevertheless he advised Job that if only he would be upright and seek God, he would be blessed in his latter end.

In verses 8-10, Bildad revealed his own standpoint in the argument that was developing. He set great store by the accumulated treasures of human wisdom. Even in these remote times it was possible to search in the records preserved from even remoter times. If Eliphaz argued from his own **observa-**

tion—what he personally had seen, — Bildad argued from **tradition** — what could be learned from the records of earlier days. He distrusted a deduction from one's personal experience, since the days of a man upon earth are but "a shadow."

Hence in the rest of the chapter he summarized what tradition would teach, illustrating his point by things in nature, like the rush and the spider's web. He claimed that all history showed that God requited man according to his deserts. If evil, he is cut off. If good, he is prospered. To tell Job that, "the hypocrite's hope shall perish," was a cut this time not at Job's children but at Job himself.

This brought forth from Job the striking words recorded in chapter 9. He began by acknowledging the rightness of God's disciplinary ways, but raised the all-important question, as to how a man could be right with God. In our day the pithy sentence, "Get right with God," has been used to awaken interest in the Gospel message. It

might well provoke the reply, "Yes, but how is it to be achieved?" This is just the enquiry that Job made in verse 2, and the rest of the chapter reveals how earnest and sincere he was in asking it, for he suggested and examined four possible answers. Each suggestion commences with an, "If."

The first is of course verse 3. Supposing man adopts a **defiant attitude** and contends with God; what then? Disaster, and no justification! Sin has made mankind into rebels, hence to defy God is their first instinct. But Job saw how ruinous such an attitude would be. God is so infinitely great that no rebel can prosper, and down to verse 19 he continues this theme. The earth and the heavens with their constellations proclaim the Creator's greatness and glory.

At verse 20, Job suggested another possible answer, How could he be just with God? Well, could he justify himself? This would at least mean a forsaking of the defiant attitude and the tacit admission of being wrong, and thus needing to be justified. **Self-justification** is a very attractive proposition, yet Job only stated it to dismiss the idea as impracticable. He knew he had only to open his mouth to condemn himself. Moreover he who would justify himself before the searching eye of God must be able to establish his own perfection. Nothing short of that would satisfy, as verse 20 shows. He went on to assert that even if he were perfect God would judge and destroy him, for he only knew perfection as it is estimated according to human

standards.

In verse 27, we find his third "If . . ." He could not defy the God of heaven nor could he justify himself: then should he give up hope, abandon his quest for the answer, and give himself up to the **careless pursuit of enjoyment**? Human nature has not changed, for many of us have pursued just the line of thought which Job disclosed here; only he immediately discarded the idea, realizing how vain it was. If we carelessly forget, God does not forget. The sinner will not evade the judgment of God by declining to face the question.

The fourth "If . . ." occurs in verse 30. Job has discarded three suggested answers to his question—those of **defiance**, of **self-justification**, of **careless forgetfulness**. What about a course of **self-improvement**? Would that help in the solution of the question? He has only to state it, to reject it with equal decision. He knew that melted snow would give distilled water of the purest kind, having the greatest power of absorbing and removing defilement. The figure he used is most graphic. If he achieved something like this in his own character and life; what then? Why, God would plunge him in a dirty ditch as the only fit place for him. And even then, **he himself**, beneath his clothes, would be dirtier than they! The defilement was in himself and not in his surroundings. His rejection of the idea of achieving justification by a process of self-improvement could not be more decisive.

How evident it is that Job knew that he was a sinful creature before

his holy Creator, and that he possessed in himself no means of getting right. That being so, his only hope was in the intervention of a third party; but no such third party, or "daysman," was known to him. His three friends could not act the part, nor could any other man, since the daysman must be **great** enough to lay one of his hands upon Almighty God, and **gracious** enough to lay the other upon poor diseased and sinful Job.

How pathetic are the words that close this chapter! If only there were an efficient intermediary, how different it would be; but, says Job, "it is **not so** with me." Have we ever thanked God with sufficient fervour that **it is so with us**? The fact is that though he may not have known it, Job was sighing for the advent of CHRIST. We can now rejoice in the "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). By Him the ransom price was paid, so that it is possible for a man to be just with God.

But for Job there was no apparent answer to his question, so we are not surprised that chapter 10 is filled with his further words of complaint and sorrow coupled with pathetic appeals to God. He had just said of God, "He is not a man, as I am," hence he was aware that he was as nothing before His holy eyes, that searched him through and through. In verse 2 he appealed to God to show him the reason why He contended with him by these disasters. In verse 6 he again admitted "iniquity" and "sin," yet in the next verse he said, "Thou knowest that I am

not wicked," using this term evidently in the sense in which Eliphaz uses it when we come to chapter 22: 15.

Yet, on the other hand, he knew that God's standards were far higher than his, and hence woe would come upon him if he were wicked, and that even if he were righteous he could not lift up his head in the presence of God. He was filled with confusion; his affliction increased; he again complained that he had ever been born, and as to the future he had no light. Death was to him as "**a land of darkness**," as we see in verses 21 and 22. We have to pass on to New Testament days to get such a word as that, "the true light now shineth" (1 John 2: 8).

Yet even today there are all too many who regard death as the taking of "a leap in the dark." And indeed it is that to them if the Christ, presented to them in the Gospel, be neglected or rejected. For such there is no excuse, whilst for Job there was every excuse. Again we affirm that the gloom of this excellent saint of Old Testament days should move us to much thanksgiving to God, who has brought us out of darkness into His "**marvellous light**."

In chapter 11 we have the brief speech of Zophar, the third of Job's friends, and reading it, we note that his tone is a little more severe even than Bildad's was. Possibly he was irritated by the fact that Job had not accepted the charges and arguments of the other two, but it was overshooting the mark and unfriendly to charge him

with a "multitude of words," of being "full of talk," of uttering "lies," and of mocking. Nor had he claimed to be "clean" in the sight of God. Zophar does not as yet reveal the standpoint from which he speaks, but he oracularly declared that Job really deserved from God's hands severer punishment than he was getting. Seeing that his suffering exceeded any other of which we have record, and that the discussion centred around God's disciplinary dealings in **this life**, and did not look into eternity, this again strikes us as harsh and dogmatic in the extreme.

From verse 7 onwards, however, he did say some striking things that have truth in them, as other Scriptures show. It is indeed true that man cannot by his searching find out God. It is equally true that man, being sinful, is "vain," or, "empty," or, "senseless," and is born like "a wild ass's colt." Zophar evidently felt that Job needed to recognize these things, without much consciousness of how they applied to himself. If the men of this twentieth century recognized them, it would puncture their inflated pride. They may find out means of destroying human lives by the hundred thousand, but they cannot find out God. He can only be found in Christ, who has revealed Him.

Zophar's final words of counsel (verses 13-20) also have truth in them. Verse 14 in the New Translation begins, "If thou put far away the iniquity which is in thy hand;" that is, he again **assumes**, like the others, that Job is after all an evil man, holding tight to his

sins. Here he was wrong, though his counsel to put away evil and turn to God was good, and his description of the happy result of so doing was correct enough.

The tone of extreme dogmatism, so noticeable in Zophar's utterance, no doubt prompted Job to begin his reply on a very sarcastic note. His words, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you," have almost passed into a proverb, to be used against the dogmatism of self-conceit. He claimed to have understanding equal to his friends, and in verse 5 he reminded them that he, who was in this slippery place, shone like a warning lamp, only to be despised by those who were in easy and comfortable circumstances, as his friends were.

In verse 6 Job challenged the main position that his friends had taken. They asserted that God always rewards the pious with earthly prosperity and visits disaster upon the head of the wicked. He maintained that it was not so, but that there were cases when robbers prospered and those who provoked God were secure. In proof of this he referred to what could be seen in the lower creation — beasts, birds and fishes. He alluded, we suppose, to the disorder that the sin of man has introduced even there, so that the weaker meet with disaster and destruction from the stronger, and all this by the permission of God. Just as the mouth tastes meat so had his ear tried their words, and found them worthless.

From verse 13 to the end of this chapter Job reviewed the ways of

God in His dealings with men. He acknowledged that "wisdom and strength" are His as well as "counsel and understanding." Yet he felt that God's exercise of these wonderful qualities were full of mystery. Again and again those who are great and wise — counselors, judges, kings, princes — are spoiled and overthrown. He lived in days when, after the flood, nations had come into being. He had seen such increased and then destroyed. Men, who had been so wise as to become chief among the people, suddenly lose their understanding and grope in the dark without a light, or stagger like a drunken man. Now why was this?

Eliphaz had based his condemnation of Job on what he himself had observed. Well, Job too had powers of observation, and he had seen all these things of which he had just spoken, as he affirmed in the opening verses of chapter 13. He did not claim to be superior to his friends, but at any rate he was not their inferior, yet he acknowledged that God's dealings mystified him, being far above and out of his sight. So, as verse 3 indicates, what he desired was to speak to the Almighty and reason with God, rather than spend his time in reasoning with his friends.

Still, there his friends were, and we can see that by this time Job had been goaded into retorts of a more biting kind. What he wanted was truth for his mind and healing for his body. They were only "forgers of lies," and "physicians of no value." He counselled them to hold their peace and listen to what he had to say; and up to

verse 13 he continued in this strain. He felt they had talked as though speaking on God's behalf, and in so doing had misrepresented Him. In this, no doubt, Job judged rightly.

In verses 14-19, God, rather than his friends, is before the mind of Job. We can discern two conflicting elements. On the one hand, there was a remarkable spirit of faith, which led him to take all that had transpired from His hand and not concern himself with the agents of the disasters, which had stopped short of his death. He had desired to die, and if God should answer this request and slay him, he would not lose confidence but still trust in Him. This indeed was excellent, but at the same time Job revealed his very weak spot in his determination to "maintain," or "defend" his own ways before Him. So we see that in a true saint very real faith in God may exist, and yet be marred by a very determined measure of self-esteem. This it is, which gives such great value to this remarkable book, since the flesh in us, who are saints today, is just the same as it was in Job some four thousand years ago.

Thus it is, that Job proclaimed that God would be his salvation and that ultimately he would be justified. But in verse 20 he more definitely addressed himself to God. He accepted his sorrows as being from the hand of God and asked that His hand might be removed from him, so that he might stand before Him on easier terms. Verse 23 shows that directly Job felt himself to be before God he acknowledged iniquity and sins. He

wished to know how many they were, since he felt, as the succeeding verses reveal, that the retribution he was suffering went beyond his real deserts. He was like a man with his feet in the stocks, and thus an easy target for those who wished to throw things at him.

As we read his words, we cannot but feel the pathos of them, and are not surprised at his cry of lamentation, which opens chapter 14. In the far-off days of Job human life was perhaps three times longer than it is today; yet it was after all "of few days," and then it was "full of trouble," just as it is today, so that, viewed in the light of the eternal God, he is but like a fading flower or a fleeting shadow. Job was conscious of this as regards himself and so he knew he could not stand the Divine inspection, nor stand before Him in judgment. Moreover he knew that he was not clean in the sight of God, and he was sure no one could produce the clean out of the unclean.

The Authorised Translation in verse 4, puts the word **thing**, in italics. Darby's New Translation inserts rather the word, **man**. This is another of the tremendous questions that Job asks, and this time he answers it — quite rightly too. No man can accomplish it in himself, and much less achieve it for others. Moreover, when we turn to the New Testament, we find that **God does not propose to do it**. The error that troubled the Galatians was the idea that the law had been given to clean men up, and hence even Christians had to put themselves under it and accept circum-

cision as the sign of it, in order to lead clean lives. The emphatic word correcting this is, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but **a new creation**" (Gal. 6: 15). The believer is not the "old man" cleaned up. He is newly created in Christ, with a nature which in its essential character "cannot sin," as affirmed in 1 John 3: 9.

Man being of few days, his life in this world must terminate in death, and the time when he goes is determined by God, as verse 5 states. But, what then? Job felt he was just like an hireling filling out his day, and he wished that God would give him rest until the end came. But again, what then?

We have to pass on to verse 14 before we find him actually stating the third tremendous question that **filled his mind**, but evidently it was **in his mind** as he commenced his argument in verse 7. He did not know how a man could be "just," or "right" with God. He knew that no man could produce that which is clean out of that which is unclean. And now comes the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" As yet, on this point, no clear and decisive light was shining before him, and in his heart.

This being so, he started to reason the matter out. He took the analogy of a tree, which had been felled, when for long its root had been in the earth. He had seen the years pass so that the stump that was left had begun to decay. Yet a change had come. Something had happened, an earth-tremor had perhaps cracked the rocks and

opened up a fresh channel for water to reach its roots. Then, as a consequence, the dead tree had come to life and sprouted again. The hope of Job was that something like that lay before mankind.

Evidently too it was more than a hope, for in verse 12 he infers that men will "awake," and "be raised out of their sleep," but that this would not come to pass, "till the heavens be no more." How true this is, as to the masses of mankind who die in their sins, we see when we read Revelation 20: 11-15. We must remember that the fact of there being a resurrection of the **just** a full thousand years before the resurrection of the **unjust**, had not come to light in the days of Job. Verse 13 makes it manifest that Job in his mind connected the fact of resurrection with the manifestation of God's wrath, from which he desired to be hid, and the rather to be remembered in mercy.

The words of Job in verses 14 and 15 are very remarkable. We may often have wondered how the faith of an Abraham embraced such things as are recorded in Hebrews 11: 10 and 16, seeing that in his day there was no public revelation of these heavenly things, as far as the Scripture record goes. So with Job here. He recognized that he had an "appointed time," when his "change" would come; that there would be a Divine "call," to which he would "answer," inasmuch as he was a "work" of God's hands. In thus speaking he was taught of God, as we can see in the light of the New Testament.

We pause to ask if we have ever thanked God in any adequate way that we walk in the light of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead? Have we ever given sufficient weight in our souls to the statement of the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 1: 10, which in the New Translation reads, "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has annulled death, and brought to light life and **incorruptibility** by the glad tidings." Immortality is not the word here. That the soul of man survived death, and resurrection lay ahead, was believed in Old Testament times, as Job's words here show, and as the Lord made plain in controversy with the Sadducees of His day. What was not made known was that for the saint resurrection will mean entrance upon a new and incorruptible order of things. This was demonstrated when our Lord rose from the dead. Hence we have no need to discuss the matter and reason it out, as Job does here. The whole truth of it has been plainly revealed.

Thus Job had a certain measure of hope and expectation but, as the closing verses of the chapter show, all was for the moment swallowed up in the miseries of his present situation. Once more the speech of Job ends upon a note of gloom. His last word is "mourn."

There can be no doubt that the excellent men who lived before Christ did view death in that light. A striking exhibition of it is seen in the case of Hezekiah — read what he committed to writing, recorded in Isaiah 38: 9-14. The day had not yet dawned when a saint could

look death full in the face and write of "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far

better." Again we say, how great the privilege of living in this Gospel day!

ON WINNING SOULS

"**H**E that winneth souls is wise," because he has selected a wise object. I think that it was Michael Angelo who once carved certain magnificent statues in snow. They are gone; the material readily compacted by the frost as readily melted with the heat. Far wiser was he when he fashioned the enduring marble, and produced works which will last down the ages. But even marble itself is consumed and fretted by the tooth of time; and he is wise who selects for his raw material souls, whose existence shall outlive the stars.

If God shall bless us in the winning of souls, our work shall remain when the wood, and hay, and stubble of earth's art and science shall have gone to the dust from whence they sprang. In heaven itself the soul-winner, blessed of

God, will have memorials of his work preserved for ever in the galleries of the skies.

He has selected a wise object, for what can be wiser than to glorify God, and what, next to that, can be wiser than in the highest sense to bless our fellowmen; to snatch a soul from the gulf that yawns, to lift it up to the heaven that glorifies, to deliver an immortal from the thralldom of Satan, and to bring him into the liberty of Christ? What more excellent than this?

Surely such an aim would commend itself to all right minds, and that angels themselves may envy us poor sons of men, that we are permitted to make this our life-object — to win souls for the Lord Jesus Christ. Wisdom herself assents to the excellence of the design.

THE INSPIRED WORD

CONSTRUCTED as the Bible is, to reveal God and His redeeming grace, that its readers may be made wise unto salvation; tracing, as it does, His footsteps along the ages of human history; selecting, as it does, one or two events out of thousands, and omitting all the rest; extending, as it does, over many centuries, and yet harmonious and consistent with itself; written, as it was, by very diverse writers, and at

long intervals, yet forming one organic whole; combining, as it does, every style of literature, yet ever teaching the same truths; produced, as it was, by one nation, in their own tongue, yet adapted equally to all nations and all languages; when we consider all this, we cannot but conclude that this Book is given, in the fullest and most unqualified sense by Inspiration of God.

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

R. McCALLUM.

(Concluded)

I come now to another predictive type, Exodus 12: 1-8. I think that what strikes everyone reading verses like these is the multiplicity of detail. There is a profusion of instructions that seems to bewilder us. First of all, what is the object of it all? Why was it necessary that blood should be shed in order that God might take His people and deliver them from the land of bondage? Why was it that the lamb should be taken one day and killed another day? Why should the blood be put upon the lintel and the sideposts? Why should it be a lamb without blemish? If there is any meaning behind these, surely it must be symbolical! Now I want you to follow with me one or two things which show that all these point to Christ. The points I am going to press are written clearly in this story, and not fanciful.

First of all notice that, while there must have been thousands of lambs slain on that day of deliverance — the Passover Day — the word "lamb" throughout this chapter is used in the singular, **the lamb**, as if God looked to the time to which all these lambs pointed forward and saw the one true Lamb that was going to take away the sin of the world. It was to be a lamb, a male of the first year. The Hebrew is very definite and means a male a year old. Why? It was to be in the full vigour of its strength. And we remember that when Christ died He was not in old age; He was not in childhood nor

yet in youth, but He was opening out into the blossom of manhood. He was a Man in the full vigour of His strength when He died as the Lamb of God on Calvary. The lamb was to come under scrutiny; it was to be examined and to be pronounced "without blemish." And you remember how our Lord could say "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He was arraigned before the Sanhedrim; they brought every charge they possibly could against Him including false witnesses, and yet they had not evidence on which they could condemn Him. They brought Him before Pilate and Pilate would feign have washed his hands of this case for he had to declare "I find no fault in Him" — without blemish.

We find the day of the month on which the lamb was to be slain was the 14th day of the month Nisan, and the day that Christ died was the evening of the Passover Feast, the 14th day of the same month. And the very time of the day was foretold; it was to be "between the two evenings," that the sacrifices were to be slain, as the marginal reading of verse 6 shows. Josephus tells us that the sacrifice was slain in the outer courts of the Temple between three and five o'clock: three o'clock in the afternoon was the first evening — five o'clock the second evening; and six o'clock was nightfall. When did our Lord die? About the ninth hour He bowed His head and said, "**It is finished,** and He gave up the ghost." Not

long after the ninth hour — three o'clock in the afternoon according to our reckoning — our Lord, the holy Lamb of God, died on Calvary's cross. Who were to slay the lamb? The whole congregation of Israel; and we know that although the Chief Priests and the Pharisees and the Scribes were instrumental in stirring up the people, it was only when the verdict of the whole multitude was given — when Pilate had said, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you, Jesus or Barabbas?" and when they had answered, "not this Man, but Barabbas," that He was led out to be crucified.

Another most remarkable thing (and I don't think it is too fanciful) is this: if it had only been a question of blood being sprinkled we should have said the place was upon the door, but no! the door escapes altogether and the blood is set upon the framework, and I want you to look at these spots. There is the basin on the threshold; the hyssop has been taken and the blood has been sprinkled upon the lintel and the two sideposts, and I ask you solemnly, do these marks remind you of anything? Do we not sometimes sing:

*"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flowed mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"*

Is it not wonderful, this predictive type? Can we deny the fact that God had something in view in giving all these details, none of which had any bearing upon the

deliverance of the people. He must have had in view their instruction and ours as He looked to that great sacrifice to be offered for the sin of the world.

We will now turn to Deuteronomy 18: 15-19 and at the same time read 2 Samuel 7: 12, 13. On these passages I speak briefly. We find first that the One who is going to come is to be a Prophet "Him shall ye hear." These words were the words of Moses, and we know that he was a prophet mighty in word and in deed, and was the mediator of the Covenant of Law — the Lord Jesus Christ, the Antitype, was the Mediator of a better Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. Moses delivered from the bondage of Egypt — the One who was to come would be a Deliverer from a sorer bondage. Moses was the founder of a new Dispensation, the Dispensation of Law; the Antitype is Founder of the Dispensation of Grace. While there are these points of correspondence, the Lord is just as much above Moses as the Son is above the servant, as we read in Hebrews.

In 2nd Samuel, we find that the One who is promised is not only a Man, not only a Hebrew, not only of the seed of Isaac, of Jacob, of Judah, but He is to be of the seed of David, and there are three things at least secured for Him in this Covenant:—

Firstly — a Davidic house, or posterity.

Secondly — a throne — a sign of earthly authority, and

Thirdly — a Kingdom — a

sphere in which He is going to exercise that authority.

It was to be in perpetuity — FOR EVER. Although sin would bring chastisement, that chastisement would be remedial. Chastisement did fall on them very heavily, first of all in the days of Rehoboam and then at the time of the Captivity. Since that time, there has only been One of the house of David crowned at Jerusalem, and that was with a crown of thorns. Yet the Covenant was reaffirmed to Mary, and the One who was crowned with thorns will sit upon the throne of His father David, and reign gloriously.

Now look for a moment at the 22nd Psalm; particularly verses 1 to 8 and 13 to 18.

This is a Psalm of the Cross and it opens with that atonement cry "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In the second verse you find an intimation of the changes of light and darkness that were going to mark the cross. You remember how darkness enshrouded Him whilst God dealt with Him concerning the question of sin. It is worthy of note that this Psalm in the Hebrew — so Hebraists tell us — is a Psalm of sobs. In the first few verses there is not a complete sentence. It reads like this: My God! My God! — why forsaken me? — far from helping me — from the words of my roaring — one gasp after another! And surely we have portrayed in the most remarkable way the sufferings of the crucified One; One who was exposed to shame and contumely by man.

And then we see that One in His agony — the profusion of sweat, "I am poured out like water." We have portrayed to us the strain of the muscles, the bones, and on the action of the heart — "melted like wax in the midst of My bowels;" you have the intense thirst that accompanied the death of crucifixion — "My tongue cleaveth to My jaws." You have too the picture of the furious leaders with the mob in the "dogs," and the "assembly of the wicked" when "they pierced My hands and My feet." And then you have the prediction, "They part My garments among them and cast lots upon My vesture," fulfilled by the careless soldiers. Then you see Him, exposed in the face of the crowd; His bones standing out so that He could count them. When I remind you that crucifixion was not the mode of death practised by the Jews but by the Romans, I think you will see that the assertion of **inspiration** is irrefutable.

Next, a few verses in Isaiah 7: 13, 14; 9: 6, 7; 53: 1-3.

Now we come to the supernatural, in that the sign given is that a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and His name shall be called EMMANUEL, which means, God with us. The truth of the Virgin Birth is not only found in the New Testament but also in the Old. The modernist refuses to believe it. He finds a mystery that he cannot understand. The explanation of it is to be found in the name, "GOD WITH US." The moment you cease to believe in the Virgin Birth you cease to believe in the Deity of Christ, which is brought out most

clearly in the New Testament. We read in John 1 — “ In the beginning was the Word ” — that speaks of His eternal existence — “ and the Word was with God ” — that speaks of His separate existence — “ and the Word was God ” — that speaks of His essential Deity — “ the same was in the beginning with God ” — that speaks of His eternal Deity, He was not merely a manifestation of God. Now this One we find, became flesh and tabernacled among us — God with us, EMMANUEL.

In Isaiah 9, we have clearly pre-announced the double nature of Christ “ For unto us a child is born,” that speaks of His human birth — “ unto us a Son is given,” that speaks of the Divine nature; “ the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful ” — He is going to be unique, different from all others; “ Counsellor ” — He is the One who will enter into the purposes of God and bring them to fruition in His mighty power; “ the mighty God ” manifested in flesh; “ the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace ” — the One who will bring upon the groaning creation that for which it most sighs — peace and joy.

And then when you come to the 53rd chapter, you have that great chapter which remained absolutely unexplained until Christ had come. It is a chapter of twelve verses and yet if you count, fourteen times over the truth of vicarious suffering, which is so much denied today, is asserted. It is stated four times in verse 5. One is going to come who would suffer for us.

And it is a chapter of paradoxes which can only be understood in the light of the New Testament Scriptures. Here is One who would rise out of a dry ground and yet bear fruit: One who is the Sent One of God, and yet men would count Him of no esteem. He is to be without offspring, and yet is going to have a glorious seed. Here is One who is going to be cut off in the midst of His days, and yet His days are prolonged: One who was to make His grave with the wicked, yet He was with the rich in His death. The One who is going to come would not only be the Son of Man but the Son of God. He will bear gloriously the burden of government upon the earth, and yet be a Sufferer for us.

But we find the time of His coming predicted in Daniel 9: 25. The prediction starts from “ the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,” Sir Robert Anderson got Professor Sir G. B. Airy, the Astronomer Royal at Greenwich, to make certain calculations. The command went forth on the 14th of March, B. C. 445, and Christ entered in triumph as Messiah into the City of Jerusalem on 6th April, A. D. 32; so he calculated. The agreement with the prophecy was complete.

And not only is the time given but the place of His birth is told in Micah 5: 2. It could apply to no mere man. His goings forth are not merely from antiquity, but from of old, from **everlasting**. The place of His birth is to be Bethlehem, and since Bethlehem means “ the house of bread,” the particular Bethlehem is specified — it is

Bethlehem Ephratah of the land of Judah. Now it seemed in the highest degree improbable that this should be the birth-place of our Lord, since our Lord's virgin-mother lived in Nazareth. But a decree went forth that the whole Roman world should be taxed, and in compliance with it she had to take that journey. Although the tax was not collected until eight years later, it brought Mary to the place of His birth, just in time to fulfil the prophecy concerning the place of the birth of the Christ.

Truly Christ is the Messiah! He fulfils every detail mentioned in the prophetic scriptures we have considered, and many more which we have omitted.

It is said that when Queen Victoria ascended to the throne, a whole series of festivities was held in her honour. The last was that great Oratorio, "The Messiah." She was told it was the custom of the British public to stand while the

Messiah was sung, but her advisers told her it would not be in keeping with her dignity to stand; and as the choir sang, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," the Queen, according to instructions given to her, remained seated. But when there rang forth, "Kings of Kings and Lord of Lords," she rose and bowed the head that wore the crown of the Empire. And surely, as we go over the Old Testament Scriptures we find the prophetic Scriptures to be one grand Oratorio of the Messiah. If it seems to us surpassing strange that the One who was to be a King was only a Sufferer, one word explains the mystery, that word is the RESURRECTION.

The time is coming when He will sit on the throne of His father David and rule in equity to the ends of the earth. But how well for us to own Him Lord of lords now, and sing in truth, "Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all."

YOUR SANCTIFICATION

R. HARKNESS.

Condensed Notes of an Address to young Christians on Romans 12: 1, 2; Hebrews 10: 5-10; 1 Thessalonians 4: 3.

WE often speak and even sing, in the language of Psalm 23, as to our cup being full and running over, especially after a special season of blessing, but is it not too often true, that there is very little in our cup?

A story is told of a little town in the mid-west of America, where in a certain chapel they had an annual "revival" service. And there was an old man in the town who al-

ways attended the service to get "revived," but long before the next year's service all the "revival" had gone out of him. One year, as usual there he was, and standing up, he began to pray, "Lord, fill me with Thy Spirit . . ." Someone present could stand it no longer, so jumped up and called out, "Don't do it, Lord, he leaks."

Now that, I fear, is a very common complaint; or, to change the

metaphor, our thoughts and lives get overgrown with other things. Once, while in the Congo, I read an article by a military correspondent on the jungle war in Malaya. He gave it as his opinion that the only way for the troops to get at the enemy was to cut the jungle down. Obviously he knew little about jungles. An African village, that has been deserted, is so soon overgrown with jungle that you hardly know there had ever been a house there. Mission stations are little oases cut out of the jungle, and we have continually to cut the jungle back. Things easily creep into our lives and exert a stranglehold upon us. We may know things that are hindering our Christian lives, but back into them we slip, until we begin to think that we must accept as normal this oscillating and failing life.

There may be present some young Christians who think they should be considered quite keen. You do your bit of service in the open air or in the Sunday School — and these are very vital services to perform. But, you know, there is considerably more involved in the Christian life than that. Sometimes, when praying, the Congo natives tell the Lord that He has bought them. Some of the older believers have had personal experience of slavery, and know what it means to be bought as a slave, and they say, "Lord, Thou hast bought us, our tongues, our hands, our feet, with Thy precious blood." **And, is not that true?**

We often speak of the wonderful position into which, as believers, we have been brought. God, in His

infinite grace, has brought us into His family as sons, making us joint-heirs with Christ. This the Apostle Paul has told us, yet he never started any of his Epistles, "Paul, son of God and joint-heir with Christ . . ." More than once, however, he started by calling himself a "servant," or "bond-slave," of Jesus Christ. If we realize what God has done for us in His grace, our gratitude will lead us also to recognize that we have been bought with a price. So we are to live not for our own wills but for His. My object is to show you what the will of God for us is, whether we are older or younger Christians.

In Ephesians 1: 5, we read how God has, "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to **the good pleasure of His will.**" You will notice too that in the scriptures I read there was mention of **the will of God.** He has a purpose and plan for each of our lives, and He thought of us long before we were born, and even before the world existed.

"Predestinated" is a long word but its meaning is simple. People talk about our destiny; well, our destiny was fixed in advance. We are not straws in the wind, carried here and there by the chance currents of fate, but God chose us for blessing. He took the initiative with each of us, whether we were born into godly homes or godless ones. Many of you were brought up in Christian homes, and I wonder if you have thanked God enough for that wonderful privilege. Some of you were not so brought up, yet God brought you

face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ and you believed on Him. The fact is, as the Apostle James has told us, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." Here again the initiative was God's. The wonderful experience of the new birth was yours.

But then that conversion of yours was but the first step in a process. You have become God's property. You have those blessings in which we rejoice; justification, reconciliation, and eventually glorification, but there is also, sanctification, and that brings me to the verses in Hebrews 10.

If you look up verse 10 in the Revised, or Darby's New Translation, you will find the reading is that we "have been sanctified" through Christ's "offering" once for all. When God took us up and brought us into this circle of blessing He sanctified us, and this is something that has been done once for all. Now this word, "sanctify" simply means "set apart." God has set us apart for Himself.

But now returning to that Scripture in Thessalonians, which I read, we find a different aspect of sanctification; and if you turn to the fifth chapter of the same Epistle, you find Paul saying, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," and that sanctification is to apply to "spirit and soul and body." God, who has set us apart positionally in Christ, intends that this sanctification should become a practical thing in our whole lives; something which others may see and recognize.

This practical sanctification is a

process, and one from which we often shrink as being painful and costly. It means the application of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in heart and life, which sets aside our own wills. Now, this brings me to the verses I read in Romans 12. We know something of those "mercies" to which Paul refers—forgiveness, justification, reconciliation, our new place in Christ Jesus, so that His unchanging love rests upon us, from which nothing can separate us. Therefore, says the Apostle, because of these mercies your responsibility is to have your bodies yielded to God as a living sacrifice. This will mean a profound change in your experience.

I am now going to give you a word of personal testimony. I give it with diffidence, for I do not want you to remember it as a standard, but only as an illustration of this point.

I was one of a group which attended similar meetings to this at Swanwick years ago. My head-knowledge of Christianity acted like an inoculation which hindered my getting the real thing. I could listen to the ministry but it made little or no impact on my life. I trained for my calling and then went to Australia to seek my fortune. If anyone had told me that five years later I would return in order to serve God in Africa, I should have laughed. My relatives prophesied spiritual shipwreck for me. This very nearly came to pass, but there was God's restraining hand on me, and there were the prayers of my parents. My word to parents or other relatives who

have loved ones, going like prodigals into the far country is, — Pray on.

I went quite far into the distant land. One day I was on the race course on Melbourne Cup day. I lost some money on the race and was not feeling very happy when I came face to face with a Christian of my acquaintance. He said, "What are **you** doing here?" And I said, "What are **you** doing here?" There we stood; two very miserable specimens! Life went on like that for some time. I never cut absolutely adrift from the meetings, and even attended some meetings for young men and boys, the leader of which had had a similar experience to mine. One day he said to me, "You say you are a Christian, but you don't live like a Christian." That shook me and I began to wonder if I was a Christian at all.

The climax was reached one night in the boarding house in Melbourne where I stayed. I went to my room and knelt down. It was not something exciting, but done in cold blood, as it were. I thought of the Lord, of all He had done and of all I owed to Him, and I told Him I was going to take my hands off my life that He might take control of me. I believe it was the way in which this experience of Romans 12: 1, worked itself out in me, for it describes a critical experience, something done once for all, when for the first time we realize Christ has bought us with His own precious blood, and we gladly give Him all that is His by right.

I shall never forget the wonderful joy that filled my heart as I got

up from my knees, and I went to tell another fellow what I had done, so as thus to burn my boats behind me, and never go back on it. Some time after that, God began to speak to me about the needs of the mission field.

Some may be thinking I am going to ask for volunteers for the mission field. I am not. I want each of you to yield yourselves to God for whatever may be His will for your life. If every young Christian were to present their body to God a living sacrifice, there would be no lack of servants for His work. In that part of the Congo where I worked, a district as large as Wales, there were only eight of us, and of these five were sisters, facing the spiritual needs and the forces of the enemy — and the Mau Mau terror gives an idea of those forces in heathen Africa. But everywhere the harvest has need of labourers, and this yielding of our bodies to God is our "reasonable" or, "intelligent" service. It means a revolution in one's life, that God's will may be supreme.

Paul goes on to say, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Only thus do we prove for ourselves what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. Flagrant acts of worldliness are easily detected, yet you may find those who never do these worldly things, but five minutes with them is enough to reveal that they are worldly-minded. The world wants plenty of comfort and pleasure, and it matters little how obtained so long as they get it. We

are to be unaffected by the spirit of the world. I heard a headmaster telling his boys that, speaking to prominent business men, they had said, "We want, not the brightest and most intelligent boys you can give us, but the most **honest.**" Sanctification has entirely to do with our characters. Elsewhere Paul speaks of being conformed to the death of Christ, and if we are to be less and less conformed to the world it will be as we are more and more conformed to Christ and His death.

But at the same time there are things for us to do. It is not just a matter of wishful thinking. It is only as we take time to be in the presence of Christ day by day, that we are changed into His likeness.

Do we practice a quiet time with the word of God and in prayer? Do we turn aside from the things that only appeal to the flesh? Do we seek God's best for our lives?

It is said that after his death there were found in Mr. Darby's Bible the following lines:

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

Let us gladly own the claims of the Lord Jesus upon us, and yield ourselves to Him. There is no telling what blessing it will mean in our own lives, what good it may bring to others, and what glory it may bring to God.

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

W. KERR.

WE are living in days when the mind of man is being developed in every field, his inventive genius finding scope in many ways. Man is discovering awesome things which terrify his own heart. Knowledge is increasing rapidly, and with the increase of knowledge, there is the rapid increase of iniquity. In social, cultural, and religious circles, the wise man, the scribe, and the worldly disputer are busily engaged in adjusting the public mind to the modernistic way of thinking. The Christian in the midst of such, finds that the ideas and ideals which are being propagated by men of worldly eminence, if allowed to dwell in the mind, become a subtle influence which would turn away from Christ.

It is clear that the Corinthian believers had been influenced by "Mr. Worldly Wiseman," in their day, and it is of great moment for us to revert to what the Apostle Paul presented to them to counter such departure from the true Christian position in this world. We read in 1 Corinthians 1: 22, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom," giving us in a representative way, what is true of man's mind — materialistic and speculative. Do we need to look far to prove how characteristic this is of man?

In contrast to this, we have a statement in verse 23, "We preach Christ crucified" — an offence to the religious Jew, foolishness to the wise Greek; but to the believer,

God's power and God's wisdom. The Apostle begins with the cross in this Epistle, and how good it is today to have recourse to the cross, to keep us in the conscious good of what really took place there — the condemnation of man's greatness so that, "no flesh should glory" in the presence of God.

The cross then, is the exposure of the wise man of the world, for we read in the next chapter that it was the princes of this world who crucified the Lord of Glory; not the ignorant wicked men, but the intelligent, seemingly wise men. Their act showed the enmity which existed in their hearts, which were thoroughly exposed there at Calvary. The other side of the matter is this, that the judgment of God upon fallen man was sustained by the One who alone could meet that judgment. Read again the pronouncement in John 12: 31, 32, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." For the believer then, the power of God is in the cross; in place of all that men would parade before us of acquired knowledge and boasted wisdom, we have **Christ crucified**, God's power, God's wisdom.

As a result of the cross, that is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ at the hands of men, and of His resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand, a new generation has come to light, which we believe is referred to in chapter 1: 30, said to be "of God" and "in Christ Jesus." Man's greatest thoughts, his best achievements, his fondest

dreams are all of **man**. In this connection, therefore, we must account that if God has so judged man morally at the cross, it is impossible in principle for man in the flesh to think rightly of God, or to take account of the things of God. Truly man's senses are alert, seeing things and hearing things; man's heart is set on things, but they are of necessity, the things of a man.

In contrast to this, we have in 1 Corinthians 2: 6-10, that God has revealed to those who are of Him — and consequently love Him — the things He has prepared for them, and this by the Spirit. The believer then being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is rendered independent of all man's thoughts and ideas, and is able to penetrate into the depths of God. There is, we feel, today a subtle influence which would seek to introduce human reasoning and man's logic as aids to the understanding of God's Word. Such no doubt resulted in the past, in such works as the Higher Criticism, and is prominent today in the modernistic teaching of many. In view of this, how necessary it is to accept the judgment of the cross upon what is the lawless principle that animates the natural man; and to have the mind of the cross, as the Apostle Paul exhorted the Philippians — "Let this mind be in you . . ." (Philippians 2: 5). Then to seek that by constant self-judgment, to have the Spirit, ungrieved, as the controlling principle in our lives, that the result which is acceptable to God may be reached, and a path of faithfulness may be ours in a day of evil and increasing dangers.

BIBLE STUDY—JOB

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 15—21).

THE second speech of Eliphaz is recorded in chapter 15, and in it we can detect an increased tone of severity. The friends had come intending to comfort, but their efforts in that direction soon got diverted into argument; their tempers rose and bitterness spoiled their spirits, as each argued to establish his own point of view. How often through the centuries has this tragedy, ending in dissension and division, marred the testimony of God-fearing folk, even down to our own day.

This discourse of Eliphaz is short for he felt that he was a wise man reasoning with unprofitable talk, and listening to speeches that were of no worth. Job, he considered was casting off fear; or as another version has it, making "piety of none effect," and thus restraining prayer. In his view piety had the profitable effect of bringing upon one the favour of God, expressed in earthly prosperity. If it did not, where then was the practical gain of piety? Therefore the terrible afflictions of Job could only have one explanation, so he thought, *though Job so insisted on maintaining his integrity.*

This idea of Eliphaz and his friends is a very common one. It was to be found when Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy in very much worse form than in the days of Job, for he speaks of "men of corrupt minds" who indulge in "perverse disputings," because they suppose that "gain is godliness"

(6: 6). The New Translation slightly paraphrases it as, "holding gain to be the end of piety." Now this was pretty much the opinion of Eliphaz, and there are not a few people today who would agree with him. They would say, What is the use of being pious if it does not guarantee things of profit in this life? Ideas of that sort were less to be blamed in the days of Job, since things of eternity and heaven were then but dimly known.

Eliphaz now denounced Job in vigorous terms and rather unjustly, as we see in verse 6. To him Job's arguments were crafty and self-condemnatory. He met them by a series of six questions, recorded in verses 7-9, all of them having the sting of sarcasm in them. In verse 10, he claimed that the position, advanced by himself and his friends, had the sanction and support of very aged and venerable men. No doubt it was so. The three friends of Job were advancing the idea generally held, based perhaps on God's deliverance of Noah and his family when the flood came. Then the godly were favoured and the wicked destroyed, and thus, they felt, it must always be.

Further questions follow in verses 11-16. His assertions as to the holiness of God are quite right. The lower heavens, defiled by the presence of Satan, are indeed "not clean in His sight." His assertions as to the filthiness of man are equally true; but the inference that Job must be guilty of secret evils,

which he "winked at" instead of acknowledging, were wide of the mark.

From verse 17 to the end of the chapter we find a vivid description of the governmental judgment of God against the wicked. He assured Job that he had actually **seen** God acting in this way. It was the fruit of his own **observation** that he declared; and as he closed he did not fail to make further indirect charges against Job, speaking of men who were "deceived," of "hypocrites," of "tabernacles of bribery," and of "deceit."

This moved Job to the reply recorded in chapters 16 and 17. We can all sympathize with his opening words. His friends had been simply repeating the same basic idea in a variety of ways; namely, that the disasters that had overwhelmed him could have but one explanation. He **must** have been a hypocrite with evils lying beneath his pious exterior. If this was the comfort they had to offer him, it was of a very miserable kind. He told them at once that if the position were reversed and he visited them in their disasters, he could speak as they had spoken but he would not, but rather aim at asswaging their grief.

But it is noticeable that, after his opening reply to Eliphaz, Job's words passed into prayer and complaint, poured into the ear of God. It looks as if verses 9, 10 and 11 are a reference to what he had suffered by the speeches of his friends, and if so, even this he took as chastisement from the hands of God as well as all the losses and disaster that had come upon him. That he did

take it all from the hands of God was indeed good, but we still perceive that note of self-righteousness and self-vindication marring his prayer, especially in verse 17. This being so, his prayer did pass into a complaint that he was being hardly dealt with by God, and this especially because he felt he could speak of God as being on high the Witness to his integrity, even though his friends scorned him.

The opening words of verse 21 have been translated, "Oh that there were arbitration for a man with God!" Thus his mind reverted to his desire for the "Daysman," recorded at the end of chapter 9. A man might plead for his neighbour or friend but he felt there was no one to step in between God and himself, and he could only anticipate a short time before his end. His breath was corrupt and the grave ready for him, as he stated in the first verse of chapter 17. We have probably but little conception of the state of extreme and prolonged bodily corruption and misery that he had been enduring.

Yet some further insight as to it is granted to us in this 17th chapter. So extreme was it that the statements of his friends seemed to him but mockery. Among the people generally he had become a "by-word," or a "proverb," and the second clause of that 6th verse is elsewhere translated, "I am become one to be spit on in the face." This however would astonish upright men, and Job seems to turn the tables on his critics by inferring that they might prove to be the hypocrites, whilst the righteous

would hold on his way, and the one who had the clean hands would increase in strength. As for these "friends," there was not one wise man among them.

The closing words of this speech of Job are a very mournful complaint as to the hopelessness of his outlook. As to his poor body, only corruption and the worm were before him, when his soul would be in the unseen world. The word translated "grave" in verse 13, and that translated "pit" in verse 16, is the Hebrew, **sheol**, the equivalent of the Greek, **hades**, used in the New Testament. This pathetic lament might well have touched the hearts of his friends.

Yet Bildad begins his second speech, recorded in chapter 18, on a very harsh note. Job certainly had not yet come to the end of himself, and in his friends' arguments there was nothing to cause him to "make an end of words." The second part of verse 2 has been translated, "Be intelligent, and then we will speak." He evidently regarded Job's repudiation of their position and the assertions they advanced, as degrading to themselves, as though they had been beasts, and so he indulged in an insulting repartee. All four men who feared God, Job especially so, but see how the spirit animating their words had deteriorated!

And let us learn a serious lesson from this. There have been innumerable discussions among Christians, developing into controversies, and ending in recrimination. Such is the flesh in every one of us. Even Paul and Barnabas were not exempt, as Acts 15: 39 shows. So,

let us be warned.

The rest of Bildad's speech follows the pattern that the friends had established. In a variety of ways, displaying a mind very fertile in its observation and in its use of figures, he reiterated the main theme; that God always judges and destroys the wicked. The inference being, of course, that Job must be after all a wicked man.

Job's reply to these rather cruel words was on an altogether higher level. They were indeed vexing him with words, and breaking him in pieces, but he did not claim to be perfect — far from it, as we saw in chapter 9. Here, in verse 4, he admits to erring, but he claimed that his errors had only affected himself and not other people. What had befallen him he took from the hand of God, as verse 6 shows, yet he felt that His dealings were unnecessarily severe.

So, in verses 7-20, we have a graphic description of the miseries he was enduring. He complained that God had stripped him, fenced up his way, destroyed him on every side, kindled His wrath against him as though he was one of His enemies. As a result of this, he was an object of contempt and forsaken by all. Even his servants and his wife would have nothing to do with him. The words with which he closed this description of his sorrows in verse 20, alluding to his physical state, have passed into a proverbial saying amongst us.

Having thus spoken, he appealed to his friends for pity rather than argument and reproach, which almost amounted to persecution. It

was the hand of God that had touched him — God, who was more merciful than they. Hence he longed that his words might be preserved in a book, or even permanently be engraved upon the rock, as was a custom in those days on the part of kings and great men. Such rock records have been discovered and deciphered, yet his desire was granted in a more wonderful way than he imagined; for they have been recorded in the inspired Scriptures, which out-live and out-distance all else.

But why did he desire this? It was because he knew that his Redeemer was the living One, and that as "the Last," He would stand upon the earth. The New Translation renders it thus, as being really a name of God, referring us to Isaiah 48: 12. Thus again, and quite clearly, did Job reveal that he knew that death was not the end of everything for man, and that he expected a resurrection which would touch his body. What was not then revealed was that state of **incorruption** into which resurrection introduces us, for life and **incorruptibility** came to light by the Gospel, as 2 Timothy 1: 10, rightly translated, reads.

Though truth has been progressively revealed, certain great facts of a prophetic sort came to light in very early days. There was, for instance, the prophecy of Enoch, uttered before the flood, though not put on record in Scripture until the last epistle of the New Testament. Without a doubt Job would have known this prediction of Enoch, and it is remarkable that nothing he says here is out of harmony with

what is revealed in later ages. When the glorious Christ raises the saints, Job amongst them, he will indeed "see God," and see Him, as he said, "in my flesh," though he did not know he would be raised with a **spiritual body** like unto the resurrection body of our Lord.

Job's discourse in this chapter ends with a warning to his friends. He claimed that "the root of the matter" was found in himself, and, that the judgment of God is impartial, so that they themselves should be afraid of it.

This moved Zophar to speak once more, and this time he revealed quite clearly the base on which his argument rested. He said, "Therefore do **my thoughts** cause me to answer;" and again, "**the spirit of my understanding** causeth me to answer." Eliphaz had based his remarks mainly upon what he had seen, and Bildad mainly upon what he had heard, handed down from times of old. Zophar based his words upon what he had arrived at in his own inward cogitations, and he was not in the least behind the others in self-confident dogmatism; indeed, he seems to have excelled them.

In 1 Corinthians 2: 9, the Apostle Paul refers to Isaiah 64: 4, and he shows that the things of God are only known by us as the fruit of **revelation**. In this connection he mentions the three faculties by which mankind obtains its knowledge of things and affairs in this world. The eye sees them; the ear hears them; they enter into the heart by an intuitive process. But for the things of God we need

another faculty—that which springs from the Spirit of God.

Now it is very striking that, as we have seen, Eliphaz relied upon his powers of **observation**, and Bildad upon **tradition** from ancient days. Zophar now came in, very sure that his powers of **intuition** in this matter must be correct and beyond contradiction. All three were wrong, and it was not until there was a **revelation** of the power and wisdom of God, in the later chapters of the book, that the truth of the situation came out with clearness. We are provided with an interesting illustration of what Paul lays down in 1 Corinthians 2.

As in the other cases so here, a number of true things are stated. It is certainly a fact that, "the triumphing of the wicked is short," and "the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." What was not true was the application made of the fact, as supplying the explanation of all Job's sorrows. The "pleasures of sin" are only "for a season," as we read in Hebrews 11, but it is also a fact that saints may be "for a season" involved in "heaviness through manifold temptations," as we read in 1 Peter 1. Now the thought of a godly man being under severe trial and sorrow for a season never seems to have entered the minds of the three friends. They assumed that Job was getting what all along he had deserved.

Zophar claimed that what he intuitively knew was supported by what had taken place from "of old, since man was placed upon earth." Reading chapter 20 we can see how underlying his statements,

as to various acts of wickedness, was the insinuation that Job had been guilty of them. He it was who had laboured to swallow down the substance of others, to oppress the poor; who had violently taken away a house which he had not built, and so on. The fact is that the man who bases his argument on his own **intuition** is always **very dogmatic and cocksure**. He has to be, to make up for the lack of outward evidence, which would corroborate his assertions.

His final conclusion was that heaven was revealing Job's iniquity, and the earth was rising up against him, and all this was appointed to him from God.

Job's reply is chronicled in chapter 21, and a trenchant one it proved to be. Naturally he was provoked to retaliate with equal dogmatism, and to begin on a note of sarcasm. Verse 2 has been translated, "Hear attentively my speech, and let this replace your consolations." Summing up the speeches of the three friends as "consolations," was of course a piece of sarcasm. How he really viewed their words is plain at the end of the next verse, when he told them that after he had spoken they might "mock on!" He fully realized the force of their words, implying that he must have been guilty of grievous unrighteousness and sin, while all the time outwardly appearing to be a man of great piety.

His first point is this: his complaint was not to man but to God. Had it been to man, well might his spirit have been troubled, or "impatient." He reminded them that it

was with God both he and they had to do. In view of this fact, and marking God's dealings with him, they might well lay their hands upon their mouths and cease to condemn him. For himself he was afraid and trembled in the remembrance of it.

Commencing with verse 5, we find the counter-assertions to which he committed himself. It was not the case, he affirmed, that the wicked were always overwhelmed with disaster. On the contrary, they often lived, became old, mighty in power and prosperous, with their seed established in their sight. They had times of merriment and pleasure and at the end had no long drawn out misery such as he was enduring, but "in a moment go down to the grave [or, Sheol]." And all the time their attitude to God was, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."

Let us note two things. First, Job here correctly diagnosed the attitude of the natural man to God, about two thousand years before Paul was inspired to write his Epistle to the Romans. There, in the first chapter, we read that men, "when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful;" and again that, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge." This is the tremendous fact that we have to face. Sin has so completely alienated man from God that he has not the least desire for Him. "There is none that seeketh after God," as Romans 3 states.

Job's statements in verses 14 and 15, agree with this, and they explain the state of heathenism and barbarism into which men sank at

an early stage of the world's history — a state that has persisted to our own days. In earliest ages men had some knowledge of God, from which they wilfully departed.

And it is obvious that if men have to do with God, they will have to **serve** Him. So, in the second place, they view the whole matter from the standpoint of earthly profit. This is just what multitudes do today, when they ask, What is the good of being religious; what do we get out of it? They are but echoing the words we have here, "What profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" We know that, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4: 8). But that kind of profit the world has no eyes to see.

In the rest of the chapter Job speaks of the end of those who aim at shutting God out of their thoughts and lives. Ultimately disaster comes upon them and their "candle" is put out. Some may die in apparent ease and prosperity and others in bitterness; but into the dust and among the worms all of them go. In saying these things Job seems to be agreeing with what Psalm 73 tells us, as a matter of the writer's experience. The wicked may depart from God and appear to prosper, for their judgment from God lies beyond this life.

So once more Job counters the arguments of his friends, declaring that he found falsehood in them. Consequently, though they had come to comfort him, he found that the "comfort" that they had offered was empty and vain.

THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT

R. DAVIES.

“KEEPING to the letter,” is a familiar expression, often applied in a derogatory manner, as indicating lack of imagination and an undesirable narrowness of outlook. Popular sympathy seems to be with the man who acts according to the spirit of the law, even if he fails to keep strictly to the letter.

Whatever truth there may be in this, it is not the meaning of, “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor. 3: 6). The “letter,” means the law given at Sinai and written upon tables of stone, as the next verse shows. In this passage two divine dispensations are in contrast. The Old Covenant is described as a “ministration of condemnation” and “of death.” The New is a “ministration of righteousness” and “of the Spirit.”

The content and character of the Old Covenant is revealed in Exodus 20, where we find the well-known Ten Commandments, the giving of which filled the children of Israel with fear, so that they besought Moses that God should not speak with them again. A further passage, in Leviticus 18, is God’s charge to the nation to keep His statutes and judgments, “which if a man do, he shall live in them.” Again Deuteronomy 27: 26, states, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.”

The “letter” then speaks in terms of doing and living. It is God’s, “THOU SHALT” (see, Deut. 6: 5; Gal. 3: 12).

Exodus 20 makes plain that though God had brought Israel out of Egypt in His mercy, what He

now required of them was righteousness and obedience. Only on this basis could He bless and prosper them. Did the Old Covenant then bring blessing to Israel? No, for at the outset they broke it by setting up and worshipping a golden calf. This was a defiance of the first and second commandments, but not only so for with it went a licentiousness not to be tolerated amongst the Lord’s people. As a result alienation was immediately apparent, since Moses at once pitched the tabernacle “afar off from the camp,” and those that sought the Lord “went out . . . without the camp” (Exod. 33: 7).

Were this Israel’s only failure, we might still hope for some blessing under the law, but Scripture shows clearly that their whole history was marked by sin and rebellion. Well might the Apostle Peter describe the law as, “a yoke . . . which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts 15: 10). Dare we presume on success where Israel failed?

The “letter” sets out God’s standards. Like a plumb-line against a crooked wall, it shows how far man has transgressed, but provides no means of putting right what is wrong. It cannot create in any the new and clean heart that is needed. The law “was added because of transgressions,” and it has, “concluded all under sin” (Gal. 3: 19-22). Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee, had sought to establish his righteousness before God by keeping the law; but he came to know its power and death-dealing blows: ‘The commandment, which was ordained

to life, I found to be **unto death** " (Rom. 7: 10). The letter demands that which man cannot give, and **it kills**.

Nevertheless the law is not to be spoken of disparagingly; on the contrary it is "holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7: 12). In the present day when many are without a reliable standard of conduct, we need to stress that God is the Author of moral law, and that the ten commandments are of divine origin: that, "God spake all these words" (Exod. 20: 1).

The New Covenant is predicted in Jeremiah 31: 31-34. Reading the passage we see that the salient features of it are (1) God's law written in the heart. (2) knowledge of God, and, (3) forgiveness of sins. The New Covenant is God's "I WILL."

This was of course addressed to the houses of Israel and Judah, and to them the promise will certainly be fulfilled. But what of the present era? To what extent does it apply to us? Both 2 Corinthians 3 and Hebrews 10 bring these blessings within the sphere of Christian experience. Do we not as believers rejoice in the forgiveness of sins? If we do not, we can hardly claim to have entered into Christian experience at all!

Moreover, Hebrews 10 gives us the basis of this forgiveness, in the finished work of Christ upon the cross. He has offered "one sacrifice for sins," and so has, "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." This emphasizes the completeness of Christ's sacrificial work,

its eternal value and efficacy in God's sight. What was never achieved under the old order is now an accomplished fact.

How we need to emphasize the great truth that the whole question of both sin and sins has been settled at the cross once for all. Let Satan undermine our confidence in this, and by appealing to our vanity persuade us that we can add something by way of improvement, and the assurance of our standing is wholly lost, and we never have that "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way," spoken of later in Hebrews 10.

We have also the knowledge of God since He has been fully revealed in Christ, and now His love is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5: 5). And further, not the law is written in our hearts, **but Christ**; so that we become, "the epistle of Christ . . . written . . . with the Spirit of the living God . . . in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3: 7).

In keeping with this are those words in Philippians 2: 12, about working out our own salvation: words so often mis-applied by overlooking the vital qualification in the following verse, "For it is **God which worketh in you** both to will and to do of His good pleasure." A similar thought is expressed at the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when we read of God "working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ."

Furthermore, unlike the old covenant the new economy is one of

grace, and instead of condemnation we have justification, "the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3: 9). Thus it is we have the ministration of righteousness and life, instead of the ministration of condemnation and of death.

It is of interest to compare the way the rich young ruler looked at eternal life, as recorded in the synoptic Gospels, with the way it is presented in the Gospel of John. In the former it is still, "This do, and thou shalt live," but now different in the latter! In John 5, we have the impotent man helpless and hopeless, by the Pool of Bethesda — a picture of man under the old covenant. But he heard the voice of the Son of God, saying, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk," supplying at the same moment the power to do it. The well-known verse, John 5: 24, is set in connection with this.

As a final point of contrast, we saw that a **curse** was pronounced on all who did not keep the law. The answer to this we find in Galatians 3: 13, where we read of Christ being made a curse for us, that we might receive **the blessing**.

How thankful we ought to be that we live in the day of God's grace. Many, alas! are still found working on old covenant lines, whether they realize it or not; occupied with doing their best, and so missing God's best.

The old covenant was solemnly ratified by the shedding of blood, as we read in Exodus 24. The blood of Christ has ratified the New, as we see in the Lord's own words as He instituted His supper, words

confirmed to us in 1 Corinthians 11: 25. The Lord Jesus is the "Mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 12: 24). The word translated "new" is exceptional. Generally speaking the word so translated in regard to "covenant" means, "**new in kind**," i.e., a new kind of covenant; but here it is a different word, with the sense of "**new in point of time**," i.e., a newly made covenant, in contrast of that which had grown old and was ready to vanish away.

Will this new covenant with all its blessings ever grow old and be ready to vanish away? Never! It is "the everlasting covenant," ratified by the blood which procured the eternal redemption, as we read in Hebrews 13: 20. Men may enter into covenants with good intentions and yet find themselves unable to fulfil them. Sometimes covenants are broken deliberately. God is ever presented in the Old Testament as the God "that keepeth covenant." Coming to the New Testament we find Peter writing in his Second Epistle to those, "that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God;" that is, righteousness in the sense of **fidelity to promises made**.

No doubt we all feel discouraged at times: looking at things from a human point of view it can hardly be otherwise. Nevertheless the promises of God are real to faith, and have set before us that hope, which is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus" (Heb. 6: 19, 20).

“HOLY AND REVEREND IS HIS NAME”

A. J. POLLOCK.

ONLY once in our English Bibles does the word, **reverend**, occur, though the Hebrew word, of which this is a translation, occurs no fewer than 376 times, under such headings as fear, dread, terrible, and kindred words. This is very impressive, showing that the word refers to God alone. We read, “He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant for ever: holy and reverend is His name” (Psa. III: 9).

His name is to be revered, for we read in Scripture that the Word was **God**, the “**I am that I am**” of the burning bush (Ex. 3: 14); that the Word became flesh, and dwelt among men. Marvellous condescension! Our Lord Jesus Christ was “in the form of God” (Phil. 2: 6), from all eternity, and became Man, veiling His Godhead glory, yet never ceasing to be what He was — “God . . . manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3: 16). Surely such an One claims our very highest reverence and worship.

In reading through the four Gospels we learn a lesson, we may well pay heed to. When our Lord’s birth was announced by the angel to Joseph, he said of Mary, “She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name **Jesus**: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1: 21).

This name was divinely given to our Lord in relation to His manhood. But what a glorious name it

is! Other names may indicate His position and offices, but the name Jesus is personal to Himself. It is composed of two Hebrew words — **Jah**, a contraction of His wonderful name **Jehovah**, the self-existent God in covenant blessing in relation to His people, coupled with Hoshea or Joshua, meaning Saviour. Truly a wonderful name for us to contemplate — **Jesus (Jehovah-Saviour)**.

When our Lord was about thirty years of age, He stepped into the limelight of public service. He called young men, whom He called apostles, to follow Him, and to company with Him in His blessed service for God and mankind in a sinful and needy world. They thus had the wonderful experience of sharing with their Lord in the everyday incidences of human life. Here we pause to ask a question, Does Scripture record one instance in which these disciples presumed to address their Lord by His personal name, **Jesus**?

Though the name, **Jesus**, is recorded over 700 times in the four Gospels, yet not once do we read of His disciples addressing our Lord by His personal name. This is something we do well to ponder over, and to admire the way these young disciples bore themselves in reverence to our Lord. We find they used other words, and rightly, in addressing the Lord, such as Lord, Master, Rabboni. He Himself again and again referred to Himself as the Son of Man.

We remember seeing verses of poetry concerning our Lord which sounded flippant and irreverent, grating upon one's sensibilities as lacking the reverence, which is ever due to our blessed Lord. His Manhood is indeed a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith, for we read, "There is one God, and one Mediator, between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2: 5, 6).

Yet Thomas, the apostle of our Lord, who refused at first to believe in the resurrection, when convinced, did not greet Him as "Jesus," but said "My Lord and my God" (John 20: 28).

So we venture to give a word of counsel as to becoming reverence in prayer. Addressing God as Father, without any other name than Father, seems a familiarity that is not sanctioned by the New Testament epistles. It is there consistently linked up with the name of God; indeed all the Apostle Paul's epistles begin with a salutation from "God the Father," or, "God our Father."

So too in the epistles the full title of our Lord is consistently given to Him, for He is both Lord and Christ. The message that He sent through Mary on the resurrection day was, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20: 17). Here He called His disciples for the first time, "My brethren," and how unspeakably precious is this new relationship, yet the Lord carefully refrained from saying

"Our." Instead He used the two pronouns, "My," and "your," showing our relationship is subsidiary to His. In the light of this we should not speak of Him as "our elder Brother," as some unfortunately do, since there is a relationship that is unique to Himself and not shared by us, as the eternal Son in the unity of the Godhead. Further, to the words, "My Father and your Father," our Lord added the words, "My God and your God." Is there not a needful lesson to be learned from this?

In the opening of the Pauline epistles we find the salutations with very slight variations to be as follows, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," thus giving to our Lord His full title; and the same thing is true in the matter of prayer. We cannot but feel that the observance of these things would lead us to refrain from ending our prayers by simply saying, "in the name of Jesus," thus omitting His titles.

And further, if we are marked by due reverence, we shall take note of our Lord's words, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. 6: 7). If this injunction were acted upon by all of us, we should be spared many a prayer-meeting made wearisome by a few brothers occupying the time with lengthy prayers, covering mainly the same ground.

There may of course be occasionally a matter of such urgency that all prayer is concentrated upon it, as was the case in Acts 12: 5. But

normally a petition is offered, and ratified by all present, as they say, Amen. After that, repetition does not indicate reverence.

Whilst we do rejoice in God's exceeding grace, which has brought us into new relationships, so that we read, "He that sanctifieth and they

who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2: 11), we must not forget that in the previous verse He is called "**the Captain**" of our salvation. Let us be careful that as such we give Him the reverence that is His due.

A MEDITATION

G. S. HEPBURN.

In John's Gospel we have what is greater and more blessed than anything found elsewhere in the Scriptures. Subsequent and further revelations were given by the Holy Spirit as promised in that Gospel, chiefly to the apostle Paul, regarding the Father's counsel and purpose in relation to Christ and the Church; but in John's Gospel the Father is Himself revealed in the Person of the Son, and **what He is** must be greater than all else.

In chapter 1: 18, we have the most blessed statement found anywhere. "The only begotten Son [term of the greatest possible endearment found only in John's writings] which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him;" and so completely is this the case that the Son said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

What a story it is, told out in words and works, of love, grace, goodness and infinite tenderness and compassion, and since the Father has not taken a body as the Son has, He may never be seen otherwise than as He is seen in the Son.

And what a wonderful circle of divine affections is incidentally unfolded. First, we have the love of the Father to the Son, whose eter-

nal dwelling place is the Father's bosom — a term found only in the verse referred to above — and the truth contained in the verse is aptly expressed in the following well known lines:

Dwells in His bosom — knoweth
all
That in that bosom lies,
And came to earth to make it
known,
That we might share His joys.

There are seven further references to this love of the Father to the Son in subsequent chapters, but what pen or tongue can describe it; perhaps the most we can say is that it is infinite, measureless and eternal; the eternity of it is stated in the words, "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (17: 24).

Next we have the Son's love to the Father: "I love the Father" (14: 31); for the affection between Father and Son is **reciprocal**. The cross, that wondrous cross, is first and foremost the expression of the love of the Son to the Father, and all His counsels and purposes depend on that cross for their fulfilment. There, and there only, is a righteous basis found for their fulfilment. The world knows nothing of this today but it will know it in

the "world to come," and much else besides.

Then there is the Son's love for the saints, "His own," "those whom Thou hast given Me" (17: 11); and in whom He evidently finds pleasure. So, we read, "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you," and this is an absolute, unqualified statement, with the same infinite, measureless and eternal love. The cross is where it has been told out in all its depth and fulness. "Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father [by way of the cross, let us never forget] having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (13: 1). Needless to say, there is **no end** to His love.

While John seems to have appreciated the Lord's love more than others, there is no reason to suppose that the Lord loved the others less than John, nor is there any reason to suppose that John had a monopoly of Jesus' bosom (mentioned only in John 13: 23). That bosom is open to all who appreciate his love sufficiently to avail themselves of it. For the enjoyment of His love one must be in the path of obedience, for He said, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love" (15: 10).

Fourthly, we have the love of the Father for the saints. "The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me" (16: 27). The Father loves all who love His Son. The same principle is found in the words, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father" (14: 21). And again in chapter 17: 23, we have the marvellous statement that the

Father loves the saints with the same infinite, measureless and eternal love wherewith He loves the Son. The Father's love to the Son is basic truth and gives character to all the rest.

Finally, we have the love of the saints to the Son, to the Father and to each other. Perhaps the less we say about our own love the better, it is so feeble, but we do well to listen to what the Lord says about it; and He tells us in chapter 16: 27, that it is that little spark of love to Himself, that is found in our hearts, that is precious to the Father, and of course it is precious to Himself likewise.

For the love of the saints to the Father we must go to John's Epistle, "We love Him because He first loved us" (4: 19); and the love of the saints whether to the Son or the Father is **responsive** love.

Regarding the love of the saints to each other, while we are never enjoined to love God or the Lord in the New Testament we are constantly enjoined to love each other, and in John's Gospel we have the Lord's command thrice repeated (13: 34; 15: 12, 17), not without reason, and we are to love each other as He has loved us. It is the same love throughout, the Son loves us with the same love as the Father loves Him and we are to love each other as He loves us. To live and move in this marvellous circle of divine love with its seven links is eternal life indeed. And the love of saints to each other is fruit for God on the one hand, and testimony for man on the other.

May we each of us take all this to heart.

THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

J. B. DUFF.

John 13: 23-25; 19: 25-27; 20: 1-4; 21: 4-7; 20-24.

IN each of these five passages in the Gospel of John we read of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and we are informed at the very end of the Gospel that this disciple was the writer himself. Some may wish to enquire if John in so speaking of himself wished us to understand that the Lord had a special love for him? But was it not rather that John had a special sense of the Lord's love to him, in common with all His disciples?

Peter might boast of his love for Jesus, as we know he did with disastrous result, but John rejoiced in the love of Jesus for him. We too may rejoice in His love, for this is safe ground and not shifting sand, since, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." It is moreover a deep and sweet sense of His love to us that will produce our love to Him.

In each of these five passages we notice a different feature characterizing the disciple whom Jesus loved.

(1) *Leaning*

In chapter 13, we find him at the Last Supper in the upper chamber in Jerusalem, when trouble and sorrow filled their hearts, and he was leaning on Jesus' bosom. What a sweet resting-place on such an occasion—the resting-place of love! We too, passing through a world full of sorrow, distress and weariness, may resort to this sweet retreat in a spiritual way, and be solaced

by His love. The hymn-writer has given expression to this in the well-known words,

"Jesus, I am resting, resting,
In the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart."

(2) *Standing*

In chapter 19, when all the rest of the disciples had forsaken our Lord and fled, we find this disciple standing by the cross. It was to the care of this disciple that the Lord committed His mother, and truly that home, where the love of Jesus is appreciated and enjoyed, is of all places a blessed spot.

It is as our hearts are filled with His love to us, that we shall be able to stand when others flee away, and so we may become "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." May the love of Christ constrain us so that we live, not to ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. Then as the Lord entrusted His mother to John, He will entrust to us that which is dearest to His heart.

(3) *Running*

In chapter 20, we find that the message of Mary Magdalene, that they had, "taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre," started Peter and John running. So they went forth and ran both together; "and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre."

Why did John run the faster? Was it merely because he was a younger man than Peter? Was it not rather that Peter was restrained by the remembrance of his recent denial of his Lord?

This indeed should teach us that the one who is occupied with and enjoying the perfect and unfailing love of the Lord for him, will run faster than the one who is occupied with his imperfect and failing love for the Lord. As we have mused upon the sweetness and blessedness of that love "which passeth knowledge," have we not felt so strengthened and stirred and energized, that we could say with Habakkuk, "He will make my feet like hind's feet"?

(4) Discerning

In the opening verses of chapter 21, we read how Simon Peter said to some of the other disciples, "I go a-fishing," and how they said to him, "We also go with thee." They went forth but caught nothing, but when the morning was come Jesus stood on the shore but they did not know it was He. But when at His bidding they had cast the net into the sea, and now were not able to draw it in for the multitude of fishes, "that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord." He was marked by spiritual discernment. We may safely say that the more we know the love of Christ, and keep ourselves in it, the greater will be our spiritual understanding.

(5) Following

Towards the end of chapter 21, we find this same disciple following.

Peter was told to follow by the Lord, but this disciple followed without being told. He could do nothing else. He was drawn by the cords of love. Well may we exclaim,

"Lord, Thou hast drawn us after Thee,
Now let us run and never tire."

How blessed it is to be so conscious of His great love to us that we cannot do without His company.

In verse 22, we read that Jesus said to Peter concerning this disciple, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me." While agreeing with others who connect these words with John's special line of ministry, we find sweetness in the thought that this character of disciple will continue until the coming of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit is still with us and in us, and He delights to make the love of Christ real and precious to our hearts, thus answering to the desire of the Apostle Paul, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3: 17-19).

"Thy love, most gracious Lord,
Our joy and strength shall be;
Till Thou shalt speak the gladden-
ing word,
That bids us rise to Thee."

BIBLE STUDY—JOB

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 22-31).

THE outspoken way in which Job had told his friends, that the comfort they had offered was untrue and valueless, rather naturally moved Eliphaz to begin his third speech on a still more bitter note. Job certainly had been defending his own character, but did he confer any profit or benefit on the Almighty by the righteousness and perfection that he claimed? And would God enter into judgment with him as though he were His equal? There could be but one answer to these questions, and it would be salutary for Job to realize what it was. As our Lord told His disciples, the confession of us all has to be, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17: 10).

But, having uttered these wise words, Eliphaz plunged into a series of accusations against Job, which in the light of the testimony God bore to him at the outset of the story, must have been utterly unfounded. These accusations fill verses 5-9, and reading them we can see what provoked Job to sing his own praises, as he does in chapter 29. Eliphaz did not deal in vague insinuations but affirmed Job's wrongdoing in regard to the needy, the naked, the weary, the hungry, the widow and the fatherless. In chapter 29, Job rebuts these things and is equally explicit in declaring how well he had acted to these very people.

In verse 13, Eliphaz supposes the evil had been mainly in secret and that Job assumed that God did not

know of his wickedness — another false assumption. In verses 15-18, we have a reference to the flood. Job had just spoken of wicked men, who said unto God, "Depart from us," and here Eliphaz asks if he had really taken to heart this very thing, as displayed in the antediluvian world. What men did **after** the flood, as they lapsed into idolatry, was just what had been done **before** the flood. Eliphaz is quite right in saying that the root of all their appalling wickedness was departure from God, and shutting Him out of their lives and even out of their thoughts.

At this point we may well pause and consider our own age. Job's assertion in the previous chapter was that when, as often, God prospered wicked men, they desired God to depart from them for they had no desire for His ways. Now Eliphaz has stated that of old wicked men dismissed God from their thoughts and lives and were cut down by the flood. Job's point was that God often prospered the wicked and their judgment only came at the end, whereas Eliphaz insisted that God did intervene in judgment, as the flood had borne witness. Both it seems were right, and in our own day we can see the direful results of men dismissing God from their thoughts and lives. If God be thus turned out, every kind of evil comes in.

How true therefore is the exhortation of Eliphaz in verse 21. The knowledge of God does indeed lead to both peace and good as the ulti-

mate result, but at first it leads to deep unrest and trouble, as Job had to find. Before he reached the good, recorded at the end of the book, he had to experience the anguish of self-judgment — see, 40: 4; 42: 6.

Underlying this verse however, and the succeeding verses too, is the old assumption that Job did not know God, that he was astray from Him and needed to come back and put away his iniquity, which was bringing all this chastisement upon him, and he closed with a glowing description of all the advantage that would come to Job if he did so. A clearer translation of the last verse is, "He shall deliver him that is not guiltless," and in his closing words Eliphaz seems to state that if only Job had clean hands he would deliver other people as well as himself.

Job's next speech occupies chapters 23 and 24, and is remarkable in that he makes no direct reference to what Eliphaz had just been advancing. Chapter 23 has the nature of a lament with a great deal of pathos in it. Here he was full of bitter complaint, yet feeling that the weight of the stroke laid on him was beyond any groan that he uttered. The stroke came from God, yet he did not know where He was nor how he might find Him. If only he could find Him and order his cause before Him, he felt sure relief would come, and he would be delivered — verse 7 has been translated, "There would an upright man reason with Him; and I should be delivered for ever from my Judge." Thus once more did Job assume his own uprightness, and his complaint was that he was troubled by the Almighty, whom he could not reach and into whose presence

he could not come.

Nevertheless he still had confidence, as verse 10 shows, that all the path of sorrow he was treading was known to God, that in it he was being tested, and that as the result he would come forth as gold at the end. That indeed was the end finally reached but, we suspect, not in the way Job expected. As yet, filled with confidence in his own righteousness, he expected to be approved of God. He did come forth as gold, but as the fruit of his abasement in self-judgment before God, and then he was lifted up and abundantly blessed.

Verse 12 is striking and frequently quoted. But the words translated, "my necessary food," are literally, "my appointed portion," as the margin shows. The New Translation renders them, "the purpose of my own heart." Reading it thus, we may well challenge our own hearts as to whether we are prepared to set aside our own purposes in subjection to the words of God.

The first verse of chapter 24 propounds a question, the exact force of which is not easily discerned. But it does appear that in the rest of the chapter Job is recounting the evils that were filling the earth in his day, which were going on unjudged until the grave closed the history of the wicked, as giving point and force to the question he asked. This being so, the latter part of verse 1 would mean, "Why do the God-fearing not see days of judgment falling from God on the heads of the godless?" A very pertinent question, approximating to that raised in Psalm 73. At the end of the chapter Job, as well as the

Psalmist, sees judgment ultimately coming upon them. But seeing it does not so come now, Job challenged all comers to confute him and prove him a liar.

For the third time Bildad now spoke, as recorded in chapter 25. As with Eliphaz so with him, each speech was shorter than the preceding one, showing that their powers of compassion, as also of argument, were running short. Moreover there appears to be little of reference to Job's statements in what he said. His description of the greatness and glory of God is fine and almost poetical, and what he says of the sin and uncleanness and insignificance of man, who is like a worm before his Creator, is equally true. But he could only reiterate the question Job asked in chapter 9, "How then can man be just with God," without making any attempt to answer it, or express a desire for a mediator, as Job had done. To Bildad it was an unanswerable question, and perhaps he thought it gave some kind of excuse for the sin, with which he and his friends had been accusing unhappy Job.

This moved Job to open his mouth for the ninth time, in a speech longer than all the rest. As their arguments for the prosecution were failing, his for the defence increased. Bildad's brief words had been of a gentler kind, but before Job showed that he too can speak in glowing terms of the greatness of God, he indulged in the sarcasms that fill verses 2 and 3 of chapter 26. To us it seems quite obvious that the speeches of the friends had not been helpful nor saving nor wise, but Job being human, he did not miss the opportunity to hurl

these taunts at them. Other translations render the opening words of verse 3, "To whom," rather than, "For whom." That would mean that Job wished them to remember that though their words had been addressed to him, they had really been speaking in the presence of God, and speaking moreover not in the right spirit.

His description of God's creatorial power is striking. Verse 7 in particular shows how these early saints, living in the fear of God, as far as He was then revealed, had a true and simple knowledge of created things, far removed from the fantastic ideas entertained, even by the learned, when their minds had been darkened by lapsing into idolatry.

He knew that God had wrought by His Spirit in garnishing the heavens, which is what learned unbelievers would hardly admit today; and at the same time he was conscious that what was known in his day was only a part of His ways, and his comment was, "What a whisper of a word do we hear of Him!" (New Trans.). Let this pathetic cry of Job sink into all our hearts. He had but a "whisper of a word" as to God. Israel knew something of "the thunder of His power," when at Sinai through Moses the law was given. We have the high privilege of knowing and enjoying the "grace and truth" that came by Jesus Christ, and further of walking in "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6). We may well bless God, who has brought us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

What a striking witness we have

in this book — one of the oldest in the world — to facts which stand out plainly in the New Testament. Here are patriarchal saints, living only a few centuries after the flood, with a knowledge of God according to the primeval revelation of Himself. Men did not develop out of heathenism into the knowledge of God, but the reverse. As Romans 1 says, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God;" and again, "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over . . ." However stubborn Job was in his self-righteousness, and his friends were in their thoughts, they did not exclude God from their knowledge. He was very present in their thoughts.

The opening words of chapter 27 indicate that at this point Job paused, expecting Zophar to speak; and apparently he paused again at the end of chapter 28. But no reply was forthcoming. This was not surprising, for the man who bases his position on **intuition** has a very restricted field of argument. The man who argues from his own **observation** may have had a wide field of vision and therefore a lot to put forward. So too, the man who delves into past history and argues from **tradition**. But the man who only urges what he thinks, the ideas that he has intuitively formed, may urge them with great force in his opinionated self-conceit; but if his thoughts be rebutted, there is not much else he can say.

So Job resumed his discourse, striking a very solemn note, as taking an oath before God. In affirming his own integrity and truth he charged his friends with being

the ones who spoke falsehood and deceit, while he held fast his righteousness with the utmost resolution. This "righteousness," as chapter 29 will show us, was concerned with his outward conduct, for as yet the searching light of God had not entered his soul. He had been charged with being a deceiver and a hypocrite. He knew he was not this, and he was not going to plead guilty to it for a moment. We too know that he was not, but outward correctness does not in itself count for righteousness in the presence of God. Job's own words here prove it, for the way he complains of God in verse 2 shows that his heart was not right in His sight.

In the rest of the chapter we find Job enlarging upon the way God deals in judgment with the hypocrite. He had just been virtually charging his friends with being hypocrites in their accusations against him, so it would appear that his words were a warning to them that such might be their fate, something akin to what had happened to him.

He followed this — chapter 28 — with the remarkable words about man's search after wisdom. In his days mining was practised: it may have been then a new pursuit, whether for iron or copper, for gold or silver or gems. They dig down, they divert the subterranean stream, they make paths untrodden by the strongest of beasts or the most keen-sighted of birds. But in all this searching they never find wisdom. This is the question he raised in verse 12, and he affirmed very rightly that it could not be found in these human activities. Men may discover **much**, and since

Job's day they have discovered an immense deal **more**, but wisdom eludes them. If Job could have been given a glimpse of man's activities and discoveries in our atomic age, he would say the same, only with emphasis a hundred-fold greater.

So, "Where shall wisdom be found?" (verse 12). Job begins to answer this in verse 23. God, who understands it, knows its way, and has declared it to man, as verse 28 declares. "**The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.**" In all the statements made during this prolonged discussion no truer nor wiser thing had been said. In Proverbs 9: 10, we find Solomon making a similar statement, and it is corroborated in the history of the early church, as we see in Acts 9: 31.

As the fear of God departs from the heart of man, so his own self-will increases, which produces endless folly. In the present age the knowledge and cleverness of man has **risen** to heights undreamed of a century ago, and his destructive folly threatens to **descend** to undreamed of depths. Psalm 36: 1, quoted in Romans 3: 18, exposes the root of it all.

As Job continued his parable, in chapter 29, he sighed for a return to the days of his prosperity and, remembering the accusations of Eliphaz, which we had in chapter 22, he began to utter his own praise. What light and luxury were his! What deference and even reverence was paid to him! And then he declared his acts of benevolence and righteousness and judgment, which he felt had entitled him to very preferential treatment in blessing

from the hand of God.

Chapter 29 has thus become one of the great "I" chapters of the Bible. Ecclesiastes 2 is Solomon's "I" chapter: that personal pronoun occurs 16 times in the first 9 verses: the chapter of the **self-gratified** "I." Job 29 is the chapter of the **self-satisfied** "I." Romans 7 is of course the chapter of the **self-condemned** "I." And to be self-condemned is far better than to be self-gratified or self-satisfied. Best of all is to be **self-eclipsed**, as we find Paul to be in Philippians 3, where he mentions "I" a good many times.

But our chapter records how Job was permitted to let himself go, and sing his own praise, and thus reveal to us the self-righteousness and self-conceit, which had lain deep down within him, hidden from all eyes but God's. To bring this to light, and to bring Job himself to judge it, and to judge himself in the presence of God, was the object God had in permitting Satan to bring these extreme testings upon him.

For the moment however Job was full of the great and excellent things he had done, and of the commanding position amongst his fellows which had been his as the result. This did but make more vivid the contrast of his present condition, and to this he returned in the sorrowful lament recorded in chapter 30. He had now become the derision of the basest of men, and even of the youngest among them. They could make up songs about his misery, and even spit in his face—a cruel insult indeed. In verse 20 however he turned to God and made bitter complaint to Him, and even

against Him. He felt that He had opposed him and cast him down, and disregarded his prayers and entreaties, and so had "become cruel" to him. Poor Job! Without any question men had become cruel to him, and he now felt that God had become cruel also. In the closing verses of this chapter he described the extreme state of bodily weakness and misery and corruption into which he had been brought. God had given Satan permission to do his worst, short of taking his life. With malign skill Satan reduced his body to such a state of loathsome disease as, we suppose, no man has suffered before or since; for in every other case the victim would have died before such a mass of bodily trouble could develop. Let us not judge Job harshly. In such a fearful plight as his we should probably have said far worse things than he.

Having uttered these sorrowful complaints, Job closed his lengthy speech, as we see in chapter 31, by a series of asseverations almost amounting to oaths. His friends had accused him of definite sins and wrong-doing. As to these things his conscience was clear, though, as we have seen, he admitted he was not pure in the sight of God. So he strongly affirmed that he had not committed the kinds of evil that were alleged or insinuated.

This chapter bears witness to the fact that before the law was given a high standard of morality was still found among God-fearing men. A standard moreover which had regard not only to the outward act but also to the inward motive that prompts the act: see, as instances of this, he spoke of what he **thought**, or **did not think**, in verse

1; of his **heart** walking after his eyes, in verse 7; and again, his **heart** being secretly enticed, in verse 27; and of **hiding** his iniquity, and **covering** his sins, like Adam, in verse 33. This may remind us of the Sermon on the Mount; particularly if we compare his words in verse 30, realizing that merely wishing a curse to his enemy would be a sin, with our Lord's words in Matthew 5: 24.

Again, he knew that deceit and false witness was wrong; see, verse 5: that adultery was wrong; see, verse 9: that idolatry was wrong; see, verses 26-28; since the worship of sun and moon was the most primitive form that idolatry took. So also he knew that he was not to covet what his neighbour possessed, for in contrast he should be a giver to his necessities, as we see in verses 13-22.

So most evidently the standard of conduct that Job had before him was a very high one, and he felt he had rigidly observed it. He knew too that there would be a day when God would rise up and visit, and he asked, "What shall I answer Him?" (verse 14). Reviewing all these things, Job felt he could call down a curse upon himself, if he had not observed them: that on his land thistles might "grow instead of wheat, and cockle [tares] instead of barley." With this Job also lapsed into silence.

The end that the Lord reached with Job is made all the more striking by the fact that in the main these assertions of his were correct. At the outset Jehovah bore witness that he was perfect and upright, and when finally He intervened He did

not utter words of contradiction. It is just this which imparts such tremendous force to the utter abase-

ment and self-condemnation that sprang from Job's lips, before he was blessed at the end of the story.

ROMANS 16: 17, 18

INSUBJECTION of spirit is a dangerous thing among those who teach in public or private, and quite as much in private only as in public. It is truth severed from Christ and that consciousness of Divine authority and of dependence on grace which we all need to keep us right, most of all, perhaps, those who teach. Few men are in such danger of mental activity in divine things; and this not merely because of self-importance on their own part, but from the desire to satisfy the craving for what is new among the saints themselves. The excitement of novelty is apt to carry away the natural mind, especially the weak, to the hurt of all, both teachers and taught. Divine revelation, not human thoughts about it, alone secures the glory of Christ and the well-being of souls. As the Holy Spirit wrote it to this end, so He alone can make it good in practice. Mental activity gathers round its own source and forms a school: truth wielded by the Spirit judges

the flesh in its most specious form, nourishes the new man, and builds up the body of Christ to God's glory.

The brethren then are besought to beware of such as make these divisions and stumbling blocks. What they had already learnt would serve as a test for these piquant statements which pampered nature under the show of utterly condemning it . . . Whatever be the shape of contrariety to the doctrine we have been taught, the duty of saints is to turn away; for they that are such are slaves, not to our Lord Christ, but to their own belly; so contemptuously does the Holy Spirit characterise their work, let it be ever so refined in appearance, let it ever so loudly boast of its own superior spirituality . . . Still the hearts of the guileless are in danger of being deceived by the plausibility and fair-speaking of these makers of parties and are warned accordingly.

W.K.

THE head may overgrow the heart, but the heart cannot overgrow the head. Intellectual interest in Scripture may supplant affection for the Lord, but as He is better known, the believer is better able to bear the knowledge of the deeper mysteries. We may get interested in books, or in our Bibles, and yet be sluggish toward Christ. We may give up extreme worldliness, and yet be carried away from communion with Christ in the whirl of religious activities.

It is easy to acquire a great deal of truth **mentally**, far beyond that which has been learnt in our souls **experimentally**, and therefore beyond that which is lived in our lives **practically**.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

F. B. HOLE.

Condensed notes of an address on I John 1: 1-4; 2: 12-29.

It is very evident that the Apostle John wrote this epistle late in the first century, when the other Apostles were gone and antichristian teachers were appearing, doing their utmost to seduce and corrupt the saints, particularly those more recently converted, whom he calls "little children," or "babes."

There are in this epistle two words both translated "little children." The one used in verses 12 and 28 of chapter 2, is simply "children," embracing all believers, since all are children of God. The other used in verses 13 and 18, is really, "babes," the beginners in the Christian life. These are the ones who are told that it is "the last time;" that is, the last epoch, in the last days of which the Antichrist will appear, so that already men of antichristian character were at work.

Because of this the Apostle opens with the words, "That which was from the beginning:" not the beginning of creation, as in Genesis 1 and John 1, but of the revelation that has reached us in the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. If any entertain doubt as to this, let them turn to John's Gospel and read verse 27 of chapter 15. The previous verse mentions the coming of the Holy Spirit and the testimony He would render. His testimony being marked by perfection, would any further testimony be needed? Yes, there were men chosen to bear witness of the things they were privileged to hear and see and even handle, as they companied with their Lord from the beginning, in days before the Spirit was given.

We must remember that, unlike man, God never has to experiment, or amend, or improve, in any revelation He makes. It is perfect from the outset, and if men attempt to add to it or subtract from it they do so to their own ruin. These first century "antichrists" were known as "Gnostics," — the "Knowing-ones" — the opposite to the Agnostics of our days, who confess that they do not know and who even aver that nobody can know.

The first century Gnostics doubtless urged that seeing the original apostles were "unlearned and ignorant men," the saints ought now to pass from the cruder ideas that were at first promulgated to the more intellectual and philosophical things they had to say. John was the survivor of the apostolic band and was used to recall the saints to the original revelation. Hence also, again and again he uses the word "know;" using the Greek word which signified not mere intellectual, head knowledge, but inward knowledge, based on experience.

It is true of course that there has been progress in Divine revelation. God made Himself known to Abraham and then through Moses in a further way. But His full revelation was in Christ, completed by His witness through the Spirit after He was glorified, as He promised in John 16: 12, 13.

That which was manifested in Christ was real and objective, capable of being apprehended by three out of the five senses with

which man is endowed. This is clearly seen at our Lord's baptism. Then the Father was audible, but that only. The Spirit was visible, but that only. The Son was audible and visible and tangible, which is just what John tells us in his first verse.

And not only that; another wonderful thing follows: the life has been manifested. To the apostles was given the power to see it, so that they could declare to others the eternal life, which, ever with the Father, had now been made known. So truly made known that the Apostle can end the epistle by saying of the Son of God, "He is the true God and eternal life."

The first point before us then is the wonder and perfection of the revelation that has reached us in the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot improve upon it nor can you add to it. The eternal life which is in the Son of God has been manifested, so that we may come into the communion and blessedness of it, in the knowledge of the Son, who has revealed the Father.

But now there is a second point. Though there is no growth in the revelation, since it is perfect and complete, there is to be a great deal of growth in the apprehension of the revelation.

That is why we have to read those verses in chapter 2. The forgiveness of sins, spoken of in verse 12, is a blessing shared in common by all the children of God, yet there are measures of growth to be found amongst them, as verse 13 shows — "fathers," "young men," and "babes." The characteristic feat-

ure of the first of these is that they are mature in their knowledge of Christ, and of all that has been manifested in Him. The second are characterized by victory over the adversary by the word of God: the third by the simple knowledge of the Father, which is where we all start at the beginning of our Christian lives.

Having stated the characteristic feature of each of the three, the Apostle proceeded to give a message to each, but to the fathers he merely repeated what he had said before. Why was this? Because the very climax of our blessing is found in the knowledge of Christ. A friend who worked among the very poor in one of our great cities, told me of a woman taken from the rationing and scarcity and privations that surrounded her to a North Wales resort, where for the first time she saw the sea. She stood and stared and a tear ran down her face as she said, "Thank God, I have at last seen something of which there is more than enough!" The fathers had reached the ocean revealed in Christ, and they had but to move on more deeply into that boundless and eternal life, since that life consists in the knowledge of Him that is from the beginning, as stated by the Lord's words in John 17: 3.

The young men had not attained to the maturity that marked the fathers, but they had overcome the wicked one in the antichristian errors he had introduced through his servants. This they had done not by the power of their own intellects but by the word of God abiding in them. That does not mean just a mental grasp of the contents of Holy Scripture. It

means that what they had apprehended had sunk down into their very being, controlling their thoughts, and expressing itself in their lives.

But even so there was a danger that threatened them; the world system in which they had to live, and more specifically the many attractive things with which the world was filled. It is often in middle life that the pull of the world is most powerfully felt. All too many who were real and devoted in their early days, fail in middle life. Marriage perhaps has not helped them, and then a growing up family around them wants the world and they themselves are dragged in that direction.

What is the world? Here its underlying principles are analysed for us. They are three. First, the lust of the flesh; that is, the desire after that which gratifies man's fallen nature. Second, the lust of the eyes; not merely the desire for outward shows that appeal to the eyes in our heads, but even more the restless desire of the human mind for the acquisition of knowledge, for probing into things undiscovered as yet. Men wish to see the deep secrets of nature, and it is amazing what they have discovered.

Third, there is the pride of life; the lustful desire for self-exaltation, that is natural to every child of Adam. It is the alliance between the pride of life and the lust of the eyes that threatens to wreck the very earth on which we live. Sober men of the world begin to fear this. We know that the whole world system will pass away; but that will be under the judgment of God.

When the Apostle turns to the "little children," or "babes," it is to warn them against those who would seduce them, turning them aside from that which they had "heard from the beginning," which he tells them is "the truth." The germ of all truth, if I may so put it, lies in the Gospel; so in believing the Gospel they knew the truth in its essence, though they had not yet had time to explore the truth in all its vast extent. As born of God they had the nature that responds to the truth of the Gospel.

And further, they had "the Unction," or "the Anointing;" that is, they possessed the Holy Spirit of God, and thus they had the capacity to know and enjoy the things of God as much as the young men and the fathers had. By that same Unction also they had the power to detect and refuse the error into which the antichrists would lead them. As we now draw near to the end of the age, antichristian teachers abound, and since most of us — both speaker and hearers — are but babes, we do well very earnestly to heed the exhortation of the Apostle.

His main exhortation we find in verse 24, in which the word for "abide" occurs three times, though in our version translated also as "remain," and "continue." That which we have heard from the beginning is to abide in us, and if it does we shall abide in the Son and in the Father, and this abiding conducts us into the power and practical experience of "eternal life," as the next verse indicates.

We all of us have the flesh — the old Adamic life — in us, and it is

all too easy for us to be dominated by it. If we are, we live a life much like that of the men of the world and we easily fall as victims of error. Our proper life is "in the Son," in whom we know the Father. If we abide in that life, which is the eternal life that has been promised, we shall be preserved from the seducers.

So my closing exhortation must be, Let us live that life which is properly ours — and I am exhorting myself as well as you. If we do, this eternal life will manifest itself in two main characteristics; in righteousness and in love, as the rest of the epistle shows. We could not have anything more wonderful. If the whole world were so ordered that in every relation righteousness prevailed, and in every heart was love, we should have the days of heaven upon earth. That is just what will be brought to pass in the

Millennium, in the early days of it at least. And it is just what should prevail in the Christian circle today. If we know that He is righteous — and of course we do — we know those that are born of Him by their practise of it.

Well, may the Anointing, the Holy Spirit of God, teach us these things. He alone — and not any man — can really do this. This does not set aside the teachers, mentioned in Ephesians 4, the gifts of the ascended Christ. They are the human instruments or vessels of the Holy Spirit, yet the vital and effectual teaching power is not theirs but His.

Subject to the teaching of the Anointing and abiding in the Son and in the Father, though we may indeed be but babes, we shall grow up in the power and joy of that eternal life which is ours.

PREPARATION FOR HIS COMING

T. D. BELL.

THE prophecies of the Old Testament scriptures speak much of a godly residue or remnant of Israel, which will be seen in testimony here after the church has been caught up at the coming of the Lord for His saints, according to 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17. This honoured and greatly blessed company will, we read, be brought through the coming judgments, though many may suffer unto death. To them the Lord will be revealed in deliverance at His appearing as we see in Zechariah 12: 10; 13: 9.

The Psalms, though primarily recording the actual experiences of the writers, such as David, yet include

many which use language, that can only be fully descriptive of the experiences of this coming remnant during the coming judgments.

One of these is Psalm 29, which gives us prophetically the voice of this company, speaking out of the midst of their trials. From Isaiah 26: 20, 21, we gather that they are then hidden behind closed doors, "until the indignation be overpast." In this psalm, as in others, we hear the song of these afflicted ones from their hiding-places.

The mighty ones of the earth are addressed in their hour of triumph, in verse 1. The beast and false prophet may rage and destroy, but

a voice is raised, calling upon them to give glory to the Lord. These despised and persecuted ones rise in moral superiority to those mighty personages, as they call upon them to "give unto the Lord glory and strength." And this in view of the fact that judgment is impending.

The judgments, we may recall, are seen by John in vision at Patmos as the breaking of the seven seals, the sounding of seven trumpets, and the outpouring of the seven vials. In the psalm these earthly saints experience them as an awful storm with seven-fold thunders. In Revelation, as the storm is about to break, the heavenly saints are heard, leading from glory universal praise, as they sing the "new song" (5: 9). In the psalm the song of the godly on earth sounds in the midst of the judgments.

In language familiar to us from Revelation, every part of man's sinful world is brought under judgment. The "waters," spoken of in verse 3, are the symbol of restless moving multitudes: the cedars, the hills, the mountains, symbols of those eminent amongst men, and of man's settled powers and governments. All are brought under judgment — broken or moved. The voice of the Lord divides, shakes, discovers, opening out for judgment the hidden things of man's moral wilderness. This we see in verses 7-9. This will be the experience of that remnant in Palestine, the centre of that storm.

We are reminded here of similar language in Hebrews 4: 12, 13. In the psalm it is the **voice** of the Lord; in Hebrews it is the **word**. The judgment in the Psalm falls on

man in the earth: in Hebrews the word deals with our inward and spiritual being. The action is the same in each — dividing, revealing, exposing, but how different the results! In the psalm man and his evil world exposed, but for judgment. In Hebrews our equally evil natures searched, divided, exposed, but thank God, judgment is past in the cross of Christ, and the saint today, constantly searched and humbled by that word, has full access to the sympathy and succour of our great High Priest.

Faith under trial always looks from present circumstances to the Lord. The words, "In His temple doth every one speak of His glory" show the direction of their gaze. This leads to the expression of complete confidence in the Lord, though in the midst of the trials. From the world of that day, shaken by judgment, they look back beyond all Israel's history, for nothing happened in all their history to be compared with this. One great event of the past only can rank with it. Of this they speak in verse 10, for it has been remarked before, the word "flood" in that verse can only mean the deluge of Noah's day. They use here that peculiar word which is found only in this psalm and in the account of the flood in Genesis.

There too the little company of eight were shut in and saved, whilst the world outside was destroyed. The remnant we are considering have this psalm, and sing it too while the mighty adversaries rage without, just as David and his men could sing their songs (Psalm 34 and 52) while Saul was still raging against them. Soon, like Joseph's

brethren, they are going to see One now exalted, who once was despised and rejected. A process of softening and repentance can be the only preparation for that meeting, as we see in Genesis 44. All history moves forward to the Lord's appearing; hence Israel's history in type and figure, presents every phase of what the remnant will have to pass through.

As the priest of old, before entering the sanctuary, had to pause at the laver for a cleansing, so these must know the cleansing, softening ministry of that outpoured spirit of grace and supplications, of which Zechariah 12: 10 speaks, which will

lead to the mourning, mentioned in the succeeding verses. The Lord will, these scriptures show us, teach them in that day in the midst of the overflowing judgment, that the true moral preparation to "see the King in His beauty," is that broken-hearted sorrow and mourning because of their national rejection of Christ.

Is He not teaching us today, who soon are to be caught up to meet Him and to be with Him above the coming storm, that a quiet, confident, but humble and contrite heart is the true moral preparation for that meeting?

THE SON OF GOD

G. S. HEPBURN.

ONE striking feature of Paul's ministry, in addition to the prominence given to eternal things therein, is the place that the Son of God personally occupies.

The first recorded utterance of Paul, Saul as he then was, is "Who art thou, Lord?" This elicited the wondrous answer, "I am Jesus whom thou persecuted." And after three days and nights during which he was blind, and neither did eat nor drink, we read that "straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9: 20. New Trans.).

Here we have something entirely new. The Lord Himself and the twelve preached the gospel of the Kingdom. Peter and others had preached that Jesus was the Christ (Israel's promised Messiah), but never before does Scripture record

that anyone preached the **Son of God**.

The subject of the epistle to the Romans is the gospel of God "**Concerning His Son**." This gospel to which he had been separated as an apostle he preached for obedience to the faith "**among all nations**" (Rom. 1: 5). The gospel of the Son of God is for the whole world; how could it be otherwise? And God's purpose for all who receive Him is that they should be conformed to His image as stated in Romans 8: 29. This in all its blessedness involves complete conformity to the image of **God's Son** in Heavenly glory — spirit, soul and body.

The subject of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians, as mentioned in chapter 1, is **the fellowship of God's Son**. This fellowship was the result of the preaching of the Gospel

of God's Son by Paul, and those associated with him; and while the seeds of all the failure and confusion that is characteristic of Christendom in general to-day had already been sown at Corinth, God is and shall ever be, faithful to this fellowship. And later Paul writes to them, "**The Son of God**, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea, for all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1: 19-20). And what a comfort it is to know that in spite of all the failure, everything is secured in and by the Son of God, firstly for God's eternal glory, and also for the everlasting blessing of all who believe in the Son of God, the Subject of the preaching.

In the epistle to the Galatians Paul writes, "when it pleased God who . . . called me by His grace, to reveal **His Son** in me, that I might **preach Him** among the heathen" (Gal. 1: 15, 16). Here again the theme of the gospel is the Son of God; and then later we read, "**the Son of God** loved me and gave **Himself** for me" (2: 20). No creature shall ever be able to say anything more wonderful or more blessed than this! And yet again, "when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth **His Son** . . . to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons" (4: 4-5).

In the epistle to the Ephesians there is but little mention of the Son of God, but what there is, is vastly important. Gifts are given and, in the exercise of them, the objective is that all the saints should arrive at "the unity of the faith, and of the

knowledge of **the Son of God**" (4: 13).

In the epistle to the Philippians note the apostle's concern for the gospel. Six times is it mentioned in the first chapter, and of course it is the same gospel as referred to above. The gospel of God concerning His Son.

In the epistle to the Colossians we have something slightly different. There it is the **Son of the Father's love** that is presented — Col. 1: 12-14 New Trans. This is very similar to the language of John's gospel, which was written later. But in any case Paul strenuously affirms in Galatians chapters 1 and 2, that none of the other apostles added anything to him and that all that he taught he received by direct revelation from God. And what a cluster of glories are enumerated in Colossians 1: 14-22.

Finally, we may turn to Hebrews 1, assuming that Epistle to have been written by Paul. How arrestingly it begins, **God speaking in His Son**. All his other epistles begin with Paul. I do not suggest egotism in his doing so, but here he evidently desired that readers should have nothing and no one before them but God and the Son of God; He who is the Heir of all things, Creator of the universe, Brightness of God's glory, express Image of His Person, Upholder of all things, the One who **by Himself** made purgation of sins, and who **set Himself down** as the right hand of the Majesty on high. How infinitely wonderful all this is! What soul could read it without being deeply moved?

In the remainder of the chapter **The Son of God** is contrasted with angels, the highest order of creatures, and shown to be so infinitely greater than they, that the edict is announced, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

In concluding I submit that the all-absorbing Object of Paul's life, and Subject of his ministry from the day of his conversion on the Damascus road, all through the gigantic task of his missionary labours in Asia and in Europe, and during the years of his imprisonment in Rome, till finally he sealed his faith with

his life's blood, was the Son of God personally, and the mighty work he accomplished on the Cross, which will result eventually in a New Heaven, and a New Earth, in which the Godhead will rest with satisfaction throughout an Eternal day.

No wonder Paul's desire was to advance in, "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord," and that all others should have himself "for an example," as we see in Philippians 3.

Oh, that grace may be given us, to follow ever more closely Paul's wondrous example.

ELEVATION AND DEGRADATION

IT is a very striking fact that in one chapter of the New Testament — 2 Corinthians 12 — we find the highest state to which a Christian can be elevated, as being "a man in Christ," and the lowest condition into which he can fall. In the beginning of the chapter we find a saint in the third heaven, in Paradise, where flesh had no part in apprehension or in communication, and where he knew not whether he was in the body or out of it. At the end we find one, perhaps many, fallen into fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, and unrepentant yet of their sins. What a contrast of the highest heavenly elevation and the lowest carnal degradation! And the Christian capable of both! What a warning for every saint, exposing the two natures at work, and the elements at conflict in his life down here. Verse 9 shows where alone power is found for a life consistent with the heavenly good to which he is called.

PEOPLE might think it a wonderful attainment to be able to say with Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." But, in truth, it is the lowest possible ground for a Christian to be on. It is owning that he had gone on so badly, that if man were to judge, there would be no ground to speak for him at all; and it is appealing to the omniscience of the Lord as his only refuge. **H**is eye could see that there was love at the bottom of Peter's heart, when nobody else could see it there. Then we have marvellous grace immediately after; for, having broken down his confidence in himself, He trusts him with the thing that was dearest to Him; "Feed My sheep."

“FIRST OF ALL”

A. J. POLLOCK.

LOOKING abroad on the very unsatisfactory and unsettled condition of the world to-day, all pointing clearly to the fact that we are nearing the end of the dispensation, one is increasingly struck with the insistence and scope of Paul's exhortation to Timothy — “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. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim. 2: 1-6).

To the emphatic words,
“FIRST OF ALL”

we should pay special attention. Not only are we exhorted to prayer. It is noteworthy that very insistent forms of prayer are indicated — supplications and intercessions. **Prayer** may be described as making requests to God; **supplications**, as earnest and agonised entreaty; **intercessions**, as caring for others, and praying on the behalf of such, as Abraham prayed for the wicked people of Sodom in his day.

Lastly, there is added the giving of thanks as the Apostle wrote elsewhere, “In every thing by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4: 6).

We do not have to wait for the answer before we render thanksgiving. We may not get the answers we wish for, but we can thank God for the response of wisdom to our earnest petitions, whether the answer be affirmative or negative.

We have an analogous case to ours, when we read, “And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace” (Jer. 29: 7).

The present times are truly difficult, something like the troubled rapids before the “beyond redemption-point” is reached, and the seething waters are flung over the precipice, carrying certain death with them. We may not understand all God's governmental ways at this time, but we can rest content in God's wisdom and power.

First, we have to pray for all men. Two results are desired from this, viz., that (1) we Christians may have liberty to live a life of all godliness and honesty; and (2) God is a Saviour-God, not wishing the death of a sinner, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. To this end Christ came as the great Mediator between sinful man and a thrice-holy God. By His atoning death on the cross He has so satisfied God as to the whole question of sin, that He can in full righteousness proclaim salvation to all, who believe.

In the very nature of things rulers are appointed to carry on appropri-

ate government, and so we have Kings and those in authority. In the hands of such, great powers are placed and their responsibility is similarly great. Whatever their title may be, Emperor, King, Queen, President, Chief, etc., we are exhorted to pray for such. Think of the great power and responsibility resting on the President of the United States of America, or the President of the Soviet Union of States, or the rulers of India, China, etc. Whether in our judgment rulers are good or bad, our privilege is to pray for all alike. As a matter of fact in the early days of the church's history on earth the very cruellest and most lustful of the Roman Emperors, Nero, was on the throne, the vile murderer of his own mother and

wife, the persecutor of the Christian community.

Christians may rightly choose to keep aloof from earthly politics, yet their prayers may be powerful as registered in heaven. We are not of the world as our Lord was not of the world, (John 17: 14 and 16). "Our conversation [commonwealth, New Trans.] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3: 20).

The insistence of this exhortation should send us all to our knees, both publicly and privately, and keep us continually in a dependent and prayerful spirit. How far do you and I respond? — is a timely question.

BIBLE STUDY—JOB

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 32—37)

SILENCE having fallen upon all four disputants, a fresh speaker appeared, and he too is introduced to us in a way that shows we are considering a history and not a romance. He was descended from Buz, who was a nephew of Abraham, as Genesis 22: 21 shows. In those early days after the flood, when population was small, the duplication of names would not be common.

Now Elihu is a name with a meaning, which is given to us as, "God Himself." If we bear this in mind, and then read verse 6 of chapter 33, we shall see that he intervened to play the part of a mediator, and so become a type —

though a faint one — of the true Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, **who is God Himself.** Elihu was truly a man, formed out of the clay, and he stood before Job on God's behalf, according to the desire that Job expressed in verse 33 of chapter 9.

In chapter 32 we have, what we may call, Elihu's apology for speaking at all. As a much younger man he had been content to listen to all these controversial speeches, and in result was moved to wrath against all four. Job had justified himself without justifying God, while the others had condemned Job without being able to answer his arguments. He acknowledged

that normally men should increase in wisdom and understanding as they increased in years, but neither greatness of reputation nor age guaranteed this, since wisdom really comes to man through his spirit and as the fruit of the "inspiration," or "breath" of the Almighty. If the three friends had succeeded in convicting Job, they would have prided themselves on their own wisdom; only God could do it. The closing words of verse 13 have been translated, "God will make him yield, not man."

Elihu also had the advantage which he mentioned in verse 14. He had not been involved in the wordy warfare, hence he could view it all impartially, and speak in a way that would not be flattering to any of the contestants. Moreover, having listened to all that had been said, he was so full of matter that it had to find an outlet and burst forth from him.

So in the opening verses of chapter 33, we find him making two claims. First, he asserts that his words will be marked by uprightness and purity, as becomes one who has his being and life from God. Second, that though he would speak on God's behalf, he himself was a man, "formed of the clay," just as Job was, and hence, though Job had said of God, "Let not His fear terrify me" (9: 34), what he had to say, as interpreting God's ways, would bring no terror to Job's spirit. Even as our Lord Jesus became a Man, thus bringing God to us without any sense of terror.

In verse 8, Elihu began to challenge Job in a direct way. He had heard what Job had contended, and

he summed it all up as being a repudiation of any accusation brought against him as to transgression and iniquity, which of necessity involved, either directly or indirectly, an accusation against God of hard dealing, if not injustice. In thus summing up the whole position we can see, we think, that Elihu was not far wrong. The world being as it is and what it is, if perfection be claimed for man, then obviously all the wrong that exists must be blamed upon God.

In answer to Job, Elihu's first point is the supreme greatness of God. Hence striving against Him is futile. It is man who is accountable to God, not God accountable to man. Let us in our day never forget this.

But then in the second place, though God gives no account of His matters, He does speak to man, though so often man does not perceive it. And, having stated this, he proceeded to indicate ways in which God does thus speak. He may speak in a dream or a vision. He has often done so, as Scripture records, and evidently He does so still, particularly with simple saints, who know but little of the Bible, and possibly have but little of the Bible in their native tongue. Where saints are instructed in and by the Bible — a superior form of guidance — dreams, in which God speaks, are comparatively rare. And, if God does thus speak to a man in a dream: to what end is it? To alter his course and to humble his pride into the dust. A salutary word for Job; and for all of us.

God may also speak to a man by granting him some merciful de-

liverance when he is threatened by disaster or war. This is mentioned in verse 18, and many of us can look back to occasions when we received mercy of this sort, and we were conscious at once that God had something to say to us in it.

And yet again, God may speak through pain and sickness, which is so vividly described in verses 19-22, until the sufferer is brought face to face with death itself. We can see how Elihu's description of this exactly fitted the case of Job, and indeed not a few of us, though our cases have not been nearly as extreme as Job's. How often has a careless sinner, when smitten thus, been led to turn to God and awakened for his eternal salvation. How often too has a saint had to look back to a time of severe sickness as an occasion of much spiritual blessing.

These times of emergency are the opportunity for the one whom Elihu called a "messenger," an "interpreter," who can show what it is that God has to say in these things. Though such are not common, as indeed we know, they are of great value, and Elihu called them, "one among a thousand," which indicates rarity. There may be many who can commiserate, and sometimes condemn the afflicted one, as did Job's three friends. To give the mind of God is another and a greater thing.

When the interpreter has arrived, what has he to say? He shows to a man his uprightness; which is of course, to judge himself and hence honestly to take his place before God as a self-confessed sinner. This Job had not as yet done, but

it is that to which he was led when the end of the story is reached. It is the end we must all of us reach, if we have to do with God at all. Have we, all of us, reached it?

When that point is reached, what is the result? An exhibition of grace on God's part, resulting in deliverance from going into the pit, and that, because God Himself had found a ransom. The word translated "ransom" here simply means a "covering," akin to the word translated, "atonement" in the Old Testament. Before Christ came God covered before His holy eye the sin of the repentant sinner, waiting for the time when full propitiation should be made in the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. Hence that word about "the remission [**passing over** — see, margin] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3: 25). These past sins were those of pre-Christian saints; Job's among them.

Verse 25 had special reference to Job's case; but verses 26 — 30 have a wide application. The ransomed sinner stands before God in righteousness and with joy and, as the next verses show, he can happily confess both his sin and his deliverance before men, as the marginal reading of verse 28 shows. Elihu's words here were instruction to Job and designed to lead him to honest confession before God. They are equally true for us, and that in a far more ample and perfect way, as we look back to the accomplished work of Christ.

In these remarkable words Elihu was certainly acting the part of the interpreter with Job, by showing what is the good design of God in

His dealings, so adverse apparently, with men. He aims at delivering them from the "pit" of self-esteem and complacency in this life, and the "pit" of judgment and condemnation in the life to come. Having interpreted God's ways thus far, Elihu evidently paused to see if at this point there was anything Job wished to say.

There being no response on Job's part, Elihu resumed his discourse and, as verse 2 of chapter 34 indicates, had a larger audience in view. He addressed himself also to the three friends and any other bystanders, challenging them as to whether they had the wisdom and knowledge that would enable them to try words and choose what is good and right. He knew well that the effect of sin is to pervert man's judgment and blind him to what is right.

In keeping with the larger audience he began to speak **about** Job, rather than **to** Job as previously he had done. Job does not appear to have said, "I am righteous," in so many words; he had rather inferred it by singing his own praises in the way recorded in chapter 29. But, turning back to chapter 27: 2, we note he did definitely say, "God hath taken away my judgment." Hence his attitude clearly was, "Should I lie against my right?"—His "right" was, he maintained, to be free of these calamities, and he did not intend to say otherwise. His wound did indeed seem to be incurable but he maintained it was not provoked by any transgression on his part. Verses 5 and 6 sum up Job's position, as Elihu saw it. He had not claimed to be sinless, but he did claim that he was guilty of

no transgression that justified God in inflicting upon him such woes. In effect it came to this, that he was **right**, and God was wrong.

Elihu now shows that in all this Job had really allied himself with the wicked. The scorning of men he might drink up like water, but he could not so treat the judgment of God. The absolute perfection and rightness of all God's ways is what Elihu asserts; a matter of the greatest importance, seeing He is supreme in all the earth. He has "charge over the earth," so that He has "disposed the whole world." Verse 14 has been translated, "If He only thought of Himself, and gathered unto Him His spirit and His breath;" then the result would be that all flesh would expire together and man return to the dust. Such is the **greatness** as well as the **rightness** of God.

Hence the argument of the succeeding verses. Should government be in the hands of the unjust? And if in the hands of the ALL-Just, is what He orders to be challenged? Men would not speak thus to kings or princes. Much less then to God. What He orders must be **right**.

Elihu proceeds to speak of the searching judgment of God, which is quite impartial, the rich being amenable to it equally with the poor. Moreover there is "no darkness, nor shadow of death," where those who work evil may hide themselves. He went on to assert that God's judgments are always right and that He acts as seems good in His sight, breaking in pieces and overthrowing mighty men, yet on the other hand hearing the cry of the afflicted. He may give quiet-

ness to the afflicted and who then can disturb it? He may hide His face from the wicked and who then can behold Him? And this is true whether a nation be in question or only an individual.

The rest of this chapter is more directly a word to Job. It would have been more becoming if he had humbly accepted the chastisement, admitting that there was iniquity with him, of which he was ignorant, and as to which he needed God should teach him, so that he should put right what was wrong. Instead of that he had challenged God's judgment in favour of his own mind, and in so doing he had added to his sin rebellion against God.

It would seem that at this point Elihu paused again, and no answer being forthcoming, he proceeded further to expose the drift of Job's arguments. In claiming that he had committed no sin that called for the enduring of such extreme sufferings as had come upon him, he had elevated his own righteousness above God's, and inferred that there was no profit in a life of piety. The answer to this would be of profit to Job's companions as well as himself.

The answer Elihu gave was based upon the supreme greatness of God as the Creator. Further than this he could not go, but that knowledge he had in common with all men after the flood. From that primeval knowledge the mass of mankind soon departed, as Romans 1: 20, 21, declares. Yet the men we listen to in this book were exceptions to this sad rule, and they retained this knowledge, and argued from it.

God was far above His heavens and so great that nothing wrong perpetrated by puny man could hurt Him, and nothing that was right could be any addition to Him. Our wrongs may be of damage to our fellow-men, and our right actions be of profit to them. And if we wrong our fellows, they cry out in complaint, yet God is forgotten. No one thought of God who is Creator, and who can lift up the spirit and give songs even in the night of sorrow.

The God, who gives the songs in the night, teaches man whom He made; beings of a far higher order than the beasts and birds, able to have intercourse with Him, whether in songs of joy or cries of need. Verse 10 mentions the songs and verse 12 the cries. And why do men cry and yet receive no answer? The answer is, because of **pride**: and in verse 13, Elihu diagnoses the root cause of it all as **vanity**, which is abhorrent to God, a thing which He completely disregards. Is not this instruction for us? Do we not see here an explanation of many an unanswered cry and prayer?

These things Elihu said in order to drive the point home to the heart of Job, as he did in the last verse of the chapter. Job had opened his mouth "in vain," or "in vanity," and hence though his words had been abundant they had been without knowledge. The excellence of Job's outward life had betrayed him into an inward spirit of vanity, which lay at the root of his lack of a true knowledge of himself. This we shall find Job himself confessed, when we reach verse 3 of chapter 42.

Again it looks as if Elihu paused for a moment to see if Job had any reply to make, but none being forthcoming, he resumed his discourse, the finish of which occupies chapters 36 and 37. He commenced by saying that he had yet words to say on God's behalf; and as we read these two chapters we shall notice that he had little more to say to Job about his utterances, but he rather dwelt on the greatness and power of God, and on His righteous dealings with the sons of men. He would "ascribe righteousness" to his Creator.

He proceeded to extol the way in which God, who is perfect in knowledge, deals both with the wicked and the righteous. From the latter He does not withdraw His eyes; that is, He keeps them ever under observation, and ultimately He exalts them as kings. Yet, before that happy end is reached, He may permit them to be "bound in fetters" and "holden in cords of affliction," just as poor Job was at that moment. And, if He does permit this, it is for a purpose, as is shown in verses 9-11. Notice, it is **the righteous** who are thus dealt with, for even an Abraham and a Job, though righteous, were not sinless, and God's disciplinary dealings are exerted towards such, rather than those who shut God out of their lives.

The arguments of the three friends had led to the conclusion that Job **was not** a righteous man. Elihu seems rather to admit that he **was** righteous, and that, because he was, God had permitted this severe discipline to come upon him; and in verse 16 he does apply what he is saying to Job, for after all the deep-seated pride and vanity of the

human heart is the greatest offence of all.

Verse 18 was addressed to Job. We must remember that in that far-distant day, nearly two millenniums before Christ appeared, life and incorruptibility had not been brought to light, as 2 Timothy 1: 10 shows; and hence an eternal salvation was not known as we now know it. If we today were to quote this verse we should do so to an unbeliever.

Elihu's warning to Job, however, was timely, particularly verse 21. In shrinking from the "affliction," he had turned to the "iniquity" of maintaining his own righteousness. But affliction is to be preferred to iniquity, as we are reminded in Peter's first Epistle — "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (4: 1). The early Christians might escape suffering by sinning and so may we, if it is only a question of what may come upon us from the world or the flesh or the devil.

Having thus warned Job, Elihu turned afresh to dwell upon the greatness of God as evidenced in creation, and upon this theme the rest of his discourse dwells. Particularly did he consider the control exercised by the Creator on that which lies wholly out of man's control — the clouds, the winds, the thunder, the lightning, the rain, the snow, the frost. As these things came before his mind, he had to confess that his heart trembled and was deeply moved.

In our day men have made many discoveries and gained control of a sort over a few of the subtle powers that lie in God's wonderful creation, but the things Elihu mentioned they

cannot master. When, as he put it in verse 9, "Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and cold out of the north," the cleverest of men can only accept the situation and seek shelter or warmth, as the case may be.

Elihu recognized that God ordered the weather with wise purpose, and what He sends may be, "for correction," i.e., discipline for wrongdoing; or, "for His land," i.e., to maintain the ordinary productivity of the earth; or, "for mercy," i.e., to effect some merciful deliverance. This too had a bearing on Job's case.

Job did not know, and none of us know, how God exerts His supreme power. The Lord Jesus displayed His Godhead power when He stilled the wind and waves on the Lake of Galilee. He did so in mercy. Elihu ended his words with the assertion that with God, the Almighty, is "terrible **majesty**," and yet all His doings are in **justice**. Hence, however wise of heart any of us — Job included — may consider ourselves to be, our attitude before Him should not be that of criticism and questionings but of **fear**.

PATIENCE

THERE is nothing that so proves power as patience . . . It means **endurance**. The man who holds out is the man of patience. The moment of the greatest power in a saint of God, has been that in which he has held out most. The proof of power then in a person, is that he holds out, and this power comes out where he is most defective.

In the tenth of Hebrews it says: "Ye have need of patience." We have not all got patience. It is the same word as that used for endurance when speaking of Moses in the following chapter. First it says, he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Now that is one part of power, but it is not patience . . . I see those who can refuse things, and those who can choose the best things; but there is a greater thing to come. You have to endure. "He **endured** as seeing him who is invisible" . . . There are the two parts of power. There is the refusing the things that gratify me, and there is the enduring the pressure that comes upon me. The thing that marks patience is that I hold out; I do not give in . . . A person that does not begin by refusing, will never end by enduring. If the children of the captivity had not refused the king's wine, they would never have endured the king's furnace . . . Of Abraham we read, "After he had patiently **endured** he obtained the promise." If a person yields, he has lost the practical power to maintain his ground . . . Can you bear? Have you patience? Can you say you will not yield, no matter what the pressure is? whether it be the saints that are against you or anything else . . .

If you look at any of God's servants, what was the moment of greatest power in that man's life? I say, not the moment when he **did** most, but the moment when he **endured** most.

TWO TRANSLATIONS TO HEAVEN

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE translations of these two men of God — Enoch and Elijah — teach us many lessons, especially as occurring in Old Testament times. With the fuller light of the New Testament we are privileged to learn more than the Old Testament saints could discern in their day. In Enoch's time there was no Scripture, and any spiritual instruction of necessity was oral.

ENOCH'S TRANSLATION

Genesis 5 records the Generations of Adam. It affords sad reading. The solemn refrain, eight times repeated, "**and he died,**" is attached to every name with one solitary exception. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23) was indeed a most solemnizing reality, as one after another passed into the grave.

But Enoch, the seventh from Adam, did not die. We read that "he walked with God; and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5: 24). Was ever so much history compressed into so few words! A shorter biography there never was! How was it, that in Genesis 5 death came to all of Adam's race, save this one particular exception?

Enoch was a good man. "He walked with God." He was no recluse. He knew what family life was. Sons and daughters sat around his table. Hebrews II, that great chapter, showing how faith governed saints of God in Old Testament times, tells us more about Enoch, that he pleased God, that faith marked him, and that he was

diligent in seeking God, (Heb. 11: 5, 6).

We can imagine two godly saints of those times, speaking very seriously one to the other, concerning this strange and completely unprecedented happening of Enoch's translation. One day he was about as usual; the next day he was not. What could it mean? What was its import? God is wholly just, a Respector of no man's person. Then how was it that Enoch was an exception and went to heaven without dying? In what way could this mystery be solved? There was clearly only one way. Beautiful as Enoch's life may have been, it was neither flawless nor without sin. If Enoch then, **a sinner**, was translated without dying, **some sinless one must die for Enoch**. If God were to preserve strict righteousness, there could be no other way. Where could such a substitute be found, when all of Adam's fallen race were sinners?

Surely the whole wondrous story of the Son of God coming into the world on purpose to die a sacrificial death, is wrapped up in this story of Enoch. It is very significant that his translation took place so early in the world's history, for he was contemporaneous with Adam, the progenitor of the human race, for about 300 years. Enoch, too, gave his son Methuselah, a name with a prophetic meaning, signifying, In the year that he dies, it (**the judgment of God**) will come. The year that Methuselah died the flood came, showing that Enoch's prophecy, which we are about to describe, was known before Adam

died. It is like our good and gracious God, that, even from the time of Adam himself, this ray of of divine light should shine.

We learn of Enoch's prophecy from the New Testament. We should never have known of it, had not Jude, writing about the apostasy of the last days, informed us that " Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the LORD cometh with ten thousands of His saints " (verse 14).

The question in Enoch's time might well have been raised: If ten thousands of the Lord's saints come **WITH** Him, when He returns to earth to carry out righteous judgment, how did they get **TO** heaven, for they would have to be **IN** heaven before they could come **OUT** of heaven **WITH** their Lord? Was not Enoch's translation an answer to this problem? Did not Enoch get **TO** heaven, and will he not assuredly appear **WITH** his Lord, when He comes to take His rightful place, where He was once rejected and cast out.

This much might well have been assumed. When we come to the New Testament we find this assumption perfectly correct. We find that in order for our Lord to come **WITH** His saints to earth, He must first come **FOR** them. So we read, " Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed " (1 Cor. 15: 51, 52). " The Lord Himself shall descend

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

It is by putting these two Scriptures together, that we get a clear understanding of our Lord coming **FOR** His people, in order to bring them **WITH** Him, when He comes to reign. And this is as sure to take place in the future as the death and resurrection of our Lord were facts in the past.

The time will assuredly come when not one Enoch and one Elijah only shall be translated to glory, but all the resurrection saints who have died in faith from the beginning, and with them, all the saints alive on the earth at the time of the Lord's coming, will share in the great and glorious triumph of being with Him for ever.

So now we see the translation of Enoch was typical of the translation of all the saints; pointing to the time when the power of death would be broken in the atoning death of our Lord, so finally we can look forward to the time when " the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death " (1 Cor. 15: 26). How often with delight have we sung:

" He Satan's power laid low;
 Made sin, sin's reign o'erthrew;
 Bow'd to the grave, destroy'd
 it so,
 And death by dying slew."

ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION

Here we have a different story to tell. Evidently the translation of Elijah to heaven was expected by him and Elisha, and also by "the sons of the prophets" (2 Kings 2: 3, 5). Elijah was about to be raptured to heaven: Elisha left to take up Elijah's prophetic mantle to carry on God's testimony to the godless nation of Israel.

The two men of God set out on their last journey together on earth. They started from Gilgal and journeyed to Bethel, then to Jericho, and finally to the river Jordan. Elijah took occasion each time they moved to test the steadfastness of Elisha in regard to his anointing as his successor. On each occasion Elisha responded with the most solemn asseveration, "As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee" (2 Kings 2: 2, 4, 6). "The sons of the prophets," viewing things afar off, taunted Elisha more than once, saying, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take thy master from thy head today," to which he replied, "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

The two prophets reached the last stage of their journey and, arrived at the river Jordan, Elijah smote the waters, and the two went over on dry land. A last interview between close friends is always a time of very great tension. Every word spoken by the departing one is greatly treasured. It is a time when affections are deeply stirred.

Such a time came for the two prophets. Elijah made a last request to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away

from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." At such a moment and under such circumstances Elisha's answer would reveal the very deepest desire of his heart. How greatly cheered and touched must the heart of the elder man have been!

To ask for a **double** portion of Elijah's spirit seemed a remarkable request. How could Elijah give a **double** portion of his own endowment? However such a Scripture as Deuteronomy 21: 17 is explanatory of what was meant. The "double portion" was given to the firstborn who was to carry on the family work.

We find an example of this in Scripture. Of the sons of Jacob, Reuben, the eldest, forfeited the right of the firstborn through his sin. Judah, who prevailed above his brethren, for out of him came the chief ruler, was not granted the forfeited birthright. It was bestowed on Joseph, and the **double** portion was seen in the persons of his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, two tribes, a **double** portion, (1 Chron. 5: 1, 2).

We have an **illustration** of this in the New Testament. We read, "Ye are come unto . . . the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12: 23). The word "firstborn," is in **the plural**, and refers to every member of the church of God, and their special place as nearest and closest in relation to the Lord, their Head in heaven, — a spiritual **double** portion.

Elisha's request expressed the deepest desire of his heart, and how

gratifying it must have been to Elijah, that he wished for a double portion of the elder prophet's spirit, in order that in his absence he might have the privilege of carrying on his work in testimony to godless Israel. Elijah's response to Elisha was, "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so."

As the two men walked on and talked together, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and Elijah was caught in a whirlwind and carried to heaven. Did Elisha witness this? To his great joy he did, crying out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." What a moment! What an experience! How did Elisha react to it?

We read that Elisha rent his clothes in two pieces, and took up Elijah's mantle, which fell from him. This is typical of what Christians are called upon to do; to put off the old man, and put on the new, (Col. 3: 9, 10). Alone Elisha went back to the river Jordan, and with Elijah's mantle smote the waters, saying, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" The waters parted hither and thither, and the prophet passed over. The "sons of the prophets," standing afar off, were constrained to admit "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," and bowed themselves down to the ground before him. So Elisha entered upon his life's work.

This story of Elijah's translation to heaven affords a very unique illustration of the place of the church in this dispensation. Just as

Elijah anointed Elisha to maintain a testimony after his own translation, so believers are anointed by the Holy Spirit of God, that the life of our Lord on this earth may be perpetuated through the members of His body during His absence.

Just as Elisha had to see with his own eyes the departing Elijah, to be assured that his request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit might be his, so we Christians may indeed rejoice to receive the full and powerful testimony of those, who were eyewitnesses of our Lord's resurrection and ascension to God's right hand. Spiritual endowment would have been entirely lacking had our Lord not risen from the dead, and had He not ascended to heaven.

And just as Elijah, ascending in the whirlwind to heaven, dropped his mantle, the emblem of power, to be used by Elisha in his service for the Lord, so our Lord in His departing from earth to heaven said to His disciples, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be **endued with power from on high**" (Luke 24: 49). This was fulfilled ten days after our Lord ascended to heaven.

The Holy Spirit has been sent forth by our Lord to indwell each believer, as anointing, seal, and earnest (2 Cor. 1: 21, 22); binding each believer to their Lord, as the glorious Head in heaven, and to each other on earth, as members of the body of Christ, (1 Cor. 12: 13). This is the great teaching of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which could be summed up in the few words, that the Lord, though He be

absent, has a body on this earth whereby to perpetuate His life down here.

To sum up: Enoch's translation is typical of the church's translation at

the second coming of our Lord. Elijah's translation, with Elisha left to carry on the work, is typical of the part believers are called upon to play on the earth in the absence of their Lord.

“ THIS GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND ” F. B. HOLE.

WHEN God gave His holy law through Moses at Sinai, Israel could not stand before Him. Moses himself said, “ I exceedingly fear and quake.” Many centuries after, the Apostle Paul found it brought him under the death sentence for he said, “ When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died ” (Rom. 7: 9). In contrast to this he wrote of, “ This grace wherein we stand ” (Rom. 5: 2). On a legal basis no one ever **stands** before God: all **collapse** and **fall down**.

So we all rejoice in Paul's emphatic statement, “ Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace ” (Rom. 6: 14), and it is helpful to observe that though the Apostle Peter was not led to expound the matter as Paul did, yet he corroborated this fact in an inferential way. This we see if we compare 1 Peter 2: 9, with Exodus 19: 5, 6. We notice a strong similarity, for the “ royal priesthood,” the “ holy nation,” the peculiar people, of Peter, occur in the Exodus passage, in slightly different words.

But on the other hand there is a profound difference. In Exodus God started with an “ IF.” “ If ye will obey My voice indeed;” but they

never did obey His voice and so never were what was proposed. In Peter the “ If ” is absent and instead we read, “ But ye **are** a chosen generation.” The Christians to whom Peter wrote **were** these very things that Israelites as a nation were **not**. What was never reached on a legal basis was reached on the basis of grace. And how? His first chapter shows us how. They were “ elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;” “ redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ;” “ born again . . . by the word of God,” and that through the operation of the Spirit of God. This was, “ the true grace of God ” in which they stood, as Peter told them in his last chapter.

So here is a very striking contrast between law and grace. The nation to whom the law was given were not a **chosen** generation but rather, as Moses had to admit, “ a **perverse** and **crooked** generation,” and again, “ a very **forward** generation, children in whom is no faith ” (Deut. 32: 5 and 20). The law was given as a test and it manifested the evil that was in them. It could not give the life that was needed, as we learn in Galatians. Grace does give the life, and then calls upon us to live out the life in a way that will

be pleasing to God and glorify Him.

Standing in grace, we are brought into liberty, and in that liberty we are to "stand fast," and not be "entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5: 1). But let us take care that we do not turn that liberty into license. In a letter recently to hand there was reference to some who were saying, "I am a Christian, therefore I am under no law, and can do what I like," and they proceed to do things which did not honour their Lord nor bring credit to their faith. That statement is not correct.

It is true we are not under the law of Moses; neither as the means of our justification nor as the rule of our lives, but it is not true that we are under no law at all, for here are two scriptures that plainly refute that idea. In both the Apostle Paul tells us what governed his own life. He wrote that he was, "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9: 21) and again, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8: 2). This illustrates what he wrote in Romans 7: 4. The Christian is now united to the risen Christ by the Holy Spirit, and the law, or control, thus established is of a far higher order than anything established by the law of Moses.

So in many New Testament scriptures, and specially in the writings of the Apostle John, we get the commandments of our Lord plainly stated. They are not given in order that by keeping them we may establish a standing for ourselves in righteousness before God. We have that

righteous standing as the result of the work of Christ on our behalf, and the commands reach us to give us clear direction as to His will for us. The way we obey them — or disobey — does not determine our spiritual standing before God, but it does determine the state of our spiritual health and our spiritual power.

Most of us have known what it is to have had at some time a season of spiritual lethargy or distress or despondency. Should we not on such an occasion ask ourselves, Have I been flying in the face of some commandment of my Lord? Matters arise and questions confront us as to which we cannot find in the Scriptures any clear command of our Lord, and it then becomes a matter of spiritual exercise, of searching the Scriptures that we may be able to deduce and discern what His mind for us may be. But on the other hand as to many things we do have clear commands, which are simply to be obeyed, since we are "under law to Christ." To disobey them is to court spiritual trouble and even spiritual disaster.

We are indeed delivered from the law, as the Apostle has told us, but this is because we are "married to Another," who rules us, not by force or by penalty, but by love, and the true heart finds its peace and its joy in being happily subject to Him.

There is a remarkable incident recorded about C. T. Studd of missionary fame. In his early years, after he had left Cambridge University and before he went out to China, his host in Leicester was attracted by a light under his bedroom

door at an abnormally early morning hour. Knocking and enquiring, he found him poring over his Bible. In answer, he said, "Oh, I have been reading that the Lord said, 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments.' Now I do love Him, and I am trying to search out all His commandments to see if I am keeping

them." Most of us have heard of the extraordinary life of devotion which he pursued as the result.

Well it would be if the younger Christians of this our day faced up to the commandments of the Lord in the spirit in which he did it. Well also it would be if we older Christians did likewise.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

R. McCALLUM.

Notes of an address on 1 Peter 1: 11, and other Scriptures.

IT may seem strange that in a meeting of believers I should have to speak about the fact of the cross, yet it is not strange in the light of modernistic tendencies. Some centuries ago those who opposed the teaching of the cross were the avowed infidels of the day, but we are living in an age when the cross is ridiculed and set at naught by those who are professing Christians, accepting the emoluments of the Church and, in many cases, destroying the truth that they are paid to preach, and constantly denying foundation truths as to the deity of Christ, the atoning efficacy of His death, His bodily resurrection, and His coming again. These are the truths that we must iterate and reiterate and contend earnestly for from age to age until we see our blessed Lord face to face.

It is a fact, of course, that the modern mind revolts at the idea that the cross is necessary. Recently I spent at least an hour talking these things over with one who is well-read in the Scriptures, but he quibbled and contended, as modernists will, that while the

cross is the very core of Pauline teaching, he has by it erected a scaffolding round the teaching of Christ that has merely obscured the simplicity and the beauty of it. He contended that the essential thing for cultured men of this age is to get back to the teaching of Christ.

Now, there never has been an age in which the cross was not refused. In the first century of the Christian Era, Jew and Gentile, at variance with each other in most matters of importance, were united in this, that the cross was an abomination — to the Jew a stumbling-block and to the fastidious Greek it was folly. It was Cicero, I think, who spoke about crucifixion in this fashion — "It is a misdemeanour to bind a Roman; a crime to scourge him; an act of parricide to kill him: but to crucify him, how shall I stigmatise that!" Cruel Rome reserved the death of crucifixion for the riff-raff of its condemned cells. Let us never forget that the blessed Son of God, Immanuel, God with us, died the death of a social pariah, an outcast, one accounted worthless. The

ancient world — Greek and Roman — heaped upon the cross their concentrated scorn, and the teaching of Paul was to them the very zenith of infatuation.

Of course, men will admit that the cross is central in the Epistles and especially in the Pauline Epistles, but they also contend that this would rob the teachings of Jesus that receive their emphasis in the Gospels, so I want just to think through the Gospels. It is admitted that Mark's Gospel is the earliest of them. There are in Mark's Gospel 16 chapters, of which 6 are devoted to incidents in the last week of the Lord's life. We may say that 6 of these 16 chapters are devoted to details connected with Christ's Passion — His sufferings when He "once suffered for sins the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God." Going with the death of Christ there is always the resurrection — the two together make up one event rather than two. And, if the 3 or 3½ years of the Lord's public life had been dwelt on with the same detail, instead of having a book of 16 chapters you can easily calculate it would at least have to be a book of 1,000 chapters.

One modernistic scholar says the emphasis that Christ placed was upon His life, and teaching. All modernists practically are coloured by that without examination of the facts. But the Lord Himself said to those two going to Emmaus "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?" Instead of looking upon the cross as that which had blasted

His work and destroyed all hope, He pointed out to them that this was the fulfilment of all the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures. Just as the highways of the Old Testament lead eventually to Christ, so the highways of the prophetic Scriptures lead inevitably to the death and resurrection of Christ.

If we go to His teaching before He died, we find Him say, "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me;" "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;" "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." When on the Holy Mount, He spake with Moses and Elias of the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. The transcendent subject was, not His life, nor His baptism, nor His birth — miraculous although that was — nor His Deity, but HIS DEATH.

So we see it is quite wrong to say that Christ set special value on His teaching, His life. And when our Lord asked us to remember Him throughout the ages, He did not ask to be remembered by His miraculous works, nor by His wonderful incarnation, but He asked us to remember Him by His death. When He gave to them the bread He said, "This is My body which is broken for you;" when He gave to them the cup He said, "This is My blood which is shed for you." A man does not seek to be remembered by that which he considers to be of least value in his life, but by that which is the greatest triumph of his life, and Christ was made a

little lower than the angels for the express purpose of tasting death.

Now we want to know what was accomplished at the cross. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, said that the facts of the Gospel are that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. The Scriptures always relate the death of Christ to our state and our guilt. His death is always presented as penal, that is to say the background of the cross is the righteous wrath of God

Christ died under the judgment of a holy God, and against sin, and every teaching that destroys the atonement at the same time belittles sin. You cannot have presented to you a good-natured, indulgent God who simply says to man, "You have failed a little but be better children, go and behave yourselves in future," and at the same time have true thoughts concerning sin. In the modernist's conception, sin is merely a phase in the process of evolution. It is a scratch upon the skin instead of a poison passing through the blood, and it is never viewed as lawlessness, rank rebellion against a holy God. The significance of the cross is that God is holy. He hates and condemns sin in the flesh, while loving the sinner.

Thus we see by the cross of Christ that God has not had to give up any of His attributes. His love is perfectly manifest; His hatred of sin is demonstrated most fully; and thus we can say to the sinner, "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace."

Now think of the 22nd Psalm,

written 1,000 years before Christ came to earth and yet every detail speaking of the crucifixion of Christ in an unmistakable way. It is said in the original this is a Psalm of Sobs; there isn't a complete sentence. The Psalm goes like this — My God! My God! why far from helping Me? why far from the words of my roaring? — every sentence left more or less incomplete as if a sufferer is pouring out the agonies of his heart before God. And then we have all the details of death by crucifixion in a day when crucifixion was unknown, for it was reserved for Rome to put men to death by this cruel means.

Yet, centuries before Christ, the Spirit of God is using the Psalmist to say, "They pierced my hands and my feet," and we see Him there denuded of all clothes; "I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me;" and the soldiers parting His garments among them. And then we hear that One saying "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." He is going to be the Leader of praise among His brethren, and it is going to be declared to a generation yet unborn that He hath done this; literally, "IT IS FINISHED." The work of the cross has been accomplished for the glory of God, and His righteousness maintained; all has been accomplished for the blessing of mankind.

In Isaiah 53 we see Him as the Sufferer — but not suffering at the hands of men — "Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities," and we see Jehovah focussing upon Him the iniquity of us all. He bore the judgment that was due to us; penal, propitiatory

and predicted; and He was buried, and He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures. How could it be otherwise? The One, who had ever set Jehovah at His right hand that He should not be moved, **must** rise; and on the third day He came forth triumphing over the grave.

God had been very careful as to the resurrection. He allowed the enemies of Christ to use all the means they did, so that it might be impossible for any unbiassed person, upon the evidence, to disbelieve that Christ rose from the dead. Mark, it was not His friends that remembered that on the third day He would rise again. The enemies of Christ were more mindful of His words than His professed friends were, and they went to Pilate seeking a guard, and asking permission to seal the tomb, and these were permitted, that men might not be able to avoid the truth and implication of the resurrection of Christ.

Those friends, weak and faltering and fleeing, when their Lord and Master is taken from them, few and feeble in number, could they break through the guard and remove the stone and unwind the clothes bound round the precious body of our Lord? They could not have done it, even if they would. And the enemies — they would not have done it, if they could. The whole purpose of setting a guard and sealing that tomb was that the body could be preserved there. We can dismiss that explanation given by the guard who were bribed, and say that if neither friends nor enemies took His body away, then He must

have been raised according to the Scriptures by the power of God.

The Scriptures tell us He appeared unto those who loved Him in the days between His resurrection and ascension, and some of the very weightiest lines of evidence for the identity of a person are found in two things — first, the voice of the person; secondly, scars, if a person has them. You remember how, on that resurrection morning when the Lord appeared to Mary, through her tear-bedimmed eyes and in the dawning of the morning, she supposed that He was the gardener, but when He said to her “**Mary,**” to that familiar voice she said “**Rabboni!**” She had recognized the voice. And, Thomas, refusing to believe the witness of the others that His Lord had risen, when the Lord said to him “Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side,” Thomas said, “My Lord and my God!” “Now then is Christ risen” — dead, buried, raised according to the Scriptures.

The last the world saw of Him was bruised and wounded upon the cross, but the world is going to see Him again when He comes in the display of His mighty power to put down every foe and every opposing force. Thank God, the day is coming when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall have to confess Him as Lord.

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things to enter into His glory?” No wonder the Old Testament Prophets wondered “what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did sig-

nify, when it was testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow!" The blessed answer to all the sufferings of Christ is going to be seen in that coming day, and in the eternal ages our redemption song will be the worthiness of the Lamb

who was slain, for He is worthy of all honour and power and glory.

An eternal song is ours in time, and may we sing it with greater intelligence and understanding as we consider the cross He endured for the glory of God and the blessing of man.

BIBLE STUDY—JOB

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 38 — 42).

TAKING the place of the "interpreter" of God's ways, that Job might recognize what "uprightness" demanded, Elihu closed his discourse on the lofty theme of the majesty and the justice of God, so the moment had come for Divine intervention. He is God, and Almighty, as the closing verses of chapter 37 declared: He is also Jehovah, and He spoke out of the whirlwind, to which Elihu had also alluded.

It is remarkable too that Elihu had spoken of the "noise," or "roar" of "His voice." Wind is not visible; yet in violent motion, men feel its pressure and hear its roar. As the whirlwind approached and its pressure was felt, its roar was the voice of Jehovah Himself. His words were addressed specially and only to Job. Whether what He said was intelligible to others, we are not told. Brought face to face with Jehovah, Job had to recognize that all his many words had darkened and not shed light upon the matter in dispute.

If we refer back to the beginning of chapter 23, we may remind our-

selves that Job in a self-confident way had expressed his wish to get into contact with God, feeling sure that he could order his cause before Him, and fill his mouth with arguments, and know the words in which God would answer him. The moment had come now for his wish to be fulfilled, and Jehovah bids him gird up his loins like a man, and be prepared to answer the voice of God. The questionings now should come from God. They begin with verse 4.

The words of Jehovah fill four chapters, with a brief interlude at the opening of chapter 40. Question after question is propounded for Job to consider and answer, if he could; and all are concerned with the mighty power that had acted in creation. Once more we see that only the primeval revelation of God is assumed. If, as some think, Moses wrote this book, he wrote of things that happened before the law was given, or, at least, of circles where the law was not known. We are reminded of what we read in Romans 2: 12-15, as we notice that "the work of the law" was written in the heart of Job. Jehovah

judged him in the light of what he knew, and as He did so, we shall discover how Job's conscience bore witness and his thoughts which had been excusing him began to accuse him. The law did not make men responsible, it only heightened their responsibility.

In verses 4-38 of chapter 38, the Lord asserts His own greatness and Job's insignificance in the light of His mighty creatorial acts. He started with His founding of the earth, which occasioned jubilation among angelic beings, who witnessed it; and then He proceeded to speak of the seas breaking forth, though in darkness, and then light appearing so that there was a day-spring as well as darkness. After that came mention of the wonders of snow and hail and rain, as well as the wonders displayed in the stars, the constellations and the ordinances of heaven. We cannot but be reminded of the early part of Genesis 1, down to the point where we read, "He made the stars also." What did Job know of these things? Had he entered into the springs of the sea? Or had the gates of death opened to him?

From verse 38 and through chapter 39 the questions refer to animals and birds, the creation of which is related in the latter part of Genesis 1. Here again, if carefully considered, wonders innumerable confront us, and questions were raised that Job could not answer.

So, in the opening verses of chapter 40, Jehovah challenged Job about it and Job at once capitulated. He acknowledged that he had spoken too much and that now silence became him. Before

his Creator, he realized he was vile.

But the conviction that now had seized Job had to be driven into him yet more deeply. Hence again he was challenged. He had been guilty of disannulling the judgment of God, and condemning Him in order to maintain his own righteousness. This was really a very great sin, and in verses 9-14 he is condemned in a most searching way. Ironic language is used. Let him not contend with God but rather turn his attention to the proud and powerful among men, and abase such; then it might be admitted that he could save himself.

From verse 15 to the end of chapter 41, the Lord makes further reference to the wonders of His creation. He called Job's attention to behemoth and to leviathan — probably the hippopotamus and the crocodile. They had brute strength but no human intelligence. It would be more easy to subdue them than to bring down proud man. In Job's day human inventions had hardly begun, so this was probably not so apparent as it is in our day, when these mighty creatures are easily subdued — but not so, proud man!

Job however could not tackle leviathan or behemoth, nor could he subdue proud man. How then could he contend with God? This was powerfully driven home into his heart.

Jehovah's voice out of the whirlwind ceased, and Job humbled himself in full measure. He confessed the wrongness of his former utterances. He had to abhor himself and repent in the place of death — dust

and ashes. These moments in the presence of God had produced a result which all the talk of the three friends, and even of Elihu, had not achieved. The man, who was so excellent among men, and had a testimonial from even God Himself, had discovered his own utter sinfulness in the deepest springs of his being. A discovery we all in our turn have to make!

The whole of this story has a great lesson for us, as we realize, if we read James 5: 11. We are now going to see "the end of the Lord" in all this, which reveals that He is indeed "very pitiful and of tender mercy." What then was the end that the Lord had in view, when He permitted all these testing disasters to come upon Job?

First, he obtained what we may call a first-hand knowledge of God. Previously he had known of Him by "the hearing of the ear;" that is, by tradition. But now, said he, "mine eye seeth Thee;" that is, God was apprehended in a new and vital way. He did not "see" in a literal sense, as we are assured by 1 Timothy 6: 16, yet the eye is but the organ of sight and it is the mind that sees. Again and again we say, "I see," when something that made no appeal to our eyes has sunk into our minds. Job now knew God in His power, holiness, righteousness, as far as He could be known in those days.

It is our privilege to know God as He has been revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and through that knowledge we receive "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," and, "exceeding great and precious promises," as well as

gaining day by day, "grace and peace." So we are told in the opening verses of Peter's second Epistle. Indeed we may say that with us, as well as with Job, a first-hand and experimental knowledge of God lies at the base of everything.

But second, as the fruit of this knowledge of God, Job saw himself in a totally new light. Formerly he had sung his own praises. Now the correctness of his outward behaviour faded out of his mind, and he saw the self-conceited depths of his fallen nature. Hence in true repentance he abhorred himself.

This spirit of self-judgment is wrought in all who really have to do with God. Examples of it abound in Scripture. For instance: when Abraham found himself in the presence of God, he said, I "am but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18: 27). Similarly, Isaiah said, "I am undone" (Isa. 6: 5); and Daniel, "my comeliness was turned in me into corruption" (Dan. 10: 8). So, Peter, "I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5: 8), and Paul, "sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim 1: 15). And all these were saints eminent in their day. They would not have been eminent, if they had not had such an experience. Have we had it?

And now there comes into view another feature comprised in the end which the Lord had in view. The three friends of Job were condemned, for they had not spoken rightly, nor humbled themselves as Job had, vindicating God and condemning themselves. They were instructed to go to Job, offer up sacrifices, and seek his intercession on their behalf: without a doubt a

most humiliating process for them. Though they had visited Job in order to commiserate and console they had been led in the progress of the arguments into hurling accusations and reproaches at him, and as they did so developing a self-righteous spirit themselves. Thus, not having humbled themselves as Job had done, they were publicly humbled by God.

But what about Job? The Lord knew right well what a complete revolution had been wrought in his spirit, while as yet his poor body was unaltered. He said, "My servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept." Not long before with heat and sarcasm he had argued against them. Now, with kindness and grace in his heart he prays for them! The man who had gained a true knowledge of God, and consequently had learned to abhor himself, is **quite transformed** in his relations with his former opponents. Resentment has given place to reconciliation. The spiritual gain of this was immense.

It must have been an extraordinary scene. Verse 10 shows that the turn in Job's bodily condition and in his fortunes came when he had prayed for his friends, **and not before**. Here were the three friends, well-favoured gentlemen of the east with their sacrifices; Job, an emaciated figure, covered with boils. Yet this poor physical wreck is in touch with God, and able to hold up his hands in gracious and priestly intercession. When had anything like this been seen in the east? No wonder the story had to be written to find a place amongst the oracles of God.

Let us not miss the application of all this to ourselves. Matters of dispute arise among those who are brethren in Christ, and if out of the presence of God, debate may be fierce and division ensue. Let the presence of God be realized, let self be judged and abhorred, and a totally different spirit prevails and a right solution is reached.

Job's prayer was effectual since he was now right with God, and not only right with his friends. We have the definite statement, "The Lord also accepted Job." The man who condemned and repudiated himself stands in acceptance before God. This has ever been God's way. We find testimonies to it in other Old Testament scriptures; for instance, Isaiah 57: 15; 66: 2. But we have to pass on to the New Testament to find the **basis** on which the acceptance rests. The **character** of the acceptance which is ours today is found in the words, "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1: 6). In Job's day this had not come to light.

Thus far we have been noting what God wrought in Job, as the result of all he had passed through; now we see God acting **for** him. Up to this point he has been held in the grip of the awful disease produced by Satan. Now, "the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends." Deliverance for his body took place, evidently with dramatic suddenness, once the end of the Lord as to his spiritual state was reached, for with God the spiritual takes precedence over what is physical or material. Satan himself was eliminated from the story by the end of chapter 2. Now his cruel infliction

was removed, having been overruled to achieve God's purpose.

In this again we see illustrated a great principle of God's ways. He makes the malevolence of the devil, as well as the wrath of man, to work out to His own praise as well as our good. The great example of this, unapproached by all else, is of course the Cross. To accomplish that, Satan entered into Judas Iscariot. Of such extreme importance was it in his eyes that he allowed no lesser demon to deputize for him. Yet he was helping on his own overthrow for referring to His Cross, the Lord Jesus said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12: 31). A further example we see in 2 Corinthians 12, where the "messenger of Satan" sent to buffet Paul, was overruled for Paul's spiritual preservation. When afflictions come upon us, let us remember these things, and profit by them.

As we observe "the end of the Lord," we can indeed say with the Apostle James that, "the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." We have noted at least five things: (1) that Job gained a first-hand knowledge of God, such as he had never had before; (2) he knew and abhorred himself, as he had never done before; (3) that in spirit and character he was transformed, from anger and harshness to grace; (4) that he was given the knowledge of his acceptance before God; and (5) that he was delivered in his body from the grip that Satan had been permitted to have upon him.

But now a sixth thing appears for, "the Lord gave Job twice as

much as he had before." Previously he had been a man of very large wealth, as wealth was counted in those days, but now his possessions grew to such proportions as would have befitted a king. God gave a mighty increase to the animals he had, but there was also that which came to him by the gifts of his brethren and acquaintance. He was restored to the confidence and esteem of all who previously had known him: a great point this, when we remember his sad complaint as to the treatment he had received, recorded in chapter 30.

In keeping with the day in which he lived, the blessings recorded are of a material sort, which ensured earthly prosperity to the end of his days. These were the positive blessings granted, just as the fifth item, noted above, was blessing of a negative order — the removal of bodily trouble. The first four items we noted were blessings of a spiritual order, and of the very first importance, since once received they abide for ever. Let us remember that as Christians all our blessings are of a spiritual and heavenly order, as stated in Ephesians 1: 3.

Having passed through this unprecedented storm, Job lived to old age under the smile of God, enriched spiritually and materially. He saw his possessions, sheep, camels, oxen, asses, multiply until their number was doubled. His seven sons and three very beautiful daughters grew up around him, and so God gave him twice as much as he had before.

But what about the sons and daughters? They were not doubled.

Should they not have numbered fourteen and six? As the new family grew up around him and then stopped at the number recorded, we wonder if it raised an enquiry in his mind, as it certainly does in ours. Yes, after all God did give Job twice as much as he had before, without exception. The animals were visibly doubled for the earlier lot were irrevocably lost, and he would never see them again. The earlier sons and three daughters **were not lost FOR EVER.**

About these earlier sons and daughters Job had been continually concerned as the first chapter of the book bears witness. Acting as priest of his family he had continually offered sacrifices on their behalf. They were outwardly God-fearing for Job did not fear that they cursed God **with their lips**, but he thought they might have done so **in their hearts.** Yet in spite of this all of them, and all together, they had been swept out of life in a moment. So in this striking way it was intimated that another world does exist into which their spirits had entered, that the resurrection, as to which Job had reasoned and debated in chapter 14, would be reached in due season, and that Job would meet them again.

We are not told in so many words that all this was plain to Job, but we assume that God, who so kindly gave this intimation, gave him the ability to perceive it. It must have confirmed his faith in resurrection on the one hand and comforted his heart on the other. It has, we trust, brought comfort to many a heart beside Job's. When full of days Job ended his long life, he must have looked back upon this time of

unparalleled testing, through which he had to pass, as being but a dark tunnel leading into bright sunshine; a time of outward disaster but of inward enrichment. That it was so, such a scripture as Ezekiel 14: 14 bears witness. He is held up as a shining example, together with Noah and Daniel.

As we close our Bibles on the Book of Job, we may well do so with a song of praise and thanksgiving in our hearts, and also having, we trust, learned some needed lessons. We may not suffer in anything like the degree that Job did, but none of us escapes the chastening hand of our God and Father. When chastened ourselves let us be exercised thereby; and when we observe chastening coming on others, let us be careful how we interpret it.

In the light of the New Testament, chastening may be sent for **retribution**, as we see in 1 Corinthians 11: 30. But on the other hand it may not be, as we see in Paul's case — 2 Corinthians 12: 7, — where the thorn in the flesh was **preventive**; lest he should be puffed up and fall. Yet again, it may be neither retributive nor preventive, but **educational**, as Hebrews 12 shows. The Father trains and disciplines His children, and even scourges them; but all is in pursuance of His objective — "that we might be partakers of His holiness."

In that direction Job was led, as we have seen. In that direction we too are being led in all the Father's dealings with us. Let us ever remember this, and praise God that it is so.