

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH (John 17: 17)

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“A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE LORD” F. B. HOLE.

THE prepared people were very few numerically, and from a social and worldly standpoint were very insignificant, yet when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the humiliation which characterized His first advent, they were ready for Him.

It was particularly the office of John the Baptist to make ready that prepared people (Luke 1: 17). He was the chosen instrument of the Spirit of God, and by his preaching and the baptism of repentance things were brought to a climax, and godly souls marked by repentance and faith were manifested, just as also by his baptism the Messiah Himself was made manifest to Israel. Still, the process of preparation had been going on for long. The opening chapters of Luke give us a very attractive picture of some of these godly souls who had been prepared of God at a date nearly thirty years before John's preaching. The book of Malachi gives us a glimpse at a similar generation of faithful saints some four hundred years previously.

The Lord Jesus evidently appeared at an hour when the world was seething with unrest and when a general expectancy of some great event swayed the hearts of men. Scripture bears witness to this feature amongst the people of Israel (see, Luke 3: 15). Secular history seems to indicate a corresponding condition in the heathen world, which is easily explained. The devil, though not omniscient, is very far-sighted and is a close observer of the Divine Word and of

the hearts and ways of men. He knew when Messiah was to appear according to Daniel 9: 26, even though saints neglected the sacred writings, and remained as a result in ignorance. He consequently agitated the minds of men, raising up false prophets and false “Christs” so as effectually to becloud the issue and confuse the inquiring mind. Moreover, he too had evidently been steadily working for centuries amongst the returned remnant of the chosen people, producing among them just that attitude of mind and that moral atmosphere that made the rejection of the Messiah when He appeared an absolute certainty. Just as there had been a work progressing in preparation for Christ, so had there been a work of preparation for Barabbas.

Now history has a remarkable way of repeating itself. This is not surprising when we remember that in all ages and under all circumstances man is just man, and God Himself immutably the same. Hence men are continually doing the same things and God is continually acting towards them according to the principles of His holy and righteous government; the consequence being the repetition, not in minor details but in broad outline, which is so frequently noticed. In keeping with this we find indications in the New Testament that there is a similar work of preparation in progress for the now near-approaching Second Advent. The same two currents are running swiftly in the course of present history. We do not for the moment pursue this side of the sub-

ject, and only mention it in order that with greater interest we may follow the course of the two totally opposed currents as they flowed before the First Advent, and thus gain needed instruction for today.

Let us then first turn our thoughts to Malachi, whose prophecies were uttered more than a century after the return of a remnant of the captivity to the land of their fathers under Zerubbabel, Nehemiah and Ezra. During these many years there had gradually supervened amongst them a haughty and self-satisfied spirit. They did not now drift off into idolatry as their fathers had done, but the devil darkened their thoughts by pride so that they were content to pursue the round of outward religious observances whilst their hearts were far from God. And not only this, but when the Lord remonstrated with them through the prophet and laid their sins at their door, they simply met such remonstrance with petulant and impertinent inquiries as to when they had ever been guilty of the sins alleged. They were utterly intolerant of criticism, and not prepared for one moment to admit anything at all was amiss with them!

Note the following excerpts:—

“ I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?” (1: 2).

“ You, O priests, that despise My Name, and ye that say, Wherein have we despised Thy Name?” (1: 6).

“ Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted Thee?” (1: 7).

“ And this have ye done again . .

insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more . . . Yet ye say, Wherefore?” (2: 13, 14).

“ Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him?” (2: 17).

“ Return unto Me : . . saith the Lord of Hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?” (3: 7).

“ Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee?” (3: 8).

“ Your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against Thee?” (3: 13).

These extracts show that already the mass of the people were developing the frame of mind so strikingly described by the Lord Jesus as being like the children of the market places who say, “ We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented ” (Matt. 11: 17). When the Lord declared His love for them, instead of rejoicing, they merely asked wherein He had loved them, inferring thereby that they did not accept His assurance, since they considered His dealings harsh and that they themselves were but victims — injured innocents, in fact. When He plainly laid their sins before them, instead of repenting they simply declined to admit that any such sins existed with them.

Moreover, in all the profanation of the things of God which marked those days, the priests were the ring-leaders (2: 1-10). Instead of leading the people to God, they “ departed out of the way ” themselves; they “ caused many to

stumble at the law," they "corrupted the covenant of Levi." Consequently no one would open the temple doors unless he made some profit by so doing, and the people were infected by the same spirit, and if they contemplated bringing an offering, they carefully looked over their flocks so as to bring to the Lord the most miserable specimen they could find! And all the while they considered themselves in the pride of their hearts as being quite above criticism, and the weight of public opinion was altogether in their favour, for, said the prophet, "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up" (3: 15). Thus rolled on the current of iniquity that was to terminate in the cry, "Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas."

Another current, however, had begun to run its course, gaining its impulse from the Spirit of God. It appears to have been largely beneath the surface, and hence much less conspicuous, and to have had an appearance of but little strength; still it was there. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another" (3: 16). There began to be manifested a true remnant of God-fearing souls within the remnant of the nation that had returned from captivity.

Three things characterized these godly souls of Malachi's day:—

1. They "thought upon" Jehovah's Name (3: 16). A person's "name" sets forth what he is, it expresses also his reputation. These God-fearing folk cared for Jehovah's reputation. They cared for what He was, and judged of things

consequently not by the way those things affected themselves personally, but by the way they affected Jehovah's name and interests. In short, they reversed the popular order and set Jehovah's interests in the first place.

2. They "served" God (3: 18). Their thoughts of Jehovah's name found practical expression in service. They were not mere thinkers. This is a great point, for it is quite possible for the saint whose mind is in the right direction to fall short of what is practical. **To think without serving is nearly as bad and ineffectual as to serve without thinking.**

3. They "spake often one to another" (3: 16). Speech as well as thoughts and actions came under Divine control. The heart being full, the mouth spoke, and intercourse and fellowship in the things of God were enjoyed. All this was pleasing and acceptable to God.

Thus far does Malachi carry us. The two currents are plainly discernible. The second current terminated in the great confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

We leave Malachi and come to New Testament times, only to meet with the two currents again. The early chapters of Matthew resume the history of the first: the early chapters of Luke that of the second.

In Matthew 2, the scenes are cast largely among the grandees of the day. We move in thought amongst venerable priests and scribes of the Sanhedrim, and in the court circles of the godless Herod. What do we find? We find a state of things, which, had not Malachi's prophecy

prepared us, we should have deemed well-nigh incredible. The Messiah, the long-expected Deliverer is born and Jerusalem knows nothing of it! The months roll by and still not the faintest inkling of the great event has reached the religious or civil authorities! Presently wise men from the East, semi-pagans in all probability, arrive in Jerusalem with the tidings, and proceed to instruct the men who were supposed to be the link between God and the people. Malachi had said, "The priests lips should keep knowledge . . . for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts" (2: 7). Here, however, the priests had no knowledge to keep. Semi-pagans got the glad tidings of great joy before them and became the instructors of priestly ignorance. So long a time had elapsed between the Nativity and the news reaching the authorities that Herod had to fix two years as the limit in his vain attempt to ensure that the Messiah should be slain. Thus did God pour contempt on all the priestly pride which Malachi had reprovved.

And this is not all. Consider the effect of the news when it came to hand. "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." That Herod should have been troubled is not surprising; he was an alien on the throne. But the leaders of the veritable people of God and the people themselves were troubled also. Instead of hailing His advent with great joy they were filled with consternation. It seemed to them an intrusion, a disturbing factor in all their schemes. They were not prepared for God to thrust Himself into the midst of their concerns. The

current of Satanic preparation for His coming had greatly increased in volume. If the cry of "Not this Man but Barabbas" appeared a probability in the light of Malachi's indictment, it is now a certainty, and inevitable.

We turn to the first and second chapters of Luke and what a contrast meets us! Far from the ignoble strife of the madding crowd of Pharisaic and Sadducean religionists or the vicious court of Herod, were at least a few saints better known in heaven than on earth. Zacharias and Elisabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna, the nameless shepherds caring for the flocks by night, were representatives of a larger number. How strongly that other current beneath the surface is flowing! Here is a people in touch with heaven! "An angel of the Lord" appears to this one. Gabriel visits another. On a third occasion the angel of the Lord with a multitude of the heavenly host comes into evidence. By a few the advent of the Messiah was known before ever He came. His approaching birth formed the theme of conversation between holy women. When the great event was an accomplished fact, hardly an hour passed before the God-fearing shepherds were apprised of it. They needed no wise men from the East to inform them that the King of the Jews was born.

In this people we see the three characteristics mentioned by Malachi. They thought upon Jehovah's name, as evidenced in the inspired utterances of Mary and Zacharias. They served God and spake often one to another, as illustrated by

Anna who "served God with fastings and prayers night and day," and who, having actually seen the child Jesus in the temple, "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." The characteristics are not only there but intensified, indeed things come to light which surpass anything mentioned in Malachi, for in Simeon the Holy Spirit was working with singular energy. Though as yet the Spirit could not indwell, yet He was **upon** him. Through the Spirit he had a **revelation**, and by the Spirit he was **guided** into the temple at the exact hour to meet the child Jesus.

As a consequence Simeon was a prophet. His words to Mary, the mother of our Lord, show that he foresaw the rejection and death of the Messiah, and they breathe a remarkable spirit of devotion and love. Here was this aged saint who had spent a long life "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and now just before his eyes must close in death he is permitted to see as an infant the One who is the fulfilment of his hopes. The actual day of Messiah's manifestation to Israel he can never hope to see. Might he not very naturally have bewailed his hard lot in having to die just as the fulfilment of his hopes was in sight? Yet as a matter of fact he simply said, "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace." Not only did he foresee the approaching tragedy of the Cross, but his heart's love centred in the Christ of God. If the Christ is to go, he is content to go. He has no wish to live if Jesus is to die!

Behold then a people prepared for the Lord morally: it remained

for John the Baptist to baptize with the baptism of repentance and thus prepare them positionally. Just as in Matthew 2 we see Malachi's picture of the people reproduced in an accentuated form, so here is Malachi's picture of the remnant in an accentuated form, and they received the Christ with great joy. Simeon stands before us as a watcher for Christ; Anna as a witness to Christ. They were ready.

It is a thrilling story. How deep the interest, whether joyous or painful, according as we look on this side or on that! Yet our situation to-day is no less thrilling did we but know it. It is easy, however, to discourse upon what has been, or even upon what is yet to be, and alas! so difficult to realize and correctly estimate the situation that is.

We draw near to the close of the church's history. The coming of the Lord is nigh. The rolling tide of religious iniquity that is to terminate in apostasy is very manifest. More and more bold become the denials and negations of men who pose as religious leaders. More and more reckless and God-forgetting become the poor men and women of the world. And the saints? What of the saints of God. Is there a corresponding movement among them?

Let us narrow down this question to ourselves individually. If we do, it will certainly send us to our knees in the presence of God. The second coming is near. The two currents of which we have spoken are again plainly visible. Ask, Which of them bears me on its bosom? Am I amongst the watchers and the witnesses? Do I stand with loins girt and ready for the Lord?

THE SON OF MAN

G. S. HEPBURN.

SON OF MAN is the most exalted of the many official titles employed in relation to our blessed Lord. It is the one commonly adopted by our Lord Himself, and is found perhaps more frequently, than any other in the Scriptures, and possibly it is the least understood.

Many seem to regard the title as denoting our Lord's humanity, as distinct from His Deity, but the truth is, it embraces both. In other words, had He not been **the Son of God** personally, He could not have been **the Son of Man** according to Scripture.

This the Jewish Council evidently realised, for when the Lord, rejected by them as the Christ (Israel's promised Messiah), laid claim to the incomparably higher title of Son of Man, they promptly replied, "Art Thou then **the Son of God?** and branded Him as a blasphemer, and condemned Him as worthy of death, (Luke 22: 66-71).

In these modern times we do well to remember that while our blessed Lord was born of a woman, He had not an earthly father. It was said by the angel to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1: 35).

There are many texts where the title, **Son of Man**, implies Deity." "**The Son of Man** hath power upon earth to forgive sins" (Luke 5: 24). The scribes and Pharisees were right when they asked, "Who can

forgive sins, but God alone?" Failing to perceive in the Lord Jesus a Divine Person, they branded Him as a blasphemer. It certainly would have been blasphemy on the part of any other to have made such a claim. "**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). When Stephen testified before the Jewish Council to seeing the heavens opened, and **the Son of Man** standing on the right hand of God, they rushed upon him with one accord, and stoned him to death, (Acts 7: 56-60).

From Hebrews 2: 5-9 we learn that the place and position **the Son of Man** will have in the world to come, otherwise described as "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (Eph. 1: 10), the grand consummation towards which all in the ways of God have been moving all down the ages, will be as the Head and Centre of the whole vast universe, not only of things under heaven, as in Psalm 8: 4-9 and Daniel 7: 9-14, but of all in heaven as well, (Eph. 1: 10). But this necessitated that **the Son of Man**, who had come down from Heaven should be lifted up on the cross of Calvary, (John 3: 13, 15).

The Son of Man came down from Heaven, He gave His flesh for the life of the world, and all who believe on Him and appropriate His death have eternal life, and He, the Son of Man, will raise them up at the last day. And when many of His followers murmured, He said, "Doth this offend you? What and

if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" (John 6: 61-62).

It may be well to note that John alone of the evangelists uses the word ascend in connection with the Lord's going to Heaven. Mark says He was received up. Luke, that He was carried up. But in John the Lord says "I ascend."

Jesus, **the Son of God**, who was personally so infinitely higher than the angels, received their homage, as the edict went forth, "Let all the angels of God worship Him, (Heb. 1: 6), and whom would they worship, but **God alone**. He was made a little lower than the angels **for the suffering of death**, for had He not been Man, He could not have died. Had He been nothing more than a man, His death would have effected nothing; but wonder of wonders Jesus, **the Son of Man**, very God and very Man, tasted death "for everything" (Heb. 2: 9, New Trans.). Faith sees Him crowned with glory and honour, the pledge

that all things will be subject to Him, nothing being outside His sway.

Genesis 2: 19-25, and Psalm 8, read in conjunction with Hebrews 2: 5-9, show clearly that when God brought creation into being, placing man, created in the image and after the likeness of God (Gen. 1: 26) as the head of it, He had in view the ages to come, when Jesus, **the Son of Man**, shall have His place of universal dominion.

"Thy counsels ere the world began,
All centred in **the Son of Man**;
Him destined to the highest place,
Head of His church through
sovereign grace:

To Him enthroned in majesty,
Let every creature bend the knee.

"Worthy, **O, Son of Man**, art Thou
Of every crown that decks Thy
brow;

Worthy art Thou to be adored,
And owned as universal Lord;
O, hasten that long-promised day,
When all shall own Thy rightful
sway."

TWO PRECIOUS PROMISES

A. J. POLLOCK.

AMONG the many "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Pet. 1: 4), that are given to us, there is one in particular, which is a source of great joy and comfort to God's people. It came from the lips of the Lord Himself, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20).

It is very noticeable that Matthew is the only evangelist out of the four, who mentions the church of God. We read, "Thou art Peter,

and upon this rock [the confession of the Lord's name] I will build My church; and the gates of hell [**hades**] shall not prevail against it, (Matt. 16: 18), and again in chapter 18: 17, where we get the word, **church**, twice repeated in the one verse.

It is indeed a very precious promise of our Lord, one often heard on the lips of His own, especially when they are gathered together to remember the Lord in His death in the breaking of bread.

It is true that this promise is valid from the moment of its utterance by our Lord, yet it doubtless has likewise a **prophetic** character, marked by the number, "**two or three**" indicating that the time will come of weakness and ruin in the professing church of God, of widespread departure from the truth of God in relation to the assembly, of **outward** forms and ceremonies, taking the place of **inward** reality, in relation to the ordering of God's church. And finally, the testimony will be sadly weakened by utter worldliness.

How unspeakably precious has this promise of our Lord been to the writer, when he has been present at the breaking of bread with only one other brother and his wife. Doubtless many an isolated saint can tell with joy of a similar experience in similar circumstances.

Even in the days of the Apostle Paul the shadow of declension was seen coming in. Confusion had crept into the assembly at Corinth in his day. We read, "It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.' Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1: 11-13). Thus tactfully and powerfully did the Apostle Paul seek to stay this contention from spreading further.

He refrained from giving the names of the actual leaders in dealing with this departure from the

truth of the oneness in Christ of all believers — "There is **one** body, and **one** Spirit, even as ye are called in **one** hope of your calling, (Eph. 4: 4), — but introduced his own name, and those of Apollos and Cephas. We read, "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (1 Cor. 4: 6). It is cheering to read in Paul's second letter to the saints at Corinth, that his first letter had the desired effect, (2 Cor. 7: 8-16).

It is indeed shocking that some in Corinth would dare to form a party, saying "I am **of Christ**," as if their party alone had the right to that sacred Name, denying it to all outside their particular circle. To our deep sorrow we have seen an example of this at the present time. Such pretension has been well described by another, as "The Mother-Tincture of Sectarianism." We all know that Mother-Tincture is highly concentrated and often deadly poison. The Lord preserve His beloved people in loyalty to Him and to His word, which brings before us His mind in such matters.

But now we come to a peculiarly touching and precious promise of our Lord, and that very specially so in relation to the last days of the church's history upon earth. We read, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3: 20). Here it is not even a meeting

of two or three gathered together in His name, but of our Lord standing **outside** the professing church, in which He can find no foothold whatsoever.

Our Lord is here depicted as walking in a judicial character in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, signifying seven assemblies in Asia Minor, and giving us **prophetically** the history of the church from its conception to its close. In the address to the Laodicean church we find a condition of open apostasy. It is very noticeable that our Lord does not indicate His coming again as "that blessed hope" (Titus 2: 13), but as a **threat**, that He will spue them in their lukewarmness out of His mouth as nauseating.

The Apostle John in vision sees our Lord as clothed in a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, setting forth His majesty and power, and the restraint put upon any manifestation of His undoubted tender affection for His own, seeing He is in their midst as Judge.

No wonder that when John saw our Lord so presented, he fell at our Lord's feet as dead. How graciously God would encourage His servant. We read, "And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead: and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell [hades] and of death" (Rev. 1: 17, 18).

And now note this precious promise of our Lord. Standing **outside** the **professing** church of

God, our Lord is most touchingly seen as at the door of the heart of individuals, knocking, knocking, seeking a response, an entrance on **their** part. Perchance one here, or one there, will respond and open the door of his heart to the Lord, to hear His loving response, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

What condescending grace on the part of our Lord, that He will sup with us in **our** humble circumstances. It reminds us, that when the late Queen Victoria came into residence to her Highland home, Balmoral Castle, Scotland, she would dispense with the outward formality of court life, and pay visits to the cottagers on her estate and receive their hospitality over a cup of afternoon tea. How honoured the simple cottage wife would feel! But suppose one day a royal messenger brought her an invitation to a royal banquet in Balmoral Castle, not in a cottager's humble circumstances, but in all the royal style of the Queen's circumstances. What a change that would be!

This illustration, however, comes very far short of our Lord's precious promise. How warmed and comforted must many an isolated saint of God have felt to realize they have the presence of the Lord granted to them individually in their trying circumstances. But the Lord does not stop there. If He condescends to be our Guest in **our** circumstances down here, He would have us to be in communion with Him now and in glory with Him presently. He as our blessed Host; we, honoured beyond words, as His guests!

We have often sung :

“ If here on earth the thoughts of
Jesus' love

Lift our poor hearts this weary
world above;

If even here the taste of heavenly
springs

So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim
sings :

What will the sunshine of His glory
prove?

What the unmingled fulness of His
love?

What hallelujahs will His presence
raise?

What but one loud eternal burst of
praise?

May the Lord bless the considera-
tion of these most precious promises
to us for the edification of each,
and to the glory of His holy Name.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS I: 1—4: 6)

OF all the prophets Isaiah is the richest in the number of his references to the Christ who was to come, and in the variety of the figures under which He is presented to us. It is evident that it divides into three main sections (1) chapters 1-35, chiefly occupied with pronouncing judgment upon Israel and the nations, but with repeated references to Christ, in whom alone is hope of blessing found. Then (2) chapters 36-39, an historical section, recording God's deliverance, both national and personal, granted to one of the best kings of David's line; recording also how failure marked him. Then lastly (3) chapters 40-66, mainly occupied with predictions concerning the coming Messiah both in His humiliation and in His glory, but presenting it against the dark background of the idolatry of Israel in Isaiah's day, and their rejection of Christ at His first advent.

The break that appears, as we reach chapter 40, is very evident, as

also the change in the main themes. So much so that critical and unbelieving theologians have asserted that there must have been several writers or compilers of the book. They speak of two or more Isaiahs. When we turn to New Testament quotations from the book, we find no trace of any such idea. Here is one fact which strongly negatives it.

In the Old Testament God is spoken of as, "The Holy One of Israel" only about 37 times. Just 30 of these occur in Isaiah, so it is the characteristic title of God in his book. These 30 are almost equally divided between chapters 1-39, and 40-66, occurring 14 times in the first part, and 16 times in the second. This strongly supports unity rather than plurality of authorship.

The first verse shows that Isaiah's ministry was in the southern kingdom and extended into four reigns. Three of the kings mentioned did mainly what was right, one especially so, and only one — Ahaz — turned aside and did evil. Yet the

prophet's opening words reveal a sad state of departure and rebellion among the people. There was not only this, but, as verse 3 states, complete insensibility and indifference. They did not display the instinctive knowledge found in an ox or a donkey. Hence the terrible indictment of verse 4. They were sinful and marked by iniquity, evildoing, corruption, alienation; and all this was while God-fearing kings were on the throne. It illumines what is said in 2 Chronicles 27, the end of verse 2.

All this had brought upon them the heavy hand of God in discipline and disaster, yet without any reforming effect, as verses 5-9 show. Graphic figures are used to bring home to the people their deplorable state, and verse 9 reveals that only a small remnant existed, that God could recognize. Had not that remnant been there a judgment like to that of Sodom and Gomorrah would have fallen on them. This is ever God's way. Again and again in the past He had maintained a small remnant for Himself in the midst of general departure. He has done so through the church's history. He is doing so today.

Verse 10 has a solemn voice to us. The prophet likens the religious leaders of his day to the rulers and people of those cities of wickedness, that centuries before had been destroyed. We say, **religious** leaders because of the verses that follow, where they and the people are shown to have been zealous and punctilious observers of the ritual of Judaism. What were they doing? They were offering sacrifices and burnt-offerings, bringing oblations and incense, observing new moons,

sabbaths, appointed feasts and assemblies, spreading forth their hands with many prayers. Were not these things right, as ordered through Moses? Yes, they were. Yet all this was declared to be a weariness to God and an abomination in His sight, because, as verses 16 and 17 reveal, their ceremonial exactness was only a decent exterior covering a mass of moral evil and uncleanness. The state of things here exposed blossomed forth into the Phariseeism, so trenchantly denounced by our Lord in Matthew 23.

What needed instruction for us! How easy for the present-day Christian to lapse into a similar condition! There are all too many professing Christians who do **forsake** "the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10: 25), for like Demas they love this present age. But what about those of us who **are present**? — even at the prayer-meeting, which many seem to regard as the least interesting of such assemblies. Are we marked by godly and separate living? — by what the apostle James calls, "Pure religion and undefiled" (Jas. 1: 27)? — for there is a strong resemblance between his words and verses 16 and 17 of our chapter. Let us never forget that with God right moral condition is far more important than ceremonial exactness in Judaism, or even correct church procedure in Christianity. If scrupulous ecclesiastical exactitude fosters moral negligence it becomes an abomination to God.

The stern denunciation we have read is followed by a word of grace and forgiveness, a foreshadowing of what we have in the Gospel to-

day. The, "all have sinned" of Romans 3, is followed by justification, freely offered through "His grace." Only, the cleansing, offered in verse 18, was in its nature a "passing over" of sins "through the forbearance of God," as stated in Romans 3: 25, since the only basis for a cleansing full and eternal lay in the sacrifice of Christ, centuries ahead.

Notice too how "if" occurs in verses 19 and 20. The cleansing and blessing offered hinge upon obedience. To refuse and rebel brings judgment. Both blessing and judgment are concerned with matters of this life, since what is involved in the life to come appears but little in the Old Testament. When the Gospel preacher of today happily and appropriately uses these verses, he of course refers to the eternal consequences of receiving or rejecting the offer, basing what he says on New Testament scripture.

The prophet returns to his denunciation of the existing state of things in verse 21. In verse 24 he announces that the Lord is going to act in judgment, treating them as adversaries; but in the next verse declaring that He will turn His hand upon the remnant, refining them as silver, and purging away their dross. The expression, "turn My hand," is also found in Zechariah 13: 7, where also, as here, it denotes an action of blessing and not judgment. This is quite plain in the next verses of our chapter. But the redemption of Zion and her converts will be through judgment.

The testimony of Scripture is consistent that the earthly blessing

of the coming age will be reached, not by the preaching of the Gospel, but by judgment. This is again declared most plainly when we reach chapter 26: 9, 10. A clear New Testament corroboration of this is found in Revelation 15: 4. This judgment will mean the destruction of the transgressors. They may have forsaken the Lord and turned to false gods with their oaks and gardens, but these evil powers will avail them nothing. All will be consumed together.

Chapter 1 is introduced as a "vision;" chapter 2 is "the word;" but again concerning Judah and Jerusalem. The opening verses enlarge further upon the good things that will come to pass when redemption by judgment takes place. The first thing is that the house of Jehovah shall be established and exalted. Thus it ever is, and must be. God must have His rightful place, and from that blessing will flow out to men.

But the house of the Lord is here called very significantly, "the house of the **God of Jacob**," for then God will manifestly have triumphed over the self-centred crookedness that marked Jacob, and has been perpetuated in his descendants. This will be so clear that all nations will flow to the house to learn of God, so that they may walk in His law. Judgment having been accomplished, men will be marked by obedience Godward, and consequently peace among themselves.

How significant is the word, "neither shall they **learn** war any more." Of recent years men have certainly been **learning war**, and all

too efficiently have they learned it, so that mortal fear grips their minds. It is beyond the power of mankind to achieve what is predicted in verse 4, though one day they will imagine they have reached it by their own schemes and say, "Peace and safety," only to meet "sudden destruction," as foretold in 1 Thessalonians 5: 3. The succeeding verses of that New Testament chapter are in keeping with verse 5 of our chapter. The house of Jacob is entreated to leave the false lights of their idolatries and walk in "the light of the Lord." That they will do, when the coming age arrives. It is what we are privileged to do today, since we are brought into the light as children of light, and of the day that is to dawn when Christ shall appear.

The prophet returns to the existing state of the people in verses 6-9. From other peoples they had imported various forms of spiritist practices. They were prosperous in material things; plenty of silver and gold and treasures, and also horses, which were a luxury forbidden to Israel's kings, according to Deuteronomy 17: 16. All this led to the land being full of idols, before which both poor and great abased themselves. Truly a deplorable state of things.

What then was to be expected? Just that which the prophet now had to announce. He looked beyond the more immediate, disciplinary judgments, that were impending through the Assyrians or Chaldeans, to Jehovah being manifested in His majesty, when His "day" will be introduced. Revelation 6: 15-17, gives us an amplification of verses

10, 19 and 21, for men were filled with haughtiness and lofty looks, though they bowed down before their idols.

The list of things, upon which the day of the Lord will fall in judgment, is very impressive. It will evidently make a clean sweep of all the things in which fallen man boasts, even things pleasant and artistic. Instead of accepting and even enlarging the products of man's inventive skill, as an introduction to the millennial age, as some have imagined, it will remove them, as well as the idols and the idolatrous notions that gave them birth. Today men are being humbled as they receive the grace and truth of the Gospel. Then men will be abased and their false glory depart, as the glory of the Lord shines forth.

What then is the spiritual instruction to be derived from this prophetic declaration? The last verse of the chapter supplies it. As it was with Israel in Isaiah's day so in the world today, **man** is catered for, **man** is magnified; but if we "Walk in the light of the Lord" (verse 5), his littleness is seen, and we "cease from man." He is but a dying creature because of his sin. Before God he counts for nothing in himself. We know, in the light of the cross of Christ, that he is worse than nothing. How amazing then is the grace that has stooped to bless such as ourselves.

Having spoken of the day of the Lord and its effects in chapter 2, Isaiah deals again with the existing state of the people in chapter 3; making plain also how God was

chastising them, and would continue to do so. The famine and confusion and oppression, with its accompanying miseries, so that Jerusalem should be ruined, might not come on them immediately, but they would ultimately, though God would favour the righteous as verse 10 indicates. The ancients and princes of the people were the leaders in the evil of that day.

But the evil of the day was not confined to the leaders, or to the men of the nation, such as are described in verses 2 and 3. The women also were deeply implicated. Their state is denounced from verse 16 to the end of the chapter. They adopted all the devices, well practised in the heathen world, in order to increase the seductiveness of their attractions; and, as the closing verses state, the very men they tried to attract should fall by the sword, and so fail them.

The first verse of chapter 4 completes this grievous theme, and here, we believe we do travel on to the last days. The destruction of male life will be so great that women themselves will be found advocating some kind of polygamy to cover the reproach of spinsterhood, prepared to be no real expense to the man whose name they take. This may read strangely to us, but when we consider the predictions of Scripture as to the strife and warfare which will mark the end of the age, we are not surprised. Read, for instance, the prediction as to the warfare, "at the time of the end," given in Daniel 11: 40-45.

The words, "in that day," occur at the beginning of verse 2 as well

as in verse 1, and here we see clearly that the "day" in question is the period that introduces the age to come, the time of the second Advent. The word translated, "Branch" is used of our Lord five times in the Old Testament, and has the sense of a sprout — "a Sprout of Jehovah for glory and beauty" (New Trans). Here we see, though somewhat veiled, an allusion to the Deity of the promised Messiah. The figure used is that of a living tree putting forth a sprout which displays its own nature and character. And the living tree here is Jehovah Himself; while the words, "for glory and beauty," carry our thoughts to the robes made for Aaron, and to their typical significance as stated in Hebrews 2: 7.

Twice in Jeremiah do we get the Lord Jesus alluded to as the Branch, or Sprout (23: 5; 33: 15); but there what is emphasized is righteousness. It is the character He displays rather than the Source from whence He springs. Again in Zechariah the expression occurs twice (3: 8; 6: 12). There the emphasis lies on the fact that though He springs forth from Jehovah, He is to take the place of the Servant, and enter into Manhood to serve. Reading the five occurrences in the fuller light of the New Testament, we see how full were these early predictions as to our blessed Lord. The one in our chapter is the first and deepest of them all.

We may remark that Isaiah 11: 1, presents the Lord Jesus as a "Rod [or, Shoot — a different word from Sprout] out of the stem of Jesse," and lower down in that

chapter He is "a Root of Jesse;" two expressions which remind us of, "the Root and the Offspring of David," (Rev. 22: 16). "Sprout" of Jehovah is what He was **essentially**. "Shoot" of Jesse and David is what He **became** in His holy Manhood.

Not only will Christ be thus revealed in that day but also a godly remnant will be found, spoken of as, "them that are escaped of Israel." This indicates how fierce and destructive of life will be the great tribulation that is elsewhere foretold. Verse 3 enforces the same fact, and from our Lord's prophetic discourse, recorded in three of the Gospels, we learn that Judah and Jerusalem will be the very centre of that time of trial and persecution, which will only be ended when the Lord intervenes in power at His second advent. Those that remain will be alive spiritually and holy, and enjoy the excellent fruits which will be produced by His presence.

But before this happy state of things can be produced there must be that work of cleansing of which verse 4 speaks, described as "a spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning;" that is, by fire. We may remember that John the Baptist said of our Lord, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. 3: 11). He indicated also that it was the chaff that should be burned, while the wheat was gathered into His garner. In our chapter the wheat is described in verses 2 and 3. The burning of the chaff will purge and wash away the filth. The cleansing of Jerusalem, indeed of the whole earth, will be by a work of judg-

ment and not by the preaching of grace.

Once judgment has accomplished its cleansing work the presence of God can be restored to Jerusalem, dwelling not merely upon a special building, like the temple in Solomon's day, but rather upon every dwelling-place and convocation. His presence will be signalized as of old by a cloud in the daytime and a flame by night. When that takes place, who shall be able to strike a blow at Jerusalem? The presence of God and the glory accompanying it will be protection. Who can strike through a defence like that?

The word translated "tabernacle" in verse 6, is not the one used for the tabernacle in the wilderness but for the feast of tabernacles or booths. Any extreme, either of heat or of rain, will be so slight that no more than a booth will be needed. Everything necessary will be found in connection with the presence of God in the midst of His people, redeemed by judgment.

The first of the minor sections of the book ends with chapter 4. Consequently we observe that though we have had before us from the outset a very dark picture of the sinful and corrupt state of the people, which would bring upon them the judgment of God, we are conducted at its close to Christ as the Sprout of Jehovah, in whom all hope is found. We shall find this feature repeated. The next section, chapters 5: 1 — 9: 7, ends with Immanuel. The third section ends, in chapter 12, with the Shoot and Root of Jesse, and the joy that He will bring to pass.

If we are permitted further to consider Isaiah, we shall note some of those things, "concerning Himself," which, when He expounded them on the day of His resurrection

to the two disciples going to Emmaus, caused their hearts to burn within them. Considering them rightly, they will have the same effect upon us.

KEY WORDS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

A. J. POLLOCK.

IT is interesting to note the key words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, contrasting the Tabernacle and types with their ineffectual shadows, with the glorious fulness of the Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His effectual Sacrifice.

"BETTER" is one key word.

Christ "better than the angels;" "a better hope;" "a better Testament;" "a better Covenant;" "better promises;" "better sacrifices;" "a better country;" "a better substance;" "a better resurrection."

"ONCE," or "ONE," is a key word.

"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" "once for all;" "one sacrifice for sins;" "one offering;" in contrast to the unending sacrifices under the law, which could never take away sins.

"NO MORE" is a key phrase.

"No more conscience of sins;" "no more sacrifice for sins," another way of showing forth the complete efficacy of Christ's work on the cross.

"ETERNAL" is another key word.

"Eternal redemption;" "eternal

salvation;" "eternal inheritance;" "eternal Spirit;" eternal judgment." To these might be added "an unchangeable priesthood." "They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. 7: 23, 24).

Thus is contrasted the stability, permanence, and perfection of Divine things with the temporary character of "carnal ordinances" (Heb. 9: 10). The Antitype stands in great contrast to the type; the glorious Substance to the fleeting shadows. With the coming to this earth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the shadows necessarily passed away. They had done their service, and were swallowed up in their fulfilment.

What marks the poverty and blindness of present-day ritualism is the slavish copying of the shadows. The more elaborate the ritual the feebler the spiritual life. How can anyone who really knows the glorious Antitype go back to "the weak and beggarly elements" (Gal. 4: 9), in which God Himself declared He "had no pleasure" (Heb. 10: 6).

TRUTH IS THE TEST

F. B. HOLE.

From notes of an address on the Second and Third Epistles of John.

ONE can hardly read these two short epistles without being struck by the number of times that the Apostle John uses the word, "Truth." If I remember rightly it occurs five times in the Second Epistle and six times in the Third.

In the first chapter of his Gospel he tells us that, "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Of course God had shown forbearance and grace in Old Testament times, for He ever was a gracious God, and proclaimed Himself to be such. Again, many things that were true and real were made known to Israel through Moses, but when it comes to the absolute thing we have to turn to Christ. In Him the grace of God was fully revealed and the truth of God fully manifested. Many true things were made known in the law, but reality itself shone forth in Christ. In Him the revelation of both was complete.

Doubtless we have all discovered that we are living in a world that is very unreal. Again and again we find something that is imitation ousting the genuine article. This is what characterizes particularly the age in which we are living. Man is very clever and inventive and we discover things are not just what they profess to be, and there is a great element of unreality. Pontius Pilate recognized this, for as a Roman judge he was continually concerned with the crookedness of human life.

You remember his famous ques-

tion, "What is truth?" But having asked it, he turned his back on the One who was the truth, and went out to the false and fickle world. Not many hours before the Lord Jesus had said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He is the way to God the Father; He is the truth concerning Him, and the life in which He can be truly known. It is no good talking to your dog about human affairs, for it does not understand them, possessing canine life only, and not human life. So, alas! multitudes around us, being dead in their sins, know not the truth. They only possess the life of Adam, and have not the life which is in Christ Jesus. But in Christ we are introduced into the world of Divine realities.

When the Apostle John wrote these two Epistles he was confronted with that which was imperilling the truth. The adversary was coming in very strongly and that in a twofold way. First of all, men had appeared actively propagating error as to Christ; and if teaching as to Him be falsified, everything is marred, since He is the truth. These first century deceivers were known as "Gnostics," a term derived from the Greek word for knowledge. They claimed to be the knowing ones. The Apostles of our Lord were as to the things of the world, "unlearned and ignorant men," so the Gnostics claimed to be able to lead on to improved and more intellectual teaching. They did not abide in that which was "from the beginning." The word translated, "transgresseth" in verse 9 of the

Second Epistle, really means "goes forward," that is, they claimed to be making an advance on earlier ideas in what they taught. In reality their fancied developments were destructive.

So the Apostle wrote to a certain Christian woman and her children, warning them against these false teachers. They evidently went from house to house, just as they do today. They were to be definitely refused entrance and no fellowship to be accorded to them even in a verbal way. If a woman and even children were to be so uncompromising in their refusal of such fundamental error, such an attitude to the false teacher and his teachings must mark every one of us. Here is practical instruction as to what to do when such men or women come knocking at our doors. Receive them not nor bid them God speed. I remember one of them coming to my house when I lived in Bath. I certainly did not receive him nor bid him God speed. I resisted him, and very soon he revealed an un-Christian spirit. The wolf threw off the sheep's clothing.

The five references to truth are in the first four verses. Love is in the truth and it circulates amongst all that have known the truth. Having known the truth, they love for the truth's sake, and so truth comes into display; not merely existing in pleasing notions or beautiful words, but expressing itself in love, which is the Divine nature.

Then again of true saints it can be said that the truth "dwelleth in us and shall be with us for ever." In his first Epistle John has told us that "The Spirit is truth" (5: 6).

That being so, the truth dwells in us, since we are indwelt by the Spirit. But also Christ is the truth, and as we shall for ever be in His presence the truth will be with us for ever. In Christ everything is adjusted in its true light. God is fully revealed: man has been fully exposed: God's thoughts and purposes made manifest: all things set in right perspective. Hence grace and mercy reach us from the Father and the Son in truth and love.

One thing more remains, brought out in verse 4. The truth that is set before us objectively in Christ, and that dwells in us subjectively by the Spirit is to govern our actions. We are to walk in truth, and walking signifies activity. All our activities, whether in thinking, speaking or doing, are to be governed by truth. If these children of the "elect lady" were so governed, a similar life is incumbent upon all of us. A saint young or old walking in truth is a lovely sight. No wonder John rejoiced greatly when he saw it; and it is equally lovely when it is seen today. We must today, as much as in the first century, protect it by refusing the false doctrine that would destroy it.

But there is a second thing which imperils the truth and that comes to light in the Third Epistle; not the propagation of false doctrine but the rigid maintenance of official status and what is considered to be outward correctness. Of this Diotrephes was a sad example, whereas Gaius, to whom the epistle was addressed, was marked by walking in truth and being a fellow-helper to the truth. As we read this epistle we see again that the truth is of the first importance and every-

thing else is tested and measured by it. Gaius walked in truth because the truth was in him, and all this was the source of great joy to the Apostle.

In those days there were men of earnest zeal who went out preaching the word, just as those men of Cyprus and Cyrene did, when the disciples were scattered abroad, as we read in Acts II: 19-20. Arrived at the place where Gaius lived, he received them hospitably and brought them forward on their journey after a godly sort, though he had not previously known them. At the end of verse 5 there are not two classes—first, the brethren, and second, strangers. It is rather, "the brethren and to strangers." Gaius did not receive and help these stranger-brethren because he had known them and liked them, but because they were devoted to the Name of Christ, and were separate from the world, not receiving help from that quarter, and because they were publishing the truth.

This latter point is made very plain at the end of verse 8. In helping these undistinguished servants of God, Gaius was helping the truth, and all of us should do what he did. John does not say we **may** receive such, if we are so inclined: he says that we **ought** to do so. It is imperative and not optional.

And this emphasizes another thing: what is important is not the man but the truth that he brings. There was the tendency then, and there is certainly the tendency today, in some quarters at least, to make the man of all importance, so that if he is accredited as "spiritual," what he says must be ac-

cepted. The man accredits the message he brings. What we see here is the reverse of this. The message of truth that is brought accredits the man who brings it; just as in the Second epistle the error that is brought discredits the man who brings it.

The same thought underlies what is said of Demetrius in verse 12, since he had not only a good report of all but also "of the truth itself." Note, it is not that he bore witness to the truth, but that the truth bore witness to him. Demetrius was not the standard by which truth was tested. The truth was the standard by which Demetrius was tested; and having been so tested he stood approved.

With poor Diotrephes it was far otherwise. Just why he took so strong a stand against these stranger-brethren and others who received them, and even against John himself, we are not told. It may have been the uprising of clericalism, excessive zeal for imagined points of teaching or procedure, and the like; but what we do know is what underlay his high-handed doings. What was really the matter with the man? He loved to have the pre-eminence among the saints. That great and important "I," that we sometimes speak of, was to the fore. He was out to establish a dominating position for himself.

Like the Apostle we condemn Diotrephes, but let us not forget the fact, which confronts us in Jeremiah 5: 31. In the midst of Israel there was much false teaching and by it the priests acquired a dominating place, but, said the Lord, "My people love to have it so."

The people wanted their sinful pleasures and were quite content to let the priests do their religious duties for them.

That has been re-enacted in the history of the church, and a forceful modern Diotrophes may be quite welcome, even to saints, if they wish to avoid personal exercise of heart and live easy-going, semi-worldly lives. The fact is that history repeats itself. It does so since human tendencies are always the same. Following Diotrophes, we deny the truth instead of helping it. Great is the truth and ultimately it will prevail. The men who bring us the truth may be open to much

criticism as to awkwardness of speech or manner. The truth criticises us.

We are living in days when the truth is being attacked on all hands. Let us remember that Christ is the truth, and as He Himself said to the Father, "Thy word is truth." That truth has reached us in "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), and let us contend earnestly for it, since it is of priceless value. And may we have grace everyone of us to be so characterized by it that we walk in truth. The eye of the Lord is upon us, and that is what He looks for, as we wait for Him.

POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS

A. J. POLLOCK.

WE read in the vision of Obadiah an arresting statement, "The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (verse 17). This unusual way of enshrining a great truth opens up a wide field of thought.

When a sinner, convicted of his guilt before God, trusts the Lord Jesus as His Saviour and Lord, he immediately becomes the possessor of eternal life, possessed alike by all God's children, whether a new convert or the maturest of saints.

But what experience can the new convert have of eternal life at the beginning of his Christian career? He is like a child going to school for the first time, not knowing more than the alphabet on which all language is based, nor does he know much about figures on which all calculations are based. He is

furnished with class books, leading him on step by step into fuller and still fuller knowledge. Thus the new convert needs Divine teaching, until it can be said of him, that not only has he eternal life as the sovereign gift of God, but he knows now what eternal life really means, and it can be said of him that he possesses his possessions.

A kind father might give each of his two sons a plot of ground with the exhortation, that they should cultivate their respective plots, growing flowers, fruit and vegetables. One boy is lazy, and does not try to answer to his father's wishes. His plot is neglected, overspread with weeds and thistles, and is a real wilderness. Thanks to his father's gift, the plot of ground is his possession, but does he really possess his possessions?

The other boy sets to work diligently, carefully prepares the soil, puts in the necessary seeds, and in due time his plot is covered with the fruits of the ground to his father's great pleasure. This lad possesses his plot of ground, but he also possesses his possessions in a practical way.

Scripture speaks of eternal life from two aspects. The Apostle John tells us eternal life is the present possession of every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. We read, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may **know** that ye **have** eternal life" (1 John 5: 13).

But the Apostle Paul presents eternal life as something the believer has to lay hold on. Writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, he exhorted him, "Lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6: 12).

It is very evident that Paul himself sought to follow out in his own Christian life his advice to Timothy. Here are his own words, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 12-14). Here we have the things connected with our real "life," presented to us as something to be

laid hold of, a prize to be won at the end of the race. What a glorious incentive!

1 Corinthians 13: 1-4, that great love chapter, shows very clearly the distinction we wish to make, between what we see all around us in Christendom, and what truly exhibits the possessing of our possessions.

It is possible with a retentive memory, and an exhaustive study of the Scriptures, to arrive at a correct knowledge of the letter of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Such an one may address his fellow-believers, his speech fluent and his exposition faultless, and yet leaving his hearers cold and unimpressed.

Have we anything in Christendom to answer to this? Alas! we see it on every hand. Scripture supposes a man, speaking with the tongues of men and angels, and yet destitute of divine love. Such an one is but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Another may have the gift of prophecies, and all knowledge, may have all faith, even to the removing of mountains, yet lacking love, he is nothing. And still further, a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, may even give his body to be burned, and who could go further: Yet without love, it would profit him — **nothing**.

We all recognise to our sorrow one, who speaks as a mere gramophone, a second-hand trafficker in truths, which have not entered his own heart, so as to mould his own inner spiritual being, and whose addresses leave his hearers unmoved and unblest.

On the other hand, how delightful it is to listen to ministry that comes from the heart of the speaker in the power of the Spirit of God. It was said of one speaker, whose life did not correspond with his testimony, "I cannot hear what you say, when I know what you are." How good it is when we listen to an address with the conviction that the speaker's Christian life is in accord with his ministry.

When the enemies of our Lord demanded, "Who art Thou?" His reply was, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning" (John 8: 25); that is, His life and outward ministry harmonized. Thus it should be with all the Lord's servants.

When a servant of the Lord discourses on heavenly things, it is good, if, unconsciously to himself, his very countenance testifies to the joy of his own heart in the knowledge of these spiritual things. No wonder that the face of Moses shone so brightly, that the people could not behold his face "steadfastly" (2 Cor. 3: 7). He had just received the wonderful instructions for the building of the Tabernacle, speaking as it does symbolically of Christ in His Person, His life, His atoning death and His resurrection.

The face of Stephen shone, and no wonder. Though the cruel stones were soon to be battering out the life of this brave proto-martyr, we read, "All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him," saw his face "as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6: 15).

The Apostle Paul wrote, "We all with open face beholding as in a

glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3: 18).

When a servant of the Lord ministers the word, which he has made his own, and it is reflected in his own Christian life, the Lord's people are quick to recognize that the speaker really possesses his possessions.

We remember an instance, which may stand as an illustration of our theme. An earnest Christian persuaded a brother in the Lord, one who was alas! a worldly Christian, but whose spiritual welfare he had greatly at heart, to attend a lecture to be given by a true servant of the Lord. Coming away from the meeting, he said to the man, who persuaded him to attend the meeting, that he felt humbled in the dust as to his own half-hearted, worldly ways as a professed Christian, that he would seek the grace of God to enable him to put first things first. The other replied in astonishment, "The speaker said not a single word to-night about worldly Christians." "That is quite true," was the answer, "But the Lord's love to us was so manifested that I felt humbled in God's presence, and determined with the help of His Spirit to seek to walk henceforth more to His glory."

The word reached his conscience and heart, for it came from the heart of the speaker in the power of the Holy Spirit, and so produced this happy result.

Here surely is an example of one, who found out, that in order to really possess his possessions, his possessions must possess him in his

most inmost soul, affecting his whole life before God in Christ. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12: 34).

Well may each one of us sing with our whole heart,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were an offering far too small;

Love so amazing, so divine,

Demands my soul, my life, my all."

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4: 16). Such an experience means that not only do we possess our possessions, but by the Spirit's operation in our hearts our possessions possess us for God's glory, and our own immeasurable gain. And we must not forget that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give [shine out] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6).

"NOW ABIDETH"

T. D. BELL.

It is a striking fact that the evils and dangers besetting the Lord's people today were foreseen by the apostles, yet none of them indicated any movement of reform, since each traced the evil to the end. This fact governs the epistles dealing with the end times — our present day. No movement of collective recovery is predicted but rather the development of the evil, and the Christian is shown his resources right through to the end.

The epistle of Jude takes this up, showing particularly the start and end of apostasy or departure from the truth. Certain men had crept in unawares, and though they were present in the apostles' day, he identified men of that kind as to be present, according to the prophecy of Enoch, at the coming of the Lord in judgment.

Three examples of mass apostasy are mentioned. The departure from the God of Israel in the

wilderness; the fall of angels, who left their first estate and their own habitations; and Sodom and Gomorrha leaving the Divinely ordered way of natural life for fornication and going after strange flesh. It is a solemn fact that in the Christian world today this threefold movement is seen. There is apostasy from the truth; the assertion of pride in man, aiming to break out beyond his natural habitation; and the breaking away from moral restraint in the ways of life.

How sweetly comes in this connection the "Remember ye," of verse 17. All this had been foretold by the apostles. They had seen it commence, had traced its development, and had shown us our resources to meet even this.

The verses which follow recall vividly the quotation from 1 Corinthians 13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity [or, love], these three," as Jude reviews each of

these in turn, practically supporting the faithful to the end. How much of that which Paul sets out in chapters 11-14 of 1 Corinthians, remains today? The seen order of the church, its visible oneness, the full energy of the Spirit operating in it, the excellence of those early gifts, the power and moral dignity of its early ministry: much of this gone! That which is seen today is but a shadow of the former power. What abides? **Faith, hope and love still remain.**

When a long, arduous journey is planned, needed provisions for it must be taken. In the first setting forth of the ordering of the church all is spoken of, including provision for the way. Whatever the energy of the start, those on the journey soon find that the power of continuing lies in the use of the provisions. This is increasingly clear as the journey nears its end. How good it is to find then that faith, hope, love, these three, abide in such a way, that when all outwardly seen is in ruins, the "beloved of the Lord" are viewed in Jude, as sustaining their souls with them, even at the journey's end.

This is intensely, intimately practical today. The apostates brought in new things, governed by their pride. The great system so formed is here around us. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith," is the answer to it. This means not only keeping to the word of God, but also taking that holy faith, taught by it, and using it to form every habit of thought and conduct. Built up in this way, we prove that whatever else may cease, **faith abides.** This leads to,

"praying in the Holy Ghost." The building up not only instructs but forms the mind, to care for the things of God. Real prayer is the outcome of this.

But the heart too has its needs. The world around, even if outwardly and formally Christian, can only minister to man's pride. The "beloved" here addressed, know well that they have a life that only the full love of God in present enjoyment can satisfy. The "most holy faith" assures us of the ever-present constancy of that love, teaching us to remain in it, even as praying in the Holy Ghost keeps the channel for that love open for us, closing all other channels. Truly then **love too abides.**

It is remarkable how the great religious world bases its every hope upon human effort achieving ultimate good, and always good in this world only. Not so the "beloved" addressed by Jude. It is "mercy" they are taught to look for. Long since have they ceased to think of themselves as being able to merit anything from God. The cross of Christ, for them, had closed for ever any hope of being anything or accomplishing anything as men in the flesh. Not only so, but as they look out on the scene of man's day, the horizon all round is black with the clouds of coming judgment. This can only be God's answer to the world that crucified, and still rejects, the Son of God. Their eyes are raised to a place outside this world as they look for "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And so **hope is found too, sustaining to the end.**

It is impossible to read Jude's epistle and remain unmoved by its intense energy of expression and its application to this day. In verse 11, Cain goes in the apostates' way. Balaam rushes along it. Core crashes to his doom in it. In the following verses picture after picture of intense abhorrence is presented, as though nature itself could hardly produce enough examples to measure Jude's hatred of apostasy; and all are true in present world conditions. Frontier, outpost, action too, between the world and the "beloved," present similar features. Some in danger may be different, but it is a world already burning into which others are lured, and may possibly be rescued. Even that is not all. It is a place of defilement, so that the garment spotted by it must be hated.

May we not reflect in closing that

one aspect of the gift of prophecy is this vivid, overwhelming presentation of vital truth to the conscience. If that gift, so prominent in the early church, has largely ceased today, the Lord secures for us in such scriptures as this, the effective prophetic word. May we bow heart and conscience under its power.

There is, thank God, One "able to keep" us even from stumbling, and when all our "building up," our "keeping," and "looking for mercy," is for ever past, able to present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." The apostasy — the falling away — going on in Christendom today, will be completed on earth when that scene of exceeding joy takes place in heaven. The issue, thank God, is secure, and meanwhile **faith, hope and love abide.**

"MARTHA SERVED"

J. B. MARSHALL.

THE scene with which John 12 opens is well known, and we all take delight in Mary's offering. She had evidently learned the Lord's service would take Him into death, through a pathway of obedience to His God and Father. She anointed His feet with what she had accumulated in her life, all that was precious was poured out, even that which God had given her for a covering was at His feet. The odour of her offering filled the house — probably implying that the whole universe would have the knowledge of His death. Mary loved Him for His grace.

Next we have Lazarus, who sat at the table with Him, enjoying communion in the appreciation of what He was to God, in resurrection life. This may not be worship, but certainly it leads to it. Mary seemed to learn His love through grace, but Lazarus through power that manifested glory. All this love, grace and power was seen in the service of the Lord. Leaving eternal glory He came into this world to make it known; the glory of an eternal relationship of Divine Persons, even God, and in Him was all its fulness expressed. Think of His patience

with the woman in John 4, leading her from conviction to the purpose of God in worshipping the Father. He sought refreshment from her in His lowly grace, and gave her the heart of the Father in exchange.

He was early in the morning in the temple, all night on the mountain top, labouring to make known the One who had sent Him, but at the close of His service the leaders of the people saw no more in Him than the Nazarene. — “Whom seek ye?” — and they answer in derision “Jesus of Nazareth” (John 18: 5). He answers “I am He,” linking His Deity with His lowly Manhood, but they went backward and fell to the ground; and Judas was amongst them. Would he, and the men from the leaders of the people, have answered a second time “Jesus of Nazareth” had they seen the blaze of His glory? Though He could have called twelve legions of angels, to have done so would have meant that the service of His grace would never have been known. His concern was not for Himself, nor for the manifestation of His power, but for His disciples, (Verse 8).

From this He is exposed to all the infamy that the enemy could produce, but He still went on, on to the cross where man in his lost state is fully seen, and where God

in His infinite love is made known. It was there the terminal word escaped His lips — “finished” — and the Creator and Upholder of all things is henceforth a Saviour God, through the work of His Son. God in righteousness raised Him from the dead, and all who believe in Him, will eternally live with Him in God’s glory. Being reckoned in death with Him, we are now in newness of life with Him.

What a service was His! God glorified in a scene of sin, and the sinner who trusts in this service saved by grace.

It was at Bethany (house of sweetness) they made Him a supper, where His glory in resurrection power was known; the true place in this world, where all man’s labour, his six days work, end in death at the Passover. It is here we can enjoy the work of Another to the praise of His name. All depended on His service, and it is not remarkable when the Spirit would record the supper, that the first expression following is — “And Martha Served” — for all who know that service of love can do no other. Martha is not seen here cumbered by much serving, as in Luke 10, but is in the good of His power in resurrection, her weakness overcome by grace, and her service acceptable.

A young man went to an aged saint on one occasion and asked him to pray for him, saying, “I find myself giving way to impatience continually. Will you please pray for me that I may be more patient?” The old man agreed. They knelt together, and the man of God began to pray: “Lord, send this young man tribulation in the morning, send this young man tribulation in the afternoon . . .” The young man nudged him and said, “No, no, not tribulation — **patience!**” “But,” said the old saint, “it is tribulation that worketh patience! If you would know patience you must have tribulation.”

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 5: 1—9: 7)

CHAPTER 5 begins with what we may call, The Song of Isaiah. If we turn back to Deuteronomy 32, we may read the song of Moses, which is partly retrospective and partly prophetic. Moses uttered his song at the start of Israel's national history; Isaiah uttered his towards its close. The testimony of both is the same. The failure of the people was complete.

Israel had been Jehovah's vineyard, and He had ordered everything in their favour. A very fruitful spot had been their location with all necessary equipment. The law, given through Moses, had fenced them about, so as to protect them from contamination from outside, if they had observed it. Moreover they were a "choicest vine," for they had descended from Abraham, one of God's choicest saints. Thus everything had been in their favour. What had been the result?

Result there was, but of a wholly worthless and evil sort. Where judgment should have been oppression was found: where righteousness, only a cry of distress. Once again we have to notice that the charge against them concerns moral depravity rather than lack of ceremonial observances.

When the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as "the true Vine," (John 15: 1), the minds of His disciples may well have turned back to this scripture, as ours also may do. Israel was the picked sample of humanity in which the trial of the whole race took place. The con-

demnation of Israel is the condemnation of all of us; but it was in the cross of Christ that the condemnation was formally and finally pronounced. The first man and his race condemned and rejected. The Second Man, and those who are of Him and in Him, accepted and established for ever.

The song of Isaiah ended, the prophet dropped figurative language for the hard, plain facts of Israel's sin. Six times over does he utter a "Woe" upon them in verses 8-25, and again we notice that it was their moral evils that stirred the Divine wrath. The first woe is flung at the men of grasping covetousness, who aimed at monopolizing houses and lands for themselves. Judgment in the form of desolation for both houses and lands would fall upon them.

The second woe is against the drunkard and pleasure-seeker. The judgment awaiting them is described down to verse 17. We may observe that similar catastrophe ever follows a people given over to pleasure and debauchery. The great Roman Empire did it in her later years, and then crashed. If Britain and other nations of today do it — what then?

The third woe (verse 18) is uttered against those who sin openly, violently, in defiance of God. The fourth is against men of a subtler type, who overturn all the foundations of right and wrong. Accepting their ideas and teachings the multitude become confused and perverted, condemning what is

good and applauding what is evil; truly a terrible state of things.

This leads, no doubt, to what is denounced in the fifth woe. The men who do thus pervert the mental outlook of their fellows, pose as being the wise and prudent leaders of others. At least they consider themselves to be such. And the effect of their teachings — new and progressive, as they would call them — upon those who imbibe them, leads to the denunciation of the sixth woe. They go back to their drink and debauchery, and pervert everything that is right in their dealings with others. If they accept the teaching, indicated in verse 20, that is what they will do.

After the second woe no details of what would be involved are given till we reach verse 24. Then the pent-up wrath, merited by the last four woes, is made plain. And in verses 26-30, there is revealed how all six woes would bring upon them chastisement from without. The nations that soon would descend upon them like a roaring lion, and were doubtless headed up in the mighty Assyrian of those days, whom the Lord called, "The rod of Mine anger" (chapter 10: 5).

Having been used to pronounce this six-fold woe, Isaiah was given a vision of the glory of Jehovah on His throne, attended by the angelic seraphim. Of their six wings only two were used for flight. First came the covering of the face in the presence of inscrutable glory; then the covering of their own way from their eyes; lastly their activity in the service of their God; a suitable lesson for ourselves. A Spirit of worship and self-forgetful-

ness precedes service. The very door of the temple was moved at the Divine presence and this was followed by a spiritual movement in Isaiah. It wrought deep conviction of sin and uncleanness, so that having just pronounced in the name of the Lord six woes upon others, he now called for a woe upon himself.

Here we see exemplified the statement, "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Psa. 39: 5). This happened to Isaiah in the year that King Uzziah died, who was one of the better kings, but ended his days a leper because he dared to push his way into the temple of God. Here Isaiah found himself before God in His temple, and he instinctively used the language of a leper (see, Leviticus 13: 45) realizing that sin is leprosy of a spiritual sort. No sooner had his confession been made than the way of cleansing was revealed. Live coal, that had been in contact with the sacrifice was applied to his lips and the sin and uncleanness removed. Only sacrifice can cleanse sin; a foreshadowing of the death of Christ.

Then came the challenge as to service, and Isaiah's response; and as a result he was specially sent as the messenger to Israel. As often pointed out, the unvarying order is:— first, conviction; second, cleansing; third, commission in the service of God. Isaiah said, "Here am I; **send me.**" When God was about to commission Moses, He had the response, in effect, "Here am I; **send somebody else,**" as we see in Exodus 4: 13; though He overruled it and Moses was sent. Let us all — especially

the young Christian—give Isaiah's response and not that of Moses, lest the Lord pass us by, to our loss at the judgment seat of Christ.

It is instructive to note New Testament references to this scene. In John 12: 4, the blind rejection of Jesus is the theme, and we discover that Isaiah "saw His glory, and spake of Him." Then in Acts 28: 26, Paul refers to our chapter and says, "Well spake the Holy Ghost . . ." So here is one of those allusions to the Trinity, which are embedded in the Old Testament. In verse 3 we have "Holy," repeated, not twice nor four times, but **three**; and Jehovah of hosts is before us. In verse 5, "the King, the Lord of hosts," whom we find to be the Lord Jesus. In verse 8, "the voice of the Lord," which is claimed as the voice of the Holy Ghost. God is One and yet Three: Three and yet One. Hence, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?"

Verses 9-15, give us the message that Isaiah was commissioned to give. It was indeed of great solemnity. Things had reached such a state that hardening and blindness was to fall on the people, so that conversion and healing would not be theirs, and they would be driven out of their land. The only gleam of hope as to themselves would be found in the fact that God would have His tenth in a holy seed: in other words, He would preserve for Himself a godly remnant. The position was the same among the Jews in Paul's day, as Romans 11 shows, and it is exactly the same today. The national blindness still persists and

there is still a believing remnant, but now incorporated in the church.

With chapter 7 we pass into some historical details of the reign of Ahaz, which are recorded in 2 Kings 15 and 16. He wrought much evil and was now threatened by an alliance against him of Pekah, the usurper on the throne of the ten tribes, and Rezin of Syria. If they had slain or removed Ahaz, they would have broken the line of descent, by which, according to the flesh, Christ came, as indicated in Matthew 1: 9. This God was not going to allow, so Isaiah was instructed to take his young son, Shear-Jashub, which means, "The remnant shall return," and intercept Ahaz, telling him their scheme should not succeed, and that within 65 years the northern kingdom should be destroyed.

Invited to ask for a sign that should confirm this prophecy, Ahaz declined, not because he had implicit faith in the word of the Lord but because swayed by his idols he was indifferent. Nevertheless the great sign was given — Immanuel, born of a virgin — which was indeed valid, both "in the depth," and "in the height above." Notice the order of these two expressions, and then read Ephesians 4: 9, where it is emphasized that the descent comes before the ascent on high.

After this prophecy had been fulfilled in the coming of Christ the Jews made great efforts to avoid giving the Hebrew word the force of virgin, treating it as meaning merely a young woman; and to this day unbelievers have followed in their train. The Septuagint ver-

sion, made by Jews long before the prejudice arose, translated the word by the Greek word which without any question means **virgin**. This one fact effectively destroys the effort to destroy the prophecy.

Verse 15 is admittedly obscure, but we believe it signifies that the coming One, though "GOD with us," is yet, as born of the virgin, to grow up both physically and mentally according to the laws governing human life. This we see to be the case in Luke 2: 40-52.

Verse 16 appears to allude to Shear-jashub, who was with Isaiah, for the word translated "child" is not the one so translated in chapter 9: 6, but one meaning "lad" or "youth." The prediction of that verse came to pass through the power and rapacity of the Assyrian kings, as the closing verses of this chapter state. The desolations that would follow are then described.

In all this there is only one hope for Israel, or indeed for any of us, and that is, God himself stepping into the scene by way of the virgin birth. Thus was fulfilled the earliest prophecy of all, that "the **Seed of the woman**" should be He, who would bruise the head of the serpent, the originator of all the sin and sorrow. The virgin birth of Christ is not just a mere detail, an insignificant side issue in the Divine plan. It is fundamental and essential. By it the entail of sin and death, inherent in the race of Adam, was broken. Christ was not "of the earth, earthy," but "the Second Man . . . the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15: 47). In Him, risen from the dead, a new race of man is begun.

A second child of Isaiah is mentioned in chapter 8. His long name was significant of the approaching conquest by Assyria of the two powers that were at that moment threatening Judah. Like a flood from the river the king of Assyria would overflow even through Judah, though he was not allowed to take Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time. Assyria did not know then, and the nations have not known since, that the land belongs primarily to Immanuel and only secondarily to the Jew.

Verses 9 and 10 doubtless had an application to the day when Isaiah wrote, but their force abides. Palestine holds a very central position and it is becoming more and more evident that its potential riches are great. The peoples may associate themselves in contending leagues in order to lay hands on it but they will be broken in pieces, "for God is with us;" literally, "for Immanuel." Christ is God; and when He is manifested in His glory, the nations will be as nothing before Him — only "as a drop of a bucket," as presently Isaiah tells us. Among the nations today the idea of a confederacy is strong but this will be the end of it.

Isaiah, however, was warned against the idea of a confederacy for himself and his people. It would be doubly wrong in their case, inasmuch as they had been given the knowledge of God, and He was to be their trust. This we see in verses 11-18. Ahaz in his day was keen on a confederacy, and in the last days there will be strong confederacy between the man, who will become the wilful king

and false prophet in Jerusalem, and the predicted head of the revived Roman empire; and this instead of the fear of the Lord.

The reason of this is revealed in verse 15. Immanuel is truly the sanctuary of His people but He would become "a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence," by the fact of His rejection. This is made quite plain in 1 Peter 2: 8. This He is to "both the houses of Israel," though He was rejected mainly at the hands of the house of Judah.

In these striking verses the godly are owned as Immanuel's "disciples." Though the mass of the people fall and are broken, as the Lord said in Matthew 21: 44, the testimony and the law will not fail, but will be bound up among those who really fear the Lord. Such will wait upon the Lord instead of turning to confederacies with men, and they will look for the appearing of Immanuel. When He appears in His glory those given to Him, and carried through the time of tribulation, will be for a sign and a wonder. This applies also today, as we see by the quotation in Hebrews 2: 13. The saints given to Him today will be manifested with Him in glory. And what a sign and wonder it will be when He thus displays the "exceeding riches of His grace," (Eph. 2: 7).

Verse 19 returns to what was then taking place in Israel. They were turning to the spiritist practices of the heathen with necromancers and soothsayers, trying to get guidance for the living from those who were dead, when the law and testimony was available for them,

in which light from God was shining. If they did not speak according to that, there would be "no light in them;" or, "for them there is no daybreak." The principle of all this is more abundantly true for us today, inasmuch as the coming of Christ has so greatly amplified the word and testimony of God, enshrined in the New Testament Scriptures. If men turn from that to the illusive sparks, generated by man's wisdom and achievements, there will be no light in them, and no daybreak for them when Christ returns.

Instead of daybreak there will be darkness and gloom, so graphically described in the two verses that close this chapter and the opening verse of chapter 9. There was this darkness in the days of Ahaz. It existed in the day when Christ came, and it will doubtless be very pronounced at the end of the age. The way in which this prophecy is applied to the Lord Jesus and His early ministry, when we turn to Matthew 4: 13-16, is very striking. What wonderful spiritual light streamed forth from Him, both in His words and His miracles, for the blessing of those who had been sitting in darkness, whether they had eyes to see it or not.

The opening verses of chapter 9 follow one another in a very instructive and delightful sequence. Verse 1 continues the picture of **great darkness** and affliction that closed chapter 8. Verse 2 tells of the **great light** that burst in upon the darkness. Verse 3, of the **great joy** that follows; for translation authorities tell us that the word, "not," should be deleted. Verse

4 speaks of the **great deliverance** that will be granted: verse 5, of the removal by burning of all that speaks of warfare, so that **great peace** is established.

Referring this to the first advent of the Lord Jesus, as Matthew does, we recognize that these great things have been the result in a spiritual way. They are just what the Gospel brings, whether to Jew or Gentile. They will be achieved for Israel, and indeed for the saved nations, in the coming day when the Lord appears in His glory. Then every oppressor will be completely destroyed and peace will descend upon the earth.

Verse 6 begins with, "For;" that is, it supplies the basic reason or ground on which the prophecy rests. The meaning and implications of the great name, Immanuel, are unfolded to us. He is truly the "Child" born to the virgin but He is also the "Son" given. In the fuller light of the New Testament we can see how fitting is the word "given" here rather than "born." He who was "Son" became "seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1: 3); that is, by His birth of the virgin. Hence His Sonship preceded His birth, and, as the fruit of inspiration, the prophecy was so worded as to be in harmony with the truth later to be revealed.

The government is to rest on the shoulder of Immanuel, and the full import of the name is now given to us under five headings. The first is "Wonderful;" that is, Singular and beyond all powers of human scrutiny. Then He is "Counsel-

lor;" One involved in the counselling which precedes Divine acts; as, for instance, "Let Us make man . . ." (Gen. 1: 26). This must be so inasmuch as He is "Mighty God." Again, being so, when He takes flesh and blood, His name of course must be, "God with us." Moreover, He is "Father of eternity," as more literally the words read. Eternity has its origin in Him. The ascription of Deity to the Child born could not be more distinct.

Lastly, being all this, He is "Prince of peace," the only One who, in this rebellious world, can establish it upon a permanent basis. This He will do by the warrior judgments, predicted in verses 4 and 5. Becoming "Seed of David," as we have seen, He will sit upon the throne of David, and having crushed man's rebellion and evil, He will govern with judgment and justice to the glory of God and the blessing of men. The Second Advent of our Lord will see these great predictions fulfilled to the letter.

The epoch in which we live is not the day of God's government upon the earth but the day of His grace, when government is still in the hands of the Gentiles and God is gathering out of the nations a people for His name. The time of grace may soon end, and then God will arise to deal with the world problems created by the sin of man. To bring the whole earth into subjection will indeed be a colossal task, but as our scripture says, "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." We may well rejoice that so it will be.

“GOD IS LIGHT”

A lady went into a Bible and Tract Depot, and wished to purchase an illuminated copy of the text, “**God is light.**” The shop assistant examined carefully her stock of illuminated texts of Scripture. At last she said, “I’m sorry, Madam, I have not got a copy of the text you wish to purchase. I have a large supply of the text “**God is love**” in different designs. We have no demand for the text, “**God is light.**”

Herein lies a sad story. One would have thought it impossible to over-emphasize these wonderful words, “**God is love.**” This is certainly true, if this grand truth is held in due proportion to other Scripture truths. But when emphasis on the truth, “**God is love**” (1 John 4: 8) is made to such an extent, as to obscure the truth that “**God is light**” (1 John 1: 5), there is something very fundamentally wrong.

There is a pseudo-gospel largely proclaimed to-day, that God is too loving to consign any of His creatures to an eternal hell. It is taught that somehow or other everyone will be found by the Good Shepherd and brought safely to the fold of heaven at last. This is an absolutely false gospel, emanating from the bottomless pit and suiting Satan well, for it obscures the truth that the Lord is ordained of God to be “the JUDGE of quick [living] and dead” (Acts 10: 42). It lulls sinners to sleep in the belief, that however evil on earth their lives may have been, there is no fear of a hell awaiting the impenitent, and that all will come right in the end.

This pseudo-gospel attributes to God, conduct that would disgrace and cover with shame any earthly tribunal, professing to administer justice, if it acted in such a fashion. What would you think of British justice, if the judge addressed himself to the prisoner in the dock, saying, “You have been convicted of a savage and cruel crime, but the Queen of this realm is so loving, that we are unable to condemn you or sentence you to punishment. All we can do is to discharge you, and set you free.”

And if such a course were carried out, whatever the offence might be, we ask you, What would the condition of society be? Criminals could give free play to their evil propensities, knowing that no punishment would be meted out to them. You reply indignantly, “Such a procedure would be pure and unabashed lunacy, too horrible for words! No man’s life or possessions would be safe for a single hour.”

We remember hearing of a rich manufacturer, a man of completely worldly life, expressing his approval of a certain religious movement, that taught there was no such place as hell. He declared he would subscribe generously to the funds of this movement, for such an assurance made life comfortable. Infinitely better would it have been for him, if the words of Scripture, the recorded words of the Lord Himself, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not **shall be damned**, (Mark 16: 16), had made him uncomfortable.

The Scriptures tell us of a great

white throne, of the wicked dead resurrected, standing before God, and being judged every man "according to their works" (Rev. 20: 12). We read the solemn sentence of that last great assize: "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 of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21: 8).

The greatest proof, that **God is love** and that **God is light**, is seen in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. There is the blending of light and love in a marvellous way. Christmas Evans, the one-eyed preacher of Anglesey in the Welsh principality in the seventeenth century, used a striking allegory to emphasize this great truth. He likened this world of sinners to a great prison-house with lofty walls and heavily barred gates.

Mercy desired to deliver them but Justice forbade till his flaming sword pierced the bosom of the Son of God, when triumphant words fell from His dying lips, "**It is finished,**" the work of redemption accomplished, justice fully satisfied.

Mercy thereupon flung open the prison gates, and proclaimed liberty to the captives, while Justice approved.

This was his allegory. It well illustrates the gospel truth very clearly

**"Jehovah bade His sword awake,
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee;**

**Thy blood the flaming blade must
slake,**

**Thy heart its sheath must be.
All for my sake, my peace to make:
Now sleeps that sword for me."**

The prophet Isaiah put this great truth very forcibly, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53: 5). The Apostle Peter put it, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3: 18). The Apostle Paul put it, "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).

This pseudo-gospel which ignores, if it does not contradict, the fact that "God is light," robs the cross of Christ of its true atoning character. It contradicts the whole tenor of Scripture. It deceives multitudes. It is a veritable opiate of hell.

Let us stand for the real Gospel and proclaim it widely by tongue and by pen. May there be an awakening desire to learn what the gospel plan is from the Bible itself. Never does the love of God shine in greater splendour, never does the light and righteousness of God shine more clearly, than when God's only begotten Son hung upon the cross of Calvary. He endured the judgment of God to the full in respect of sin, so that God now offers salvation to whosoever will, guaranteed by **light** as well as by **love**.

THE EPISTLE OF CHRISTIAN COURTESY

J. HOUSTON.

IN reading this beautiful epistle, it is instructive to note how Paul, its author, enters into the individual life of the Christian, and occupies himself with minute details, even in material things which might seem unworthy of his attention. It would hardly be expected of him, whose mind was filled with great truths, such as he gives in Ephesians and Colossians (to say nothing of his sufferings in prison), to interest himself in trivial matters, which mainly concerned two individuals, Philemon, a master, and Onesimus, his fugitive slave. Yet, this is the subject with which he engages himself, and into which he enters with singular warmth of affection. It shows how love can come down to what is small, just as it can rise up to what is great, in all that concerns the welfare of God's people, whether in material or in spiritual affairs.

This condescending, and at the same time, transcending, love can adapt itself to every condition, circumstance, and station in life, in which God's people may be found; and treat each individual with a propriety, which gives no place to undue familiarity, much less to any form of vulgarity; for love "doth not behave itself unseemly." Thus brothers and sisters, both elder and younger; masters and servants; rich and poor—all can be together in the uniting bond of fellowship, each respecting the other, while all are under the prevailing power of love. This is, properly speaking, Christian fellowship, to which God

has called us, as His people. The watchword of all, who are in this bond, is "love one another." And when others see this practically carried out, they recognize the true mark of discipleship. "By this," the Lord Jesus said, "shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13: 35).

This love is shown in a marked way in the epistle before us. Paul speaks very affectionately and appreciatively of each individual, whom he is careful to mention by name. Of Philemon, he says: "Our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer." Of Apphia, Philemon's wife: "Our beloved Apphia," of Archippus, who was called to service: "Our fellow soldier." Of Onesimus, Philemon's slave: "My son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." There is nothing superfluous in his appreciation of each one; nothing unduly adulatory that might tend to flatter; no extravagant epithets, with high-sounding praise. He speaks choice words of the Spirit; each fitly spoken, as saint to saint. There is such a thing as "the law of kindness" in the tongue, (Prov. 31: 26). There is also "the law of truth" in the mouth (Mal. 2: 6). Paul had both; his words were comely and appropriate, like "apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25: 11). And it was his custom, in addressing God's people, to acknowledge all the good that was in them before he referred to anything that might call for correction. In this way, he won, and

held, their heart, before he reflected on their conduct. This is the way of love; and oh, how irresistibly powerful it is!

Judging from Paul's appreciation of Philemon, we conclude he was a good man; godly and devoted to the Lord's work. Evidently, he was in comfortable circumstances. The church was in his house. He gave himself to the ministry of God's Word, according to the measure of his gift; and he exercised a tender and watchful pastoral care for the saints. Paul refers to this when he says to him: "We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (v. 7).

Onesimus, Philemon's slave, was a fugitive. Paul met him in Rome, and was the means of his conversion to God. As a convert, he was a great comfort to Paul, by ministering to him, "in the bonds of the Gospel" (v. 13). His conversion, however, did not alter his position as slave. It was necessary, therefore, for him to be reconciled to his master and return to his post of duty. Paul recognized this, and sent him back to Philemon, bearing this epistle. In the disciplinary ways of God, it was meet for him to take up the yoke of obedience to his master, **in humility, as a Christian, which he had cast off, in pride, as a wilful slave.** And if he were to obtain his liberty to serve the Lord, his enfranchisement should come, in a lawful way with his master's will, and not as the result of his perfidious act as a runaway. Such are God's righteous ways with His people.

In sending Onesimus back, Paul

made a strong appeal to Philemon to receive him, not only as a slave, but as a "brother beloved." Natural feeling of resentment might easily have affected Philemon, which, of course, would hinder the work of reconciliation. We must remember that Onesimus wronged him very much when he ran away; and it is probable he robbed him to boot (v. 18). Paul rose above the evil in grace; and made an irresistible appeal, using language that could not fail to touch Philemon's heart, when he pleaded: "Receive him, that is, mine own bowels;" "receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved;" "receive him as myself" (verses 12, 15, 16, 17). In this very touching appeal, Paul refers to himself, as "Paul, the aged;" and added, "now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (v. 9). Nowhere else does he speak thus of himself. We conclude that it was intended to move Philemon to receive Onesimus, in a spirit of grace and forgiveness.

We might well call the beautiful epistle a **model of Christian Courtesy.** It shows love in action, in that happy circle of Christian fellowship, where all are under its power, considering and serving one another, in the spirit of grace. It has been summed up well, by a servant of Christ, when he spoke of the members of Christ being bound together so that it, "Spread the savour of grace over all the relationships in which men could stand toward each other, occupying itself about all the details of life with a perfect propriety, and with the recognition of every right that can exist among men, and of all that the human heart can feel."

THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

R. THOMPSON.

TO have the blessing of the Lord is infinitely greater and better than any honour which the world can bestow. The favours of this world are temporary because they are bounded by death; but the blessing which is from the Lord is eternal and abiding, beyond the reach of sin and death altogether. It is His delight to bless, and all who have simple faith in Christ receive the blessing and may enjoy it in spiritual power.

Two things are said of the blessing of the Lord in Proverbs 10: 22. Firstly, "it maketh rich;" and secondly, "He addeth no sorrow with it." These are the true riches, and for us they are not of an earthly character, but heavenly, for they are centred in the glorified Christ at God's right hand. His coming into this world, and the great work of redemption on Calvary's cross was needed to bring them to us. He, who was rich, became poor, that we "through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8: 9). Truly, to have eternal life in Christ, relationship with the Father as His dear children, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all the fulness of God, is to be enriched indeed.

Writing to the church at Smyrna, the Lord in His omniscience and love could say, "I know thy works and tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich)" (Rev. 2: 9). Here we behold the grace of the Lord sustaining His beloved saints in a great trial of persecution and afflic-

tion. Outwardly they were in poverty and adversity, but the sufficiency of the Lord strengthened and enriched them.

The contrast to this is seen in the word of the Lord to the church at Laodicea. Here He takes up their boastful word, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." He added, "and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" (Rev. 3: 17, 18). This church, with all its boastful self-sufficiency, had no room for Christ and was poor indeed — sadly prophetic of many a modern church. How graciously and patiently Christ stood without, waiting to bestow upon them riches, raiment and sight, which are found only in Himself.

To take up an Old Testament illustration; we read that, "The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things" (Gen. 24: 1). He had heard and answered the call of God, stepping out in faith, as recorded in Genesis 12: 4. The way was unknown to him, but in dependence upon God, who had called him, he was guided, supported and blessed. The blessing was received on the ground of simple OBEDIENCE to the word of the Lord.

Again, in I Chronicles 4: 10, we find Jabez seeking the blessing of the Lord in PRAYER. His name means "Sorrowful," but he rose above his sorrow when he turned to

the Lord, and asked for four things — blessing, enlargement of inheritance, the presence of the Lord, and preservation from evil. The Lord heard the prayer of faith, and gave a ready answer, so he was richly blessed.

Another striking instance is seen when Balak desired Balaam to curse the children of Israel, only to find they are blessed according to God's PURPOSE. The blessing is secured in Christ, and can never be revoked. Balaam saw the people as separate, sanctified, the object of God's satisfaction, and he predicted that from them should come the sovereign Ruler, Christ, bringing victory and dominion. Balaam had to say, "Behold I have received commandment to bless and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (Num. 23: 20).

Coming now to the New Testament, we see the kind of people whom the Lord delights to bless. Little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them. The disciples rebuked them, not knowing the gracious and tender love of Christ. His word to them is very sweet, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Then "He took them up in His arms" to bless them. The knowledge that the Son of God delights to bless even little children should give us deep joy and comfort.

Again, at the end of Luke's Gospel, we behold Him blessing His disciples as His last visible action before leaving the world. He had comforted two on the way to

Emmaus, gathered them to the upper room, spoken peace to them, instructed them, and commissioned them to preach the Gospel. Now at Bethany He lifted His hands upon them in blessing and was carried up into heaven. The last act of any loved one is observed with deep interest. This was the Lord's last service of love for His own, and indicates His disposition toward us all the time He is away.

Finally, we note how the Apostle Paul blessed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1: 3). Thus the love of God expresses itself for the satisfaction of His own heart. With no claim on our part, we see how the eternal purpose of God chose us in Christ, predestinated us for sonship, and made us accepted in the Beloved. What matchless grace and love!

This fulness of heavenly blessing is for all believers in Christ, but we must seek to possess it in spiritual power. The adversary endeavours by his wiles to rob us of our portion. How effectually he has often succeeded in this we are all painfully aware.

Let us seek to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, putting on the whole armour of God, so as to stand in an evil day. Thus we may know more and more of the blessing of the Lord, which makes rich, and adds no sorrow with it, while we await His coming again. Then, conformed to the image of God's dear Son, we shall be introduced into the scene of cloudless light and blessing for evermore.

THE writer of this paper has pleasant memories of gleaning the ears of grain left by the reapers in the fields around the scene of his boyhood seventy years ago. Now in his old age he finds happy occupation gleaning in the fields of the true Boaz, the kinsman Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and would like to pass on some of his recent gleanings to others.

It surely is a happy and profitable exercise to glean from the Scriptures thoughts regarding what the Lord is to His own; Saviour, Shepherd and Friend is He, Prophet, Priest and King, and more beside. But it is also precious and wonderful to glean thoughts regarding what His own are to Him. He speaks of them as —

My Sheep. It is a blessed thing to be able to take up the language of the Psalmist and say "The Lord is my Shepherd," but it is equally blessed to hear Him speak of us as "My Sheep" and "His own sheep" and he further speaks of us as having been given to Him by His Father, and here we may find the explanation of the great value He attaches to those sheep, for whom, in order to make them His very own, He gave His precious life. All this we find in John x.

My Friends. "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you, henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto

you" (John 15: 14-15). In chapter 10 the Lord is speaking to the Pharisees about His own. Here He is addressing His own, and here the link is closer than in chapter 10. It is blessed indeed to be able to speak of Him as our Friend, the Friend who loves at all times, the Friend who sticks closer than a brother. In ridicule and reproach He was branded as "a friend of publicans and sinners." Praise His name, these words are true. But to think that the Lord of life and glory should take us into His confidence and treat us as His friends making known to us all that He has heard of the Father; oh, the wonder and grace of it!

My Servant. "If any man serve Me let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John 12: 26). Needless to say, we do not cease to be servants because we are friends, but here it is the singular that is used denoting, I submit, that service to the Lord is an individual matter. Many years ago Piper Findlater, who was very much in the limelight on account of his gallantry, was offered a post under the then reigning King, and to the surprise of many declined the honour. A brother of the writer's, a long service man in the army, with four decorations on his breast, remarked to him, had the offer come his way he would have jumped at it though the remuneration had been but a farthing. But who would not consider it a very high honour to be entrusted with service even in a small measure to

him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords? And think of the reward; to be with Him in His presence, and to receive honour from the Father.

My Brethren. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20: 17). Here the relationship is much closer than any of the foregoing. Before the Cross He spoke of "the Father," and "My Father;" and but for the Cross he must have remained forever alone in that relationship, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12: 24). Now, having died and come forth in resurrection, He has those He is not ashamed to call His "brethren," possessors of the same life and nature as Himself, and standing in exactly the same relationship to His Father and God as that in which He Himself as Man stands. Precious fruit this surely is for Him, and rich blessing for us; and thus has been, and is being fulfilled, the prophetic words of Psalm 22, penned many centuries before, and quoted in Hebrews 2, "I will declare Thy name unto **My brethren.**"

My Church. "Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16: 18). Who but the Son of the Living God could defy the gates of Hell? As such Jesus had been revealed to Peter by His Father, and on this Rock it is that he is building His Church, which embraces every believer in Him from the day of

Pentecost till He comes again. In Ephesians 5, the simile used by Paul to illustrate the relationship of the Church to Christ is that of husband and wife, the closest of all human relationships; so close that they are said to be one flesh. Then he adds "This is a **great mystery**, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." See also what is said in 1 Corinthians 12: 12.

It is not only that the saints are one in Christ, but that Christ and the saints are one. There are many mysteries mentioned in Scripture. Two of them are described as **great**, the other is found in 1 Timothy 3: 16, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." This Church Christ is going to present to Himself all glorious. That all who compose this Church are enriched, beyond all words to tell, goes without saying; but wonder of wonders, He Himself is going to be enriched thereby. In His estimation it is a gem, a pearl of great value, see Matthew 13: 46. Then again the Church is seen coming down from God out of Heaven "prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband," in Revelation 21: 2. In all this it is not a question of what Christ is to the Church, but of what the Church is to Christ. It is His, His very own, purchased by His precious blood; His for the gratification of His own heart's affection, His for all eternity, "**My Church.**"

Thine eye in that bright cloudless
day

Shall, with supreme delight,
Thy fair and glorious bride survey,
Unblemished in Thy sight.

THOUGHTS ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

L. A. ANDERSON.

THE epistle of Jude although comprising one chapter of only twenty-five verses, nevertheless contains several triplets each having interesting and helpful features. Here are a few of them:—

Sanctified, preserved, called, (v. 1). If we had had the writing of this epistle the order would have been reversed. We should have recognized that God had called us, that we had been preserved from coming judgment and that we had been set apart for the glory of the One who had met our need. This would be the natural and correct order from one angle. It is, however, a good thing to view things as God sees them. It would appear that the Spirit of God, whilst reminding us that we have been preserved and called, has as His primary object that we, having been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, should remember that we have been set apart for or "sanctified" by Him. We have been bought with a price and henceforth should live for His glory, and so sanctification is placed first.

Unbelief, disobedience, Corruption, (verses 5, 6, and 7). Three facts are stated; firstly, the unbelief of the Israelites; secondly, the angels who kept not their first estate; thirdly, the awful corruption of Sodom and Gomorrah. We see the terrible corruption and immorality that go on around us; the newspapers are full of it and we rightly condemn it. But what does God see? He sees where the whole

root of the trouble is — it lies in unbelief of God, the evil begins in the heart before it manifests itself. Unbelief then is followed by pride and disobedience to God's commands, and thereafter follows the awful corruption. Surely God would have us realize that unbelief and departure begin long before the sin is visible. The man in the prison-cell is there because his sin has been found out, but the commencement of the trouble began inside, in the heart of the man, perhaps many years before.

Defile the flesh, despise dominion, speak evil of dignities, (v. 8). When we look at Communism and its outburst against existing Governments; why is it? Only too often it starts with persons wanting to go their own ways and to do just what pleases them: therefore they despise all authority and speak evil of all who wield it and of everyone who stands in the way of their gaining their lustful desires.

Then in verse 11, we have **Murder, money, murmuring.** Here again we might have altered the order had we written the verse. Murmuring we would have said provokes the greed for money and finally resolves itself into murder. But how does the Spirit of God view these three things? First of all there is the murder by Cain, the greed of Balaam and the murmuring of Korah. God sees the minor motives before evil comes out. Does not John say in his first epistle "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer"? That is

where murder began — in the heart long before it was committed. Then comes the greed for money and Balaam would fain have uttered curses against God's people in order to get gain. It is because man cannot get all he wants that he starts to murmur, and God looks at murmuring as one of the worst sins, especially when made against Him or any of His people, hence the terrible judgment that fell on Korah and these who followed him.

Lastly in verses 20-21, **Building, praying, looking.** Once again we might have reversed the order had we been writing the epistle, for surely that would have been the

way we would imagine things should work out, namely, mercy in our being in possession of eternal life, followed by prayer and finally in building up ourselves and the people of God. But see, God's order is, building up ourselves and others in our most holy faith; follow this up by prayer in the Holy Ghost, and then afterwards look for the fruition of eternal life which is all of His mercy.

May we all seek to view things from God's standpoint rather than that of our own, and we shall discover what are God's purposes and then get things in their true spiritual perspective.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 9: 8—14: 32)

AT this point the prophet resumed the denunciation of the people and their sins, which had been suspended that he might relate his vision of Jehovah of Hosts and give the prediction concerning Immanuel. We now learn how God's hand was stretched out upon them in anger and discipline. In chapter 5, woe was pronounced upon them six times, and now we get the hand of God stretched out in wrath four times over — verses 12, 17, 21, and 10: 4. There seems to be an increase of severity as we proceed.

The ten tribes had been chastised with much destruction, but in their pride they declared that it gave them the opportunity to rebuild on a much improved scale. They spoke then just as men are speaking today as they view the des-

truction wrought in the recent war. The Lord warned them that their ally, Rezin of Syria, would be overthrown, a token of the overthrow coming upon themselves.

But again the people did not accept the discipline and turn to God who sent it. Consequently they would be deceived by prophecy that was false, and from the highest to the lowest face a cutting off and disaster. But this too would fail of any true effect.

Hence further miseries would come upon them and inter-tribal strife. The wrath of the Lord would darken the land and yet be as a fire and the people as fuel. And still His anger would remain.

They would still practice deceit

and treachery and oppression, and bring upon themselves what is described as "the day of visitation." Having forsaken their God, He would be no refuge for them in that hour of distress, and His hand would still be against them. This brings us to the Assyrian, in verse 5.

But we pause a moment to remark that, as so often in Old Testament prophecy, there is an ultimate fulfilment as well as a more immediate one, and this surely is the case here. For instance, there were prophets speaking falsely in Isaiah's day, but the very special "prophet that speaketh lies," who is "the tail" is a reference to the antichrist of the last days; just as "the day of visitation" looks on to that special day of trial that is yet to come. Similarly "the Assyrian," that now we are to consider, has this double application — the then existing great power centred in Nineveh, and also that "king of the North," which was Assyria, that we read of in the last days.

In Isaiah's day the power of Assyria was threatening all the nations. God had taken that people up as the rod of His anger to chastise many a nation that was far from Him — and Israel among them. Later God used the Chaldeans in the same way, and this it was that disturbed the mind of Habakkuk, and led him to protest that, bad as Israel might be, the Chaldeans, whom God was going to use against them for their discipline, were worse. We see here what we see also in Habakkuk; that God may use an evil nation to chastise His faithless people, but only under His strict supervision

and control. God was now sending him, as verse 6 says, against an hypocritical nation — evidently the ten tribes and Samaria.

But the Assyrian himself did not realize this, and therefore, "he meaneth not so," but intended to ravage Jerusalem as well as Samaria, doing to them what he had already done to many of the surrounding peoples. As we know from the historical Scriptures, though he distressed and threatened Jerusalem he did not take it. As verse 12 intimates, he would be used to perform on Jerusalem that which God intended and then he himself would be punished and humbled. He was only like an axe or a rod in the hand of the Lord and could not dictate to the One who wielded him. The Holy One of Israel would consume him and bring down his pride and importance.

We know how all this was fulfilled in the days of Hezekiah. Samaria was led captive, but when Sennacherib attempted with proud boasts to take Jerusalem his forces received a conclusive blow directly from the hand of God, and he himself was shortly after slain by two of his sons, as we read in 2 Kings 19: 37.

The double application of the latter part of chapter 10 is, we think, quite evident. In verses 20-23, God pledges Himself to preserve a remnant though He was to permit a great consuming in the land, according to His holy government. This promise of a remnant covers the whole "house of Jacob," for it must have been given some years before the ten tribes were

taken into captivity. God did preserve a remnant in those far-off days when the prophecy was given, and He will yet do so in the coming days at the end of this age.

So again, in verses 24-34, there was the plain assurance to the inhabitants of Jerusalem that they need not fear the Assyrian. He would afflict them as with a rod, yet God would destroy him eventually. This came to pass, as we have seen, though he would come to the very gates of the city and, "shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem." His progress through the towns, as he approached, is very graphically described. He would seem to be like a great cedar of Lebanon, stretching his mighty bough over the city, but Jehovah of hosts would lop his bough with terror.

All this also has an application to the last days, as is manifest when we commence reading chapter II, for there is really no break between the two chapters. The Lord Jesus is the "Rod [or, Shoot] out of the stem of Jesse," and the "Branch," and the chapter presents Him in the power and glory of His second coming. That the Spirit of the Lord, in seven-fold fulness, rested upon Him at His first coming is very true, and when we read of our Lord that, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure (John 3: 34), there may be a reference to what is stated here, as also there is in "the seven Spirits," mentioned in Revelation 1: 4; 3: 1; 4: 5; 5: 6; and in this last reference they are "sent forth into all the earth," as will be the case when the Shoot of Jesse

comes forth endowed with this seven-fold fulness.

We are reminded also of the candlestick in the Tabernacle with its six branches springing from the main stem. The oil, typical of the Holy Spirit, fed its seven lamps. The "Branch" is to grow or more accurately, "be fruitful," and when Christ in the plenitude of the Spirit fills the earth, fruit will abound for there will not only be wisdom, but the might to enforce its dictates, and all controlled by the fear of the Lord.

Moreover He will not be dependent, as are human judges, on external things; on what He sees or hears; since He will possess that "quick understanding," which will give Him that intuitive knowledge, which springs from His Divine nature, so that His actions, whether in favour of the poor and meek or against the wicked, will be marked by absolute righteousness. At last an age of righteousness will have dawned.

As the result of this, peace will descend upon the earth, so much so that all antagonism and ferocity will depart, even from the animal creation. The creature was made subject to vanity, not of its own will but by reason of the sin of Adam, and it is to be "delivered from the bondage of corruption" (Rom. 8: 20, 21); but the Apostle gives us a detail not made known to Isaiah, for it will be the time when not only the Shoot of Jesse will be manifested, but also the manifestation and glory of the sons of God.

The picture of millennial blessedness, presented to us in verses 6-9,

is a very delightful one. Missionaries would tell us, we believe, that to slay and eat a kid of the goats is a special attraction for the leopard, just as the wolf naturally slaughters the lambs. All creation shall be at peace, all ferocity abolished; even the poisonous serpent deprived of its venom and its desire to bite. The earth in that day, instead of being full of the confusion and the conflicts created by the fall of man, will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. How do the waters cover the sea-bed? They do so completely, without one crevice being unfilled. Such is the lovely picture that is presented to us here.

And how can such wonderful things, not only for Israel but for all creation, be brought about? Verse 10, we think, sheds light on this, for there we discover that the Lord Jesus is predicted as the "Root of Jesse," as well as a "Shoot" out of his stem. We are reminded at once that in the last chapter of the Bible the Lord presents Himself to us as "the root and offspring of David;" an allusion doubtless to our chapter. Here "Jesse" is used we believe, to heighten the contrast, for David had become a name of great renown, whereas Jesse only reminds us of the otherwise unknown farmer from whom David sprang. From one small and unknown the great Messiah was to spring, and yet to be the Root from which Jesse sprang.

So, if as the Shoot we think of Christ in His holy Manhood, as the Root we have to think of Him in His Deity. In His Manhood He sprang out of Israel, and had

special links with that people. Introduce His Godhead, and all men come at once into view. So it is, as often noticed, in the Gospel of John, where the word "world" occurs with great frequency; and so it is here, for the word "people" in our version should be "peoples;" that is, the nations generally, to whom the Root will stand as an "ensign" or "banner," and to Him will the Gentiles seek: and "His rest will be glory," as the margin reads. Greed will go out and glory will come in. What a day for the earth that will be!

This wonderful prophetic strain continues to the end of chapter 12, and four times do we get the expression, "in that day." The first we have glanced at in verse 10, when the promised Messiah shall be manifested in His Godhead glory, and bring blessing to the remotest peoples. The second is in verse 11, for in that day there will be a re-gathering of Israel, and the predictions concerning this continue to the end of the chapter. We must not mistake the present migration of Jews to Palestine for this, since verse 11 speaks of what will be accomplished in the day of Christ's manifestation, and it will be an act of God and doubtless accomplished through Christ; for "Lord" in verse 11 is not "Jehovah" but "Adonai," the title used for instance in Psalm 110: 1, when David by the Spirit spoke of the coming Messiah as "my Lord."

Moreover, when that re-gathering is brought to pass, the division between the ten tribes and the two will have disappeared, and the nations that surround Israel will have been subdued, and there will

be an alteration in geographical conditions both as to Egypt and Assyria. None of these things have yet come to pass.

But these things will come to pass, and "in that day," when they do, there will burst forth from Israel a song of praise far deeper and more sincere than that which was sung in Exodus 15. But let us recapitulate for a moment. In verse 10, Messiah appears in His Deity and glory as the rallying centre for all mankind. He draws all to Himself, according to John 12: 32. But this means, as the rest of the chapter shows, that Israel will get redemption blessing, far more wonderful than their past redemption from Egypt. Then follows, as chapter 12 opens, the triumph song of this new redemption. Jehovah had been angry with them, and rightly so in view of their past of tragic wickedness, but now He has become their Comforter, their Strength and their Salvation.

If verses 1 and 2 remind us of Exodus 14 and 15, verse 3 is reminiscent of Elim, which is mentioned in the last verse of chapter 15. The Elim wells were very welcome and refreshing but here is something far more wonderful, of which Elim was only a faint type, since the salvation that Israel will then receive will be not only of a temporal sort but also spiritual and eternal.

Our short chapter ends with praise in view of that which will be the very climax of their blessing — the "Holy One of Israel" in the midst of them. This was foreshadowed when, redeemed from Egypt, the Tabernacle was erected in their midst with the cloud of

glory resting on it. This which will be brought to pass "in that day" will far exceed what was accomplished under Moses. With this striking prophecy a definite division of the book reaches its close.

What we have seen we might almost call, **the burden of Jacob**. Judgment has to "begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4: 17). Israel was that of old time, but though their heavy guilt brings on them heavy judgment, a bright future waits for them at the end. The judgment having begun at them, we now find the surrounding nations judged. A burden lay upon them from the hand of God and as the prophet uttered the burden it lay also doubtless on his own spirit. Chapter 13 begins the "burden of Babylon." The Spirit of God foresaw that this city would become the chief oppressor, and the original seat of Gentile power when the "times of the Gentiles" should set in.

The predicted destruction will arrive when "the day of the Lord" sets in, as verses 6 and 9 show; hence the terrible overthrow, detailed in verses 1-16, will be witnessed in the last days, and be executed upon the proud Gentile power of which Babylon was the head and front, as we see in Daniel 2 and 7. Verse 11 speaks of punishing "**the world**" for their iniquity, and of convulsions in the heavens as well as the earth, such as the Lord also predicted in His prophetic discourse. But in verse 17 the prophecy does descend to a judgment more immediate, which was executed by the Medes, as the book of Daniel records. It is in this connection that the statement is

made that the destruction of Babylon should be complete and irremediable. The prediction has been fulfilled unto this day and still stands. Anything that might appear to be to the contrary applies, we judge, to the dominant Gentile power, which does still exist, and of which Babylon was the beginning, or to that "mystery" Babylon of Revelation 17, which represents the false professing church, left for judgment when the Lord comes for His true saints.

The first three verses of chapter 14 show that the judgment of Babylon clears the way for mercy to flow to Israel. This had a partial fulfilment in the days of Cyrus, as the opening verses of Ezra record. It will have a far greater and more complete one when the times of the Gentiles come to an end. Then, not only will Israel be established once more in their own land but they will be the supreme nation, ruling over the others who formerly oppressed them, and completely at rest themselves. In that day they will take up the proverb against the king of Babylon, that fills verses 4-23 of the chapter.

When Isaiah uttered this prophecy Babylon was still dominated by the Assyrian power. A century or so later it became "the golden city" under the great king Nebuchadnezzar, spoken of as the "head of gold" in Daniel 2: 38. With him the times of the Gentiles began, and they will close under the potentate, called "the beast" in Revelation 13, who is to be raised up and inspired by Satan, who is called "the dragon." All the world will worship the beast and the dragon who, though un-

seen, lies behind him.

Isaiah's prophecy in these verses applies first to the visible king — verses 4-11. The Lord will break his sceptre and cast him into hell as is more fully explained in Revelation 19. But in verses 12-15, we seem to pass from the visible king to Satan, whose nominee he is to be. Satan, whose original sin was an attempt at self-exaltation unto equality with God, is to be "brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit," as we also see in Revelation 20.

Verses 13 and 14 are most striking. Notice the five-fold repetition of "I will." The very essence of sin is the assertion of the will of the creature against the Creator. In Genesis 2, God said to Adam, "Thou shalt not;" but in Genesis 3, tempted by Satan, Adam virtually said "I will." The complete contrast to this is found in Philipians 2, where the One who was "the Most High," whose throne was "above the stars of God," who could not "ascend," since there was **no place higher** than the one He occupied, **descended** and took the form of a Servant. Satan sought to exalt himself and is to be abased. Christ humbled Himself, and He is, and shall yet be, exalted.

In the succeeding verses we seem to come back to the judgment of the visible king, of his city, and of all those that follow him. It will be no partial or provisional dealing of God but a final judgment that will make a clean sweep of his power and kingdom, a judgment more severe than that which has fallen upon others.

At verse 24 we pass back again to the more immediate judgment of Assyria. Upon the mountains of Israel, which the Lord calls "My mountains," he should be broken. This had not been accomplished in the year that king Ahaz died, for that was the third year of king Hoshea of the ten tribes, and Samaria was carried captive by the Assyrian in Hoshea's ninth year. In verses 29 and 31 "Palestina" means apparently, "Philistia" the country to the south west of Jerusalem. At that moment all might seem peaceful, but their judgment was coming, and their only hope and trust was to be reposing in

Zion.

Now Zion does not mean simply Jerusalem, for that city too would ultimately fall under God's judgment. Zion was founded by the Lord in His mercy when He intervened and raised up David, so that it has become a symbol of the mercy and grace of God. This we see in such a scripture as Hebrews 12: 22. In that grace, which Zion represents, the godly poor amongst the people will trust. They **did so** in days that are past. They **will do so** in days that are to come.

They are doing so today. Are we amongst them?



SIN AND REDEMPTION

IN Adam and Cain **sin** is presented in its perfected forms: in Adam, sin against **God**; in Cain, sin against **man** in the image of God. Sin in Adam bore the stamp of distrust of God's goodness. Cain's sin is hatred of grace and of him who is the object of grace. Both are seen in full character in man's hatred and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Abel and Enoch, on the other hand, are presented the full and perfect redemption from sin by the power of divine grace. Abel is the first exemplar of **righteousness** by faith, now sin had destroyed man's **innocence**; Enoch presents the perfect triumph over death, as the consequence of sin; thus bringing into full relief "the hope of righteousness by faith."



LAW AND GRACE

THE contrast between law and grace became apparent directly after the law was given. When the golden calf had been made, the word of the Lord to Moses was, "I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let Me alone . . . that I may consume them" (Exod. 32: 9, 10). But in contrast to this grace was shown to Moses and through him, so that he could say, "If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance" (Exod. 34: 9).

BODILY EXERCISE AND GODLINESS

A. J. POLLOCK.

SCRIPTURE is very careful to point out the great contrast between "bodily exercise," which is for a little time, and "godliness," which "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4: 8); the only life that endures for ever.

How few and fleeting are the days of our earthly pilgrimage! David lamented, "Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth: and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity" (Psa. 39: 5). But after all, the human body is a **God-given vessel**, in which every thought, every word, every action of the Christian man or woman finds expression for better or for worse. We read, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17).

There are several words in the Pauline epistles, which show that the great Apostle had godly concern as to the right care of the body, that it might be indeed a vessel, which God can use for His own glory, and for the blessing of mankind.

Here is a very homely example of this. The Apostle Paul, addressing Timothy, his beloved son in the faith, wrote, "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee" (2 Tim. 4: 13). The reader may

ask, Does it really matter that we should know about Paul's cloke? Yes, the Scripture gives us this record, addressed to Timothy in the first instance, but recorded in an inspired portion of the word of God.

It comes as a word of instruction to us all from that day to this, and for as long as the Lord leaves His church upon this earth. If it had not this wide application, as the whole of Paul's epistles to Timothy have, it would have been the last thing to be expected in an inspired epistle. Indeed it would be quite correct to see in this record, not only Paul's care, but also the care of God Himself for the comfort and well being of the body. Evidently the Apostle had in view the **wintery** weather, when a warm cloke would be a comfort night and day, for he does say to Timothy, "Do thy diligence to come before winter" (2 Tim. 4: 21).

Another illuminating word is Paul's tender regard for Timothy's health, which was evidently poor. How comforting it is to draw from this the assurance that God Himself cares for us all in His wisdom as to our health and well-being. His inspired instructions were, "Drink . . . a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5: 23). But this carries with it many thoughts. It certainly did not open the door to freely drinking wine for self-gratification, that might easily lead to excess. Did not the Apostle specify the amount, "a **little wine**," using God's good gift for **medicinal** purposes.

That the Apostle goes on to warn against drinking in excess is clear when we read, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment: and some men they follow after" (1 Tim. 5: 24). Is this not a reference to the **open** drunkard, whose excess is often in sad evidence before the public; and the **secret** drunkard, whose hidden sin will follow him till the time comes for its public exposure. So the injunction ends, "Likewise also the good deeds of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." The judgment seat is a great reality, and it lies before each one of us. A sobering thought!

Godliness is profitable for the life that now is. Doubtless the proper, godly care of the body meets with its reward even in this life. Indeed Scripture indicates this, when the promise is made to obedient and subject children, "that it may be well with thee, **and thou mayest live long on the earth**" (Eph. 6: 3).

In this connection the writer tried an experiment in a large cemetery. He made an exhaustive examination of the dates on a hundred graves, that did not give any indication, that the persons buried were Christians. He was greatly struck with the number, which had died in their early life — their twenties, thirties, forties, few indeed in their seventies, and only one grave registered eighty years, and not one above that.

He then proceeded to examine the graves of Christian people, bearing such inscriptions as "Asleep in Jesus," "Departed to be

with Christ," "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." Such graves bore most conclusive testimony, that Christian living, is profitable for the life that now is, for the average length of life was far higher in these cases, standing in most vivid contrast to the others. Here, a considerable number lived to complete their three-score years and ten, a few lived up to their eighties, and even to their nineties. The writer was deeply impressed with the earthly blessing that most markedly accompanies the Christian faith.

But when we consider the life which is to come, how immeasurably better off is the Christian, as contrasted with the unbeliever, however correct his outward life might have been in public estimation. "Godliness" means life of a Divine quality, that passes from time into eternity, with an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1: 11). What a triumphant end it will be, when "the path of the just," as the shining light, emerges finally "unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4: 18).

So utterly glorious will the scene be, that Scripture mostly describes it by what is NOT found there, even those things which make this present life wearisome and testing. In that blissful scene there will be no tears, there will be no more death, no more pain, no more crying, for the former things will have passed away. He who sits on the throne will "make all things **NEW**" (Rev. 21: 6).

As to the positive blessing, we

read, " 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: 17, 18).

It is to be carefully noticed that the word, **NEW**, when applied thus to spiritual things, stands for something, that has never been before. In our general conversation we use the word, **new** in its **relative** sense — **new** in contrast to **old**. But when we come to **GOD'S new** creation, it is not merely a fresh creation but one of a new kind altogether.

A positive description of such a scene is found in what the Apostle tells us in 2 Corinthians 12, of how he was caught up to the third heaven. The first heaven refers to the atmospheric heavens the home of clouds and winds; the second heaven is the stellar region, where there are hundreds of millions of stars; the third heaven is the dwelling place of God.

When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, to paradise, he could not tell whether he was in the body or not. In the glory he heard unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for a man to utter on earth. Paul's experience was remarkable and limited only to himself. He returned to earth, and kept his experience as a profound secret.

In course of time the Christians in the assembly at Corinth acted strangely towards the Apostle, so much so that he wrote to them, " I am become a fool in glorying; **ye**

have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing " (2 Cor. 12: 11). So after fourteen years of complete silence as to his experience, he felt constrained to tell them of it, though he divulged not the unspeakable things he heard, not lawful to be repeated on earth.

To keep him from being puffed up beyond measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to him by God a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, and this continued all the closing years of his strenuous life. Thrice did the apostle pray that this affliction might be removed, but his prayer was not answered. He was told that God's grace was sufficient for him, so Paul eventually gloried in his infirmities. He himself wrote, " For his [Paul's] letters, say they, are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible " (2 Cor. 10: 10). Many have thought this referred to paralysis or stammering. Writing to the assembly at Galatia, he referred to his temptation, which was in his flesh, which the Galatians did not despise, nor reject him because of it. They received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus, and that, if it were possible, they would in their zeal and love have plucked out their own eyes to have given to him. (See, Gal. 14: 14, 15). This seems to imply blindness.

Paul returned to earth after this truly remarkable experience, but how thankful we may be, that he was pressed to record his experi-

ence, as giving us a wonderful peep into the unutterable bliss we shall all enter into, either when we end our earthly pilgrimage, or better still when we shall all be caught up together at the second coming of our Lord. How soon that may take place! We may well sing,

“ If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus’
love

Lift our poor hearts this weary world
above;
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim
sings:

What will the sunshine of His glory
prove?

What the unmingled fulness of His love?
What hallelujahs will His presence
raise?

What but one loud eternal burst of
praise?”

“THINGS WHICH BECOME SOUND DOCTRINE”

F. B. HOLE.

IN his epistle to Titus the Apostle Paul laid great stress upon two things: first, upon “sound doctrine” (1: 9); second, upon “the things which become sound doctrine” (2: 1). These two are closely related as cause and effect, so much so that each may be used as a test to the other.

In opening the epistle the Apostle wrote of “the truth which is **after godliness**,” for all real “truth” has **this** as its effect and fruit. That which has not is thereby declared to be spurious and not “truth” at all. But, on the other hand, in writing, “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine,” he indicated that any course of behaviour or speech not in keeping with truth and sound doctrine is thereby condemned. Sound doctrine and sound conduct fit one another like a die and the impression it makes in the wax.

Though this short epistle is mainly occupied with instructions as to conduct, there is yet given a very clear summary of sound doc-

trine, both as to the grace of God that has appeared, working redemption on our behalf, and also of the mercy that in washing and renewing us has wrought out our salvation. The former deals with the objective work wrought for us, and yet outside and apart from us, by Christ. The latter deals with the subjective work, wrought within us individually and severally by the Spirit of God.

In the first place then, sound doctrine sets before us the grace of God. In Crete were found, “unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision.” These were full of, “Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.” Law was their theme, but law degenerated into human commandments; and they, while binding law upon other people, are stigmatized by a fine stroke of irony as **unruly** themselves. The genuine law had once appeared, but now it is the grace of God that has appeared.

Next, this grace has brought with

it salvation for all men — the marginal reading here being the better translation. Grace overleaps the boundaries that were observed under the law. Then God made known His demands to one nation only. Now with the offer of grace He addresses Himself to all men. How many may humble themselves to receive His grace is another matter.

Further, the grace has been expressed in the Lord Jesus, who "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us." Israel was typically redeemed from Egypt, the land of darkness and bondage, that they might be His servants and witnesses. Our redemption was a more vital matter, to deliver us from all iniquity, and purify us to Himself for His own special possession, a people zealous of good works.

Then also, the grace which has redeemed us teaches us in very effectual fashion. Formerly the law was schoolmaster, and it imposed upon man demands and instructions from without. Grace teaches by acting upon the heart and conscience within. If we look back to our school days, when many things were imposed upon our memories by books from without, we realize how much of it we have clean forgotten. Yet there were many things, which never taxed our memories but yet wrote themselves on our hearts and ingrained themselves into our characters. These things we have not lost and never shall. It is after this fashion that grace teaches.

Lastly, grace also directs our eyes to the future, so that we are "awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great

God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (New Trans.). The grace that has appeared redeems, instructs, and leaves us to await the glory; for the second coming of our Lord is an integral part of "sound doctrine."

The thought of what the Cretans were by nature lies as a dark background to this epistle. Paul quoted with approval the very uncomplimentary saying of one of their own prophets, "Cretans are always liars, evil wild beasts, lazy gluttons" (New Trans.). But in the third chapter Paul speaks not of the Cretans alone, but of himself and all of us. "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." This being the case, thorough moral cleansing is our deep necessity.

This deep need has been met by the appearing of God's mercy and love to man—His philanthropy. We have been saved by a work wrought in us, a work of washing and renewing. The word translated, "washing" is one that literally means "bath" or "laver," and the only other place where it is used in the New Testament is in Ephesians 5: 26. In Leviticus 8: 4-6, we read how Moses brought Aaron and his sons to the laver and there bathed them all over. This is typical of our passage. Subsequently the priests had to wash hands and feet in the laver every time they entered the sanctuary; and this is more typical of the passage in Ephesians.

The word translated "regeneration" also only occurs twice in the

New Testament, the other occasion being in Matthew 19: 28, where it signifies the new order of things which will be established when the Lord Jesus Christ reigns, and when "a nation" — Israel — will be "born at once" (Isa. 66: 8). We learn in Titus that though we have not yet arrived at the hour of this world-wide regeneration, yet believers today are the subjects of the washing of regeneration individually. The new birth in all its cleansing power is theirs.

Connected with this is "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." The Spirit acted in our new birth, as John 3 shows, but this renewing is produced by the Spirit being "shed on us abundantly," as the fruit of which we have that more abundant life, of which the Lord spoke in John 10: 10. We have been saved from all the folly and moral filth, of which Paul had just spoken, by the new birth and the renewing effected by the indwelling and work of the Spirit of God. Thus saved and also "justified by His grace," according to the redemption previously mentioned, we are "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." All this sets before us an outline of "sound doctrine."

Titus was to "speak the things which become sound doctrine," so that the converts in Crete might be characterized by them and not be displaying their bad national features. A believer today may try to excuse an outbreak of temper or some fleshly display by saying, "Oh, well, that is my make-up; that is the kind of person I am." "No doubt it is," we may well reply, "but have you not been washed and thereby saved from

such things?" Godliness is to mark us; and that means displaying the Divine nature and not our own deformities.

We are informed as to the things that become sound doctrine in the latter part of chapter 1 and the earlier part of chapter 2. Bishops are first addressed, then aged men, aged women, young women, young men, Titus himself, and then servants. It is when we come to these last, who were really slaves, or "bondmen," that the most comprehensive summary is found.

The present "world" or "age" is still pursuing its degraded and unsteady course, and it will not be altered until the appearing of the glory. Today God alters the whole character of those whom He saves by grace, that they may pursue their course through the unaltered age upon altogether new principles; those of sobriety, righteousness and godliness.

"**Soberly.**" This word occurs five times in the Authorized Version of Titus. On one occasion it is the translation of a word which means, watchful or vigilant (2: 2). The other times the word used denotes temperance, prudence and general soundness of mind. The word "sound" also occurs five times, and is the translation of a word which has the sense of "healthful," which we have imported into our own language as "hygienic." The epistle to Titus may well be called the epistle of **spiritual hygiene and sobriety.**

The force of "soberly" turns in upon oneself. It does not so much define one's attitude towards God or one's neighbour, as one's own per-

sonal mental poise. A sober man is one who has learned his own nothingness in the presence of God. He has been brought down from all those high and lofty thoughts of self which lie at the heart of every child of fallen Adam, and consequently he sees God in His true light. This being so he has learned to estimate himself and people and things in something of their true value, and is not imposed upon by mere appearances. This imparts to him a solidity and weight, the very opposite to the fickleness, instability and levity which are so natural to us all. Let us so live in the light of eternal things that we do not waste our lives over the passing frivolities of the hour.

" Righteously." A righteous man is one who renders what is right to all outside himself; to God first and foremost. When the Lord Jesus said, " Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's " He was preaching practical righteousness.

The men of the world do not concern themselves with the claims of God, but they keenly scrutinize the Christian to see if he acts rightly to his fellows. Hence righteous action on our part is of the greatest importance, for a breakdown here destroys much good, and an ounce of practical unrighteousness will outweigh a ton of eloquent preaching. Are we weak as to this point?

Except we walk prayerfully with God we may easily and almost insensibly be infected with the spirit of the present age. There is great clamour for one's own rights with a determination to shirk responsi-

bility as far as possible. To get as much as possible in return for as little as possible is all the rage. Therefore let Christians beware! Grace teaches us to live righteously.

It teaches the Christian to give full and proper pay to those he employs. It teaches the tradesman to give full measure, and eschew any trick by which illicit gain may be made. It teaches the workman to give steady and honest work, as conscientiously when not supervised as when under supervision. And if any have a believing master, or conversely a believing servant, no advantage is to be taken of that fact, as 1 Timothy 6: 2 shows.

" Godly." The bearing of this word is clearly in regard to God. Our business is to " adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." The doctrine is beautiful in itself, yet it may actually be adorned by us; and what will more effectually do this than the display of His character in those who profess it? We may safely affirm that nothing will.

If the Apostle's words through Titus had their proper effect, and there was found in the midst of the liars, evil wild beasts and lazy gluttons of Crete, a people who were visibly purified unto God for His special possession, characterized by these three things, and zealous of good works, what an effect must have been produced to the glory of God!

No less effect would be produced upon the men of this age, if these excellent things which become sound doctrine were more fully promoted amongst us, and in display for all to see.

THE RULE OF THE HOUSE

T. D. BELL

THE words of the Lord, recorded in Luke II: 31, recalling the journey of the Queen of the South to Solomon, ended in a solemn rebuke to the men of His day — "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." The way in which the events of her journey, as related in 2 Chronicles 9, reflect certain features of the House of God, which we find in 1 Corinthians, has often been noticed. It is instructive to see the way in which the whole of that Epistle is summarized for us in the typical Old Testament details. As we study the Epistle we see the One who is greater than Solomon exerting His rule in that House.

The report, heard in the distant land, started the journey of the Queen. We too have heard in faith a report, which brought us from the far distance of a spiritual sort to find, like her, One well able to resolve all our hard questions. Having arrived, the Queen first of all heard and realized the wisdom of Solomon, and accordingly the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians opens out to us first, the wisdom of God, manifested in the cross of Christ; and second, the blessed effect of this on the one who learns it. How the first answers every hard question, and silences every voice of man, for Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." Then how sweetly the result with us is summed up at the end of chapter 2, "But we have the mind of Christ."

The house that Solomon had built was the next thing that the

Queen of Sheba saw, and the building of God's present house is the great subject of 1 Corinthians 3. "Ye are God's building," says the Apostle, and it has but one foundation — Jesus Christ. The Apostle as the wise masterbuilder had laid the foundation and others were building thereon. Man's responsibility in the building has to be tested, since it is "the temple of God."

This house, this temple, must have its ministers and stewards, and so this follows in chapter 4; as the Apostle speaks, first, of himself and his helpers, and in the next chapters he regulates, according to the authority he derived from the Lord, the conduct of the household; reverting in chapter 9 to his own apostolic authority.

The Queen of the south next saw "the meat of his table," and we may say that spiritual meat is a great subject of 1 Corinthians 10. How wonderful this is! How peculiarly the food of God's household is, "the communion of the blood of Christ," "the communion of the body of Christ." That house is characterized by "the Lord's table," and not by the altar, which Israel had, and still less by "the table of devils."

"The sitting of his servants," is the next item noted, and this phrase surely emphasizes the dignity acquired by sitting at Solomon's table. And so 1 Corinthians 11 in turn opens this out to us. What a privilege to sit at the table of the Lord, as in company with Him, and to partake of that bread and drink of

that cup! The corresponding responsibility, to partake in a manner that is altogether worthy, is equally great.

The next thing noted by the Queen was, "the attendance of his ministers;" and accordingly chapter 12 immediately speaks of the "gifts," of the "administrations," and of the "operations," the source of which is found in the Godhead, though wrought out in saints who minister. The practising of them is thus in the hand of each who is called of God, and they are effective, we must remember, throughout the one body; that is, all true Christians, the entire household of God.

The next thing noticed was, "their apparel;" the attractive dress they wore. As we read on into chapter 13, the beauty of the apparel that is proper to Christians shines before us. Who could fail to be moved in reading that chapter at the full moral beauty of the life of love? How often does it send us to our knees in longings to know more of its beauty clothing each of us; only to realize that in One alone did the full excellence of it shine out.

Solomon's "cupbearers" and "their apparel" next were seen; and chapter 14 of the epistle now gives us the movements of those servants who are called of the Lord, pouring out the fatness of His provision, the wine, the good of the house. May we note here how the first verse of that chapter links together the apparel — love — and the desire for that service. "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts." Does anyone desire to serve

the household in this way? Here is the God-appointed way to do it. Take up first the apparel of love. Is it not clear from the teaching of this chapter that it is in the wearing of the apparel so natural to fallen men — the pride of the flesh — that confusion comes in, and, "God is not the author of confusion" (verse 33).

Finally, the Queen saw, "his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord;" and in chapter 15 we are taught the great truth of the resurrection of Christ, and of all that flows out of it. Like those of old we may see the empty tomb and realize the presence of the Lord, who has gone up on high. When Jacob saw the ladder, set up on earth but reaching to heaven, he said, "This is none other than the house of God." We may say the same, and truly it is in God's house here that the witness to His resurrection is continued by the Holy Spirit's power.

The state of Christendom today is a tragic witness to the fact that the Apostle's warning, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon" (1 Cor. 3: 10), has not been obeyed by all. Wood, hay and stubble have been built in as well as gold, silver and precious stones. Consequently, mere professors as well as possessors of eternal life are viewed as in the house; now the "great house" of 2 Timothy 2: 20.

As a result of this the urgent call that comes to us is found in the last chapter of our Epistle — "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith." There is also that final call, "If any man love not the Lord

Jesus Christ" It has an infinitely solemn warning, which points to the Lord's coming and the final test of reality.

What then is the resource of the true heart in all this? Surely this — the assurance of His love, and responsive affection for Him. His cross and Himself, the foundation. Within the house, the communion of saints is in His death and at His table. From Him all true administration comes, and by His hand the right apparel given. The cup

of service too is from Him, and the grace and tenderness which the cupbearers may show, are only learned at His feet.

All that we may receive as the result of the service of the house is really from Him; and in ministering the same, if we find grace for it, all has to be done as under His eye. This then is the rule of the house, and a great one it is! How it should affect our behaviour in the house, ever remembering that, "A greater than Solomon is here."

WHERE IS YOUR LIGHT?

"**W**HAT have you done for Christ since you believed?"

The question was asked of a young man who had recently surrendered to Christ.

"Oh! I'm a learner!" was his reply.

"Well, when you light a candle do you light it to make the candle more comfortable, or to have it give light?"

"To give light."

"Do you expect it to give light after it is half-burnt, or when you first light it?"

"As soon as I light it?"

"Very well . . . begin at once."

The conversation was not without result. The young man started to win others for Christ and many were brought to Christ by his means.

We are lighted to shine. Our Lord has said, "No man when he hath lighted a candle putteth it in a secret place, neither under a

bushel, but on a candlestick that they which come in may see the light" (Luke II: 33). "Or putteth it under a bed" (Luke 8: 16).

Shall we ask ourselves, Where is my candle? "In a secret place," through cowardice. "Under a bushel," through business. "Under a bed," through laziness. Or is it on a candlestick giving light to others?

A far-seeing man of an earlier generation has said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing."

For many of us there is strong temptation to do nothing. We are not highly gifted folk, entrusted with ten pounds, but rather like the servant with only one pound, as shown in the parable of Luke 19. Let us accept the warning not to lay it up in a napkin.

Our gift may be small, but let us use it. Our light may be little, but let it shine.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 15: 1 - 23: 18)

IT is clear that, when God acts in judgment, He begins at the innermost circle. It was so in the days of Jerusalem, as we see in Ezekiel 9: 6, and the same principle holds good in New Testament times, as stated in 1 Peter 4: 17. In Isaiah we have seen the predictions of judgment first uttered against Israel, though with promises of restoration and glory in their Messiah. After this follows the judgment of the nations surrounding Israel.

We have seen Babylon head the list, to which judgment is prophetically meted out without any promise of restoration. Now in chapters 15 and 16, Moab comes into view, a people that in its origin stood in a distant relationship with Israel. Against them too judgment is pronounced but with a note of sympathy (see, 15: 5), which is altogether absent in the case of Babylon. The Moabites were a pastoral people but dwelling on high ground east of the Dead Sea and strongly fortified. In verse 1, Ar is the city and Kir the fortress. All should be laid waste.

The prophecy refers to judgment which would speedily fall on Moab in view of their haughty pride, as the last verse of chapter 16 shows. The opening verse of that chapter also refers to the tribute that Moab used to pay, as we see in 2 Kings 3: 4. Yet in part the prophecy also refers to the last days, for verse 5 looks on to a King "in the tabernacle of David," whose throne will be established,

and who will be "hasting righteousness." Before that hour strikes God will have a people whom He calls His, though they are "outcasts" in the earth, and Moab will do well to give them shelter. That Moab will exist in the last days is made clear in Daniel 11: 41, as we saw also in our prophet, when considering chapter 11: 14.

In the days of Isaiah, Damascus had been allied with the ten tribes. Its "burden" fills the three verses that open chapter 17. The prophetic strain however quickly passes from Damascus to the children of Israel for disaster was to come on both, since both had united in alliance against Judah. The figure is used of harvest, whether of corn or of grapes, which would leave them poor and thin, yet a remnant would be left, like a gleaning of grapes or a few berries on an olive tree, and that remnant will turn their eyes to "the Holy One of Israel," and away from the idolatrous things that formerly held them.

All this found a fulfilment in days immediately ahead, yet will have an ampler fulfilment in the last days yet to come. The prediction about the "pleasant plants," or "plantations," and the "strange slips" is often referred to in connection with the recent doings of Jewish immigrants in Palestine. They have indeed been busy with plantations in their agricultural colonies and have imported vast quantities of vine cuttings from other lands in order to re-establish

vineyards.

But look at verse 11, which predicts that, though this work will have a promising beginning, it will suffer a crushing blow. And, how? By a great and antagonistic uprising among the nations, of which the rest of the chapter speaks. Here doubtless we have a brief yet comprehensive sight of the final convulsions among the nations, when God will make Jerusalem "a cup of trembling" and a "burdensome stone" to all the peoples round about, and "gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle" (Zech. 12: 2, 3; 14: 2). Jerusalem and the Jews will indeed be heavily chastised, but the proud nations themselves will meet ultimately the fury of God and be scattered before Him, like chaff or thistle-down is blown away by a whirlwind. As we view present doings in Palestine let us not forget this solemn prediction.

Chapter 18 opens with a call to a distant land that is to serve God's purpose in the last days, helping to regather Israel. Verses 4-6, appear to be parenthetical, so that verse 7 is connected with verse 3. Both verses 2 and 7 speak of a people "scattered and peeled [or ravaged]," who without a question are those we now know as Jews. Our chapter indicates that, when in the last days God gives the signal for their regathering, there will be a distant people with ships who will do what they can to help them. But the parenthetical verses show that, though God overrules this, He is not directly acting in it. He retires, as it were, saying, "I will take My rest," observing what is taking place, but ultimately bring-

ing disaster upon it all, as we saw in the previous chapter.

And yet, in spite of all this, the scattered and ravaged people will be recovered and brought as a present unto the Lord. Verse 7 does not tell us how this is to be accomplished after the failure of the earlier attempt. When we read Matthew 24: 31, we find the Lord shedding light on this matter. The people who will be brought thus as a present to the Lord, will be "His elect," and not just an assortment of patriots and fugitives, as we see at present. And they will be brought "to the place of the name of the Lord of Hosts, the mount Zion." Alas! Jerusalem as it is at present cannot be designated thus. It is the place where Jews are re-assembling, hoping to display the greatness of their own name, while still rejecting their Messiah.

The Jew has yet to discover the meaning of "the mount Zion;" namely, grace flowing out from God, rather than merit through law-keeping, achieved by themselves. The Apostle Paul realized this, as we see at the end of Romans 11. They have been shut up in unbelief, "that He might have mercy upon all." The contemplation of this over-abounding mercy to Israel moved Paul to the doxology, concerning God's wisdom and ways, with which that chapter closes.

We resume the "burdens" on the surrounding nations, as we read chapter 19. Egypt, that had so much to do with Israel and its history, now comes before us. Again we notice the feature so common in these prophecies: the

predictions soon pass from more immediate judgments to those that will mature at the end of the age. History tells us that soon after Isaiah's day Egypt did fall from her former high estate, and things recounted in verses 1-10, came upon them. The princes of Zoan did become fools, though in the days of Moses long before "the wisdom of Egypt" was highly regarded.

Yet in the latter part of this chapter the terms of the prophecy go beyond anything that has transpired in the past, and so look on to the end of the age. This is corroborated if we turn to the closing part of Daniel 11, where "the king of the south" represents Egypt, and we are told how Egypt will yet be overrun and plundered by "the king of the north" in the last days. In those days "the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt," and this certainly has not taken place yet, though it may do very soon.

Out of all this discipline, which yet is to fall on the land of Egypt, some spiritual good will come. Egypt has been in the past well filled with altars to their false gods and with pillars erected in honour of their despotic kings. It is going to have an altar to the Lord in its midst and a pillar to the Lord on its border. Not many of either, you notice, but one only, for by then they will acknowledge the one true God. Though He smites them for their sins, He will heal them and send them a deliverer. At the last Egypt will know and do homage to Jehovah.

The three closing verses of this chapter are a remarkable prophecy,

for Assyria — the king of the north, of Daniel 11 — was the great oppressor of Israel in the days of their kingdom, just as Egypt was the oppressor in the days of their early servitude. In the last days all the enmity will be banished. An highway with free communication will extend between them, and Israel will be in the centre. Egypt will be blessed as "My people;" Assyria as "the work of My hands;" Israel acknowledged as "My inheritance." To be Jehovah's inheritance is something greater than to be His people or His handiwork, yet all here is connected with God's purpose for earthly blessing. What is stated does not rise to the height of Ephesians 1: 18, or Colossians 1: 12, yet it does enhance our sense of the mercy of God as we note that finally He will act in blessing to both peoples, who have been in the past, and will yet be, Israel's inveterate enemies.

The short chapter 20 brings us back to events that were to happen, shortly after Isaiah was bidden to enforce his prophecy by a peculiar action. He foretold the coming overthrow of Egypt by his walking naked and barefoot. Other prophets, such as Hosea, were instructed to support their words by actions. The object in view was to bring home to the inhabitants of this "isle," or "coast," that is, Palestine, that it was folly to put their trust in Egypt for deliverance from Assyria. It will doubtless be the same in the last days, as we see in Daniel 11: 36-45, where "the king" of verse 36, who will evidently be in Jerusalem, will find no help in "the king of the

south " against the assault of " the king of the north."

In chapter 21 we return to the doom of Babylon. It is to be " the desert of the sea." In Jeremiah's prophecy against the city he says, " The sea is come up upon Babylon " (51: 42), which helps to explain the expression. Babylon would be swamped by the sea of nations and become a desert. In verse 2 the call comes to Elam and Media to go up and besiege, helped to the spoil by treachery. Verses 3-5, prophetically describe in the most graphic language the scenes of revelry, turning into confusion and terror, which are described for us in Daniel 5. Then the prophet foresees a watchman, who from an oncoming chariot gets the tidings of the fall of Babylon, and announces it with a voice like the roar of a lion.

The burden of Dumah is compressed into very few words. He was, as Genesis 25: 14 shows, of the stock of Ishmael, and Seir was a dwelling-place of the sons of Esau. These " burdens " on the various peoples were bringing upon them a " night " of Divine displeasure. What was the prospect that lay before them? The answer was indeed prophetic. A morning was surely coming, but a night was coming also. The morning will be for those who fear God and are subject to Him: the night for those who are His foes.

In other scriptures very strong judgment is pronounced against Seir, but verse 12 here indicates that a door of mercy will open to them. If any have a desire to enquire of God they may do so. And if, as

the result of enquiry, any desire to return, they may do so. They are even invited to " come." In these words we discern an indication and forecast of that grace, which comes to light so fully in the New Testament Gospel.

At the close of the chapter Arabia comes under judgment. Disaster should overtake them too, but not in such overwhelming fashion as in the case of Babylon. Their mighty men should be " diminished," and there should be a " residue," and not a complete destruction. It is striking that of all these burdens the one upon Babylon is the most complete without any hope of recovery. So also in Revelation 17 and 18, the " Mystery " Babylon is going to be completely destroyed and not a trace left.

But Jerusalem too must come under judgment, as we see in chapter 22; and here again, as is so often the case, and particularly when Israel is in view, we find a double fulfilment contemplated. The prophet sees the city, once full of joy, now full of misery and sorrow. It was " the valley of vision," but now the vision had perished, and the valley was full of besieging chariots. And in this dire emergency instead of turning to God in repentance and seeking His mercy, they busied themselves in taking all the measures of defence that they knew, and then settled down to enjoy themselves, even if death came on the morrow.

" Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die " is the reckless cry of men who know "here is

danger ahead, but are determined to have their fling before it arrives. The Apostle Paul quoted these words in 1 Corinthians 15: 32, showing that if this transient life were all, and there were no resurrection of the dead, such a reckless attitude might be justified. We have come to an age in the world's history when men are aware of awful dangers ahead, and with no real faith in the resurrection world, this ancient saying is in control of their lives. With no fear of God before their eyes, millions are determined to get all the pleasure possible out of life with the hope that death ends all. We are to be marked by a spirit which is exactly the opposite of this, and to be always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that there is the resurrection world, and that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Let us also remember that in an emergency it would be quite natural for us to do in principle what Israel was doing, as the enemy threatened them. They adopted what looked like wise military strategy instead of turning to God, which would have involved weeping, sackcloth and repentance, such as marked Nineveh in Jonah's day. The flesh in us would prefer **policy**, that appears so wise, rather than **penitence**, that costs so much to our pride.

This thought is emphasized by the episode regarding Shebna and Eliakim, recorded at the end of the chapter. Shebna was a man with much riches passing through his hand for he was the treasurer. Thus he had distinction in this life and building for himself "a sepulchre

on high," he desired to perpetuate his memory when his life was over. Self-exaltation was evidently his aim. He was rejected, and God would dispossess him so effectively that the chariots of his glory would turn out to be the shame of his lord's house, as we see at the end of verse 18.

Shebna then was rejected and Eliakim, whose name appears to mean, "God is setting up," was to take his place. This transfer actually took place during the reign of Hezekiah, according to the word of the prophet, but we see in it a parable of what will take place at the end of the age, when the self-exalting "man of sin" will be violently turned and tossed to destruction, and the once rejected Christ shall be exalted and established. Of Him Eliakim, in this incident, was a faint type.

This is evident when we read Revelation 3: 7, and note how our Lord claims for Himself the very things that are said of Eliakim in verse 22 of our chapter. He it is who is worthy to have the government laid upon His shoulder, not only of Jerusalem and Israel but of the whole universe. He it is who will hold the key of David and will unlock and bring to light and establish "the sure mercies of David," of which we read in chapter 55. Eliakim doubtless had a place of much authority under Hezekiah, but the graphic and conclusive figures, we find here, go far beyond him.

Notice three things. First, the key and the opening or shutting of the door, which no man can reverse.

No such door has ever yet been found under the control of mere man. The authority and power indicated is Divine.

Second, "the nail in a sure place." What place on earth is sure? Where has such a nail been found? The nail moreover is to be "for a glorious throne to his father's house," and to have "all the glory of his father's house" hung upon him. Great statements these! They only find proper fulfilment in our Lord Jesus Christ, for indeed, not only the glory of the house of David hangs upon Him, but also the glory of God that is found in redemption.

But now, third, there comes the paradox. The nail that is fastened in the sure place is to "be removed, and be cut down and fall." Here surely we have one of those partly hidden references to the rejection and death of the Messiah, which the Old Testament furnishes. In the light of the New Testament all becomes clear. He will be manifested as the Master of every situation, and as the One upon whom everything hangs in the coming age, **just because,**

"By weakness and defeat
He won the meed and crown."

So in the end of our chapter we have a reference prophetically to the removal of the man of sin and the establishment of God's Man — the Son of Man — in His excellence, maintaining the glory of God and the blessing of men.

The series of burdens ends in chapter 23 with "The burden of

Tyre." In those days this very ancient city was the great centre of trade and commerce. This is quite evident in verse 8 of our chapter. In the days of David and Solomon its kings had been very favourably disposed and helpful, but its great wealth and prosperity had wrought corruption, as seems always to be the case in this fallen world. In this chapter Isaiah predicts a period of disaster and eclipse that should come upon the city, but with some respite at the end of seventy years.

The great Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre and this is referred to in Ezekiel 29: 18, which speaks of his having "no wages" for the long years he spent over it, for the Tyrians had time to remove all their treasure. Still judgment from God did come on the proud and rich and joyous city, and her glory departed.

The comparative mildness of the burden on Tyre is accounted for, we believe, by the fact that it was not an oppressor of Israel. It presents to us a picture, not of the world as oppressing and enslaving the people of God, but as the scene of man's successful and opulent activities in forgetfulness and independence of God.

Thus, in the chapters we have been considering, we have seen the world in all its aspects, both secular and religious, brought under the judgment of God. Yet in the midst of the judgments are a few bright flashes of light, which direct our thoughts to the One in whom is found the centre of all blessing —
C H R I S T.

"JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS"

(EXTRACTED)

FIRST of all let us enquire:

What is the meaning of "Justification"?

The Scriptural answer to this is found in Romans 8: 23, where we read, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." These words clearly show that a justified person is one against whom no charge of guilt can be laid in God's sight. Justification then means the removal of the charge of guilt.

This may become more clear if we consider the difference between forgiveness and justification.

Forgiveness has to do with the **penalty** of sins — the penalty being removed.

Justification has to do with the **guilt** that incurred the penalty — the very charge of guilt being removed.

Not a few who rejoice in the knowledge that the judgment their sins deserved has been borne, and that they are forgiven, do not as clearly understand that the charge of guilt against them has been removed, so that they are justified as well as forgiven.

The difference has been illustrated in this way:— Two men are brought before a magistrate, both charged with theft. In the case of one, it is clearly proved that he was miles away when the theft was committed, so he is discharged without a stain on his character. He is justified, or cleared from the charge. In the case of the other, the charge is fully proved, but it is a first offence and there are ex-

tenuating circumstances, so he is discharged with a warning and not punished. He is forgiven, and so escapes the penalty of his offence, but he is not justified.

This illustration is helpful, as bearing upon the one point of the difference between forgiveness and justification. It has no bearing upon the matter of **whom** God may justify or **how** He justifies. So let us now enquire;

Whom does God justify?

The answer to this is plainly given in Romans 4: 5, where we read that He "justifieth the ungodly." So we see at once that the illustration just used does not apply here. Men can only justify the innocent person from a false charge that may be brought against him. God can justify the ungodly man that believes from true charges of guilt.

If we turn to 1 Kings 8, the long chapter that records the prayer of Solomon, at the consecration of the temple, we find him asking God to judge, "condemning the wicked . . . and justifying the righteous" (verse 32), and then he asked Him to "forgive the sin of Thy people Israel" (verse 34). So we see that Solomon, the wisest of men, could understand a sinner being forgiven, but could not conceive of any but righteous people being justified.

But then we know that, "There is **none** righteous, no, not one." So if God could only justify the righteous it is evident that **none** can be justified. God, however, can do what no man can do, and if further proof of this were needed, Luke 18:

14 supplies it. The man who said, "God be merciful to me **a sinner**," was he who "went down to his house **justified**."

Man then is a sinner, convicted of guilt, and God is holy so that He cannot pass over sin, as though it were of no account. Therefore our next question must be:

How does God justify the ungodly?

We can at once answer that if God justifies a man who deserves nothing but judgment, it must be an act of sovereign **grace**; and also that being a holy God, His every act must be in consistency with His nature. It must be done **righteously**.

Now both these features are found in Romans 3, where we read of the sinner being "justified freely by **His grace**" (verse 24); and then again that He is "**just** and the **Justifier** of him which believeth in Jesus" (verse 26). He does it in sovereign grace, because of what we are; and in absolute righteousness because of what He is.

Thus far all is clear, but another question now demands an answer. It is this:

In what righteous way can God justify an ungodly man who believes?

The grace and the righteousness would appear to be antagonistic. How can they be brought into line with each other? The answer to this is found in the words of Romans 3: 24, which we have not hitherto quoted. It is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." We may speak of two great parts in redemption. First,

the payment of the redemption price. Second, the acceptance of the price paid. As to the first, we read in Romans 5: 9, that believers are "now justified by His blood," since He was "delivered for our offences" (Rom. 4: 25).

Let us enquire: Who delivered Him? The answer is — God. What did God deliver Him to? It was to judgment. What was He delivered to judgment for? It was for our offences. The omniscient God, to whom nothing is hid, Himself dealt with all our sins at the cross, when Christ's precious blood was shed, quite apart from all our experiences and feelings. Thus the redemption price has been paid.

This brings us to what we have called the second part. All our sins have been against God, so He is the One who has to be satisfied with the redemption price that has been paid. It is not we who have to be satisfied but God Himself. This was typically seen on the Passover night in Egypt, of which we read in Exodus 12. God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you;" not, when **you** see the blood. So now the question is not, What do I see in the blood of Christ? but, What does God see in it?

The answer to this is quite clear and definite, since we "believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." He who was delivered for our offences has been "raised again for our justification." God has not only raised Him from the dead but also seated Him at His right hand in glory, where sin has never been and can never come.

This declares that all the sins that He bore at the cross are perfectly removed to God's satisfaction. The price paid has met with full acceptance, to our justification. This we could never see by looking at ourselves, but only by looking at Christ risen and glorified.

The redemption work has been done, and the work has been accepted. This is the ground upon which God can in grace, and yet in perfect righteousness, justify the guilty sinner that believes in Jesus. Thus it is that grace reigns through righteousness.

Now let us consider:

How is justification received?

The answer is that justification is received by faith, for in Acts 13: 39, we read, "By Him **all** that believe are justified from **all** things." Here is a very definite statement. If by grace we are included in the first "all," then the second "all" applies to us, and every charge that once laid against us has been removed.

But as to this further questions may be asked — Believe whom? — Believe what? Such questions are plainly answered by Scripture. Romans 3: 22 connects justification with the "faith of Jesus Christ." Romans 3: 25 with "faith in His blood." Romans 4: 5 with **believing** "on Him that justifieth the ungodly." Romans 4: 24 with **believing** "on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Faith then is very simple because it is centred in Divine Persons and the finished work of the cross, presented to us in the Gospel.

Were we bidden to believe in ourselves, our experiences, our feelings, our faith would be the most uncertain thing imaginable. God in Christ and the work of the cross are set before us, and on this Rock our souls can confidently rest, with the assurance that believing we are justified from all things.

A last question remains:

What are the results that flow from being justified?

Romans 5: 1, 2, will answer this question. The first thing is that we have "peace with God." In our unconverted sinful state we were at enmity with Him, and if we thought of Him at all, fear filled our hearts, but now, knowing that every charge against us has been righteously removed, and that God Himself has done it through our Lord Jesus Christ, our hearts are at peace in His holy presence.

But further, our whole place and standing before God now rests on a new basis. We now stand in His "grace" or "favour," — the favour indeed in which Christ stands, for we are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1: 6). And we have "access," by faith into this favour. We enter into it and enjoy it as a present blessing.

Finally, the "hope of the glory of God" is set before us; and faith enables us to rejoice in such a hope, inasmuch as every hope founded on God is sure and certain and beyond all frustration. Hopes based on man most frequently disappoint. Hope based on God is sure and steadfast.

Have all our readers started their

Christian careers in the firm assurance of the fundamental truth contained in this article? We trust indeed that it is so. But if any reader

does not yet possess the peace and joy to which the Gospel leads, may the prayerful reading of this article lead them into it.

PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION

W. ANGLIN.

“**W**HILE we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom. 5: 8).

The preposition “for” has two meanings which, unfortunately, some preachers, at times, confuse. If a man says, “Christ died for me” the word may mean that Christ died on his behalf, or, that He died in his stead. The former is propitiation, the latter is substitution. Only the believer can rightly say “Christ died in my stead;” that is, He was my Substitute. All men can say, “Christ died on our behalf.”

Quite recently someone sent me a tract, which was all too plain an example of the way that servants of the Lord confuse the two truths, and of the way in which an ignorant man was deceived, imagining that he was “saved,” because of the faulty explanation of a Christian who tried to evangelize him. The conversation ran thus:—

“Do you admit that you are a sinner?”

“Yes.”

“Do you believe that Christ died to save sinners?”

“Certainly.”

“Then, if He died to save sinners, and you are a sinner, He died for you, and you **are** saved, for God

will not payment twice demand.”

If this had been said to one trusting the Lord, who lacked assurance of his salvation, it might have helped him; but as the man was indifferent it would only serve to deceive him. It is almost certain to have that ill effect in a Gospel preaching or in a tract for general distribution. It is true that Christ died on behalf of all mankind, but only those who believe in Him truly can say that He died in their stead; that is, He was their Substitute on the Cross.

We have heard preachers say that the word “all” that begins Isaiah 53: 6 and the “all” that finishes the verse refer to the same people. That is true; but it is necessary to explain that the verse predicts the utterance of believers who recognise Christ as their Substitute. A preacher for lack of explanation of the difference, may deceive his hearers into a false hope, which rests on a logical conclusion instead of a heart-trust in the Saviour.

Children and simple souls are apt to be misled by a faulty presentation of the truth concerning the Sacrifice of Christ. This places great responsibility upon Gospel preachers, Sunday School teachers and tract writers.

DISPLAYED AT THE CROSS

J. HOUSTON.

TH**ERE** are two ways in which we may contemplate the death of Christ on the cross: in the light of the cruel and ignominious sufferings that He endured at the hands of the wicked man: in the light of His passing under the relentless and inflexible judgment of God against sin.

In reference to the former, it was when evil in man had done all it could do, that He was completely forsaken by friend as well as foe. In the dire hour of that trial the prophetic scripture was fulfilled, "Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psa. 69: 20).

In reference to the latter, His greatest sorrow was to be forsaken by God; and it was then He cried out in the deepest anguish of His soul: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Psa. 22: 1). Sorrowful indeed it was to Him to be forsaken by men, whom He loved and came to bless, but it was infinitely more sorrowful to Him to be forsaken by God. We can in some degree imagine how man's wickedness could rise at the crucial moment to its full height; but we cannot understand in any degree the depths of suffering to which He went under the judgment of God, in order to make atonement for sin.

There is a hymn, written in the spirit of worship, that some of us often sing, which touchingly expresses it; as for instance in the

following lines:—

"On that cross alone — forsaken —
Where no pitying eye was found."

Again we have, as addressing the Lord Himself:—

"Did Thy God e'en then forsake
Thee,
Hide His face from Thy deep
need?"

Oh! what love we see displayed in the lifted-up, dying Saviour upon the cross.

But it needed the cross to bring to light the true state of man's heart, in its awful hatred against God, just as it needed the cross to show forth the goodness, the mercy, the grace of God in His infinite love to man. God overcame man's evil by His perfect goodness. Evil in man was at its worst, while goodness in God displayed its best. It rose above the evil like the sun above the clouds, and shone brightly in its own Divine fulness.

We see it shine out in the blessed Saviour, who pleaded for forgiveness for His murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34). This love, holy, pure, Divine, has been effectual in its action; hence we read, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4: 10). Well may we sing in worship:—

"No man of greater love can boast
Than for his friend to die;
Thou for thine enemies was slain!
What love with Thine can vie?"

But further the cross was needed

to bring out in full display the righteousness of God. This is the basis of all His dealings with man. In every dispensation it has been so — “For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness” (Psa. 11: 7). Again we read, “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psa. 145: 17). And where is this more clearly seen than at the cross? If He forgives sinners, He lays the full charge of their sins on the Saviour; so that forgiveness may be granted in righteousness. He is then “faithful and just” to forgive, because every claim of righteousness is met in the Saviour’s death.

Nor is the righteousness established in Christ’s death on the cross restricted to the salvation of sinners. It has laid the basis for the full display of God’s glory in the whole of the universe; so that

His throne may be established and maintained in righteousness for the fulfilment of all His eternal counsels for man’s blessing and His own pleasure.

Grace is now reigning, but it is “through righteousness” (Rom. 6: 21). Christ is to reign in His millennial kingdom, but it will be with “a sceptre of righteousness” (Heb. 1: 8). Ultimately God will dwell eternally with men, but it will be in “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3: 13). All glory to God and blessing to man is secured in Christ’s death on the cross; since:—

“God’s righteousness is there proclaimed,

His mercy’s depths are known,
While to the full Thou hast maintained

The glory of His throne.”

THE PRAYER MEETING

A. J. POLLOCK.

A sister in the Lord came recently, asking advice as to attendance at the assembly prayer-meeting. She was distressed, for she confessed that she derived neither spiritual inspiration nor comfort from it, but rather weariness of spirit. Was she to continue attending the prayer-meeting under such conditions, or cease to attend?

Prayer is looked upon in Scripture as a very real exercise on the part of each member of the assembly. Our Lord prayed all night, (See, Luke 6: 12). The prophet Ezekiel drew attention to three men of righteousness, intercessors in their day, Noah, Daniel, and

Job, mentioning them twice in one chapter. (See, Ezek. 14: 14, 20). We are exhorted to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5: 17). We read also, “In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4: 6).

Then we have the great example of the early church, “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2: 42). It is striking in this Scripture, whilst prayers are emphasized, it says nothing about Bible-readings, though we should be the last to belittle them. That

most useful meeting has under God's good hand been the means of immense blessing to multitudes of His beloved people, in the increased knowledge of the word of God. The Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy, his loved son in the faith, to "give attendance to **reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4: 13).

Yet there must be something radically wrong when many saints gather for the breaking-of-bread, and only few are found at the Bible-reading, and alas! even less at the prayer-meeting, when a mere handful are present.

We are aware that meetings held on a week-day are bound to be smaller, seeing some may be lawfully detained by business claims, and some are tied at home, caring for young children and other duties. But with every allowance for contingencies, it seems strange that frequently even the Bible-reading should be somewhat better attended than the even more important prayer-meeting.

Perhaps one of our sister's experiences would give an obvious point to her question. She was present at a prayer-meeting where one brother occupied 21 minutes in prayer, a brother followed with a 20 minutes long prayer, and yet a third followed with another 20 minutes long prayer. No wonder such a meeting was a weariness to the flesh. Did not our Lord warn His disciples, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. 6: 7).

The longest recorded prayer in Scripture was that of the youthful King Solomon on the very special occasion of the dedication of the newly erected Temple at Jerusalem. In that prayer there are nine definite petitions, covering an immense amount of ground, and yet each petition is presented in a few well-chosen all-embracing words, and all can be read reverently in five or six minutes. Here is an example we might well study, and derive salutary lessons therefrom.

One often feels, if we could behold our Lord **visibly** in our midst at the assembly prayer-meeting as gathered to His name, how our prayers would be much more reverent, and with a more profound sense of the One we are addressing. On such an occasion our very attitude would bespeak reverence. We would not transgress were we before an earthly monarch; how much more so, when we are addressing One, whose presence fills the whole universe.

If we realize the Lord's presence in our midst, by faith and in the Spirit's power, would we dare to expound Scripture at length to Him, who is the Divine Author of all Scripture? We remember well a meeting, when there were two men present, who invariably gave addresses on such occasions. On this occasion others spoke so that they were unable to give their usual addresses. They made up for this by giving their addresses to the assembly in the form of prayer. These prayers were really addressed to the saints and not to God, and one could scarcely think that these lengthy expositions of

Scripture, under cover of prayer, rose any higher than the ceiling of the hall in which they were spoken.

We may well ponder seriously over these things. We can thank God that, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is LIBERTY" (2 Cor. 3: 17), — liberty for the Spirit, and not for the flesh. There is no mistaking the liberty of the Spirit, and if this was manifestly present when we come together in prayer, we should soon find increased numbers attending.

Thank God, for the handful that do attend the assembly prayer-meeting. It is there we should hope for the spiritual revival we all long for. We cannot throw stones at each other, for we are all to blame, but there is surely room for real exercise about these things.

Scripture often pulls us up with a sudden shock. We get a striking example of this in the address to the assembly at Laodicea in Revelation 3. In that assembly the great evil was COMPLACENCY. There is a startling and humbling contrast between the high and exalted opinion they had of themselves, and their actual condition in the eyes of Him, who walked observantly in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. This had a voice to them in the then condition of that assembly. It has likewise a loud voice to us, living, as we are, in the last days of the church's history upon earth, waiting for the blessed shout of the Lord to call us to be for ever with Himself.

These Laodicean boasters claimed

to possess spiritual riches, to be increased with spiritual goods, to have no need of anything. How absolutely crushing was our Lord's rejoinder, "Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked" (Rev. 3: 17).

You may exclaim, that we have not got to such extremes as marked these Laodiceans. There the Lord is seen standing outside the professed Christian circle, knocking at a closed door, if perchance an individual may respond, and open the door of his heart to the Lord, to have Him sup with him, and still better to be called to sup with his Lord, the greatest height of spiritual bliss.

Yes, thank God, COMPLACENCY has not reached, as yet, to these terrible extremes, but is there not a danger of its beginning unconsciously and insidiously, and the state of many a prayer-meeting being an index of it? To realize this danger is half-way to meeting it.

If we all were truly concerned before God in this matter, what searchings of heart there would be, what confessions of lukewarmness to be made. The Lord would most surely grant a gracious response. Spiritual revival would set in, the prayer-meeting would take on a new vitality, and recover its true and proper place in our midst.

If only one of us were to come into a cold and formal prayer-meeting with true exercise before the Lord, such an one would bring

in fresh life to it, and it might be the beginning of happier days.

This would be the advice we would humbly offer to any enquirer. How good it would be to

be overcomers in such circumstances. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3: 21).

SEPARATION

G. S. HEPBURN.

IT is not in any ecclesiastical sense that the word "separation" is used in this paper, nor is it in any pharisaical sense. The word Pharisee means separatist, but the Lord when here castigated the Pharisees in the most scathing manner describing them as hypocrites, serpents and vipers, as we see in Matthew 23. The Lord preserve reader and writer from their kind of separation.

It is separation from the world and the evil in it. We read that "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1: 3, 4). Again, He prayed to the Father, not that we should be taken out of the world, but that we should be kept from the evil; and He added, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17: 15-16).

In Genesis 6 we read that man had filled the earth with corruption and violence to such an extent that God repented that He had made man on the earth, and He decided to destroy mankind by the deluge. Only Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and a fresh start was made with him, his wife, his two sons and his sons' wives, eight

souls in all. But, alas, Noah, just man though he was, planted a vineyard, drank of the wine and was drunken and ere long things were bad as before, the tower of Babel, man's attempt to dethrone God, being witness.

In Genesis 12 we have a new departure in the ways of God when He called out Abram from country, kindred and father's house, to go to a land that should be shown unto him, and the New Testament reference to this is that, "he . . . obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11: 8). And such has been God's way since, and such is His way today. He calls His people out to walk with Himself in separation from the world, with a heavenly city and country in view.

Lot, Abraham's nephew, comes into the picture, though we do not read of his being called in the way that Abraham was, but what a difference in the history of these two men!

When God gives a person's history he records his failure as well as his faith, and we find that Abraham on several occasions departed from the path of faith, particularly when he went down

into Egypt, type of the world. Otherwise he was known by his tent and his altar; his tent signifying his pilgrim character, and his altar signifying his communion with God. While Lot had his tent to begin with, we never read of his having an altar, and here we find the root cause of all his terrible failure. To this we do well to take heed.

First he "pitched his tent toward Sodom," (Gen. 13: 12); another figure of the world, described as an exceedingly wicked city. But on the contrary we read of the Lord appearing to Abraham. Read carefully Genesis 12: 7; 15: 1-6; 17: 1-8, and 18: 1-10. These were indeed red-letter days in Abraham's history, and in John 14: 21-23 we have what answers to this in our day. What do we know of this blessed experience?

Alas, for poor Lot! He knew nothing of this, and when the heavenly visitors came to Sodom they found him sitting in the gate of the city. He had scrapped his tent, becoming a citizen of that wicked city, and, it would seem, a member of the council.

And how different the answer he received when he invited them into his house, from that which Abraham received. "Nay, but we will abide in the street all night (Gen. 19: 2). Under pressure they did go in eventually, but with what dreadful results, and, but for the Sodomites being smitten with blindness, they would have been even more dreadful.

Nor is that the end of the story. Evil communications corrupt good

manners, and Lot sinned with his two daughters, as the result of which Ammon was born to one, and Moab to the other, and the Ammonites and the Moabites became relentless enemies of God's people Israel. And here the history of Lot ends, we do not even read of his death.

Much more is recorded as to Abraham, let it suffice meantime to refer to his old age. "And Abraham was old and well stricken in age, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things" (Gen. 24: 1.) In the New Testament he has honourable mention, his name being found some fifty times. Friend of God, and father of the faithful was he; faith being the outstanding feature of his character. He was "strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. 4: 20).

As for Lot, we learn that he did not have one happy day in Sodom, since, "that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day" (2 Peter 2: 5-9). And what a mighty contrast between the end of these two men, and their posterities.

In Abraham we have an outstanding example and great encouragement. In Lot a most solemn warning, and depend on it the root cause of all spiritual weakness and poverty is worldliness in one form or another, appealing to the flesh within us.

In concluding this paper a brief reference to the Moabites, Ruth, may not be amiss.

The Moabites it was, who instigated by Balak their King, hired

Baalam to curse Israel, (howbeit the Lord turned the curse to a blessing) and on account of this they were debarred from entrance into the congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation, as recorded in Deuteronomy 23: 3-6.

Ruth evidently escaped the ban, resolutely turning her back on her country and identifying herself with the God of Israel; and not only was she received into the congregation

of the Lord, but she became the wife of Boaz, in the line on which David the King was born, and further received honourable mention in relation to the birth of the Saviour in Matthew 1: 5.

What a testimony is this to the grace of God on the one hand and on the other to the inspiration of the Scriptures which so consistently call on us as believers to be in separation from the world.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 24: 1 - 27: 13)

THE last of these cities, upon which a "burden" rested, being disposed of, the prophetic strain moves on to make known in a more general way what would be the state of things at the end of the age. It is a dark and sorrowful picture: the whole earth turned upside down and the inhabitants scattered, no matter to what class they belonged. And not only Israel is in view, for though the closing accusations of verse 5 may have special reference to them, since laws and ordinances were specially given to them, the covenant of law, given at Sinai, could not be termed "everlasting." The reference here is rather to the covenant established with Noah and the new world of nations of which he was the head, according to Genesis 9: 9.

The first 12 verses of the chapter are filled with the gloom of earthly judgments, but when we reach verse 13 light begins to break, for a remnant of God-fearing ones is indicated, under the same figure as was used in chapter 17: 6. So that,

even in the darkest hour, a note of praise will be sounded and God will be acknowledged and honoured; and that in all parts, for "the fires," is a poetic expression for the east, and "isles of the sea" for the west.

Thus God will have His witnesses in all parts, though in the presence of abounding evil and the judgments of God they may only be conscious of their leanness. Thus indeed it ever is and must be with God's true servants. It is the false who speak of their fatness, as "rich and increased with goods." God may empower His servants by His Spirit, but they are conscious of nothing but leanness in themselves.

Verses 17-20, give us a graphic description of the terrible overturning of all human order and institutions, that lies ahead. Six times in these verses is "the earth" mentioned, referring rather to the established order and world-system of things than to the actual earth-crust on which we live. All

will be violently shaken before they are removed by the presence of the Lord.

The three verses that close the chapter show the effect of His presence. Not only will punishment fall on the kings of the earth but also "the host of the high ones . . . on high" will be judged and "shut up in the prison." What this means comes out more fully in the book of Revelation, where we learn of Satan and his angels being cast out of the heavens, and then Satan himself bound in the abyss, when the kings of the earth, under the leadership of the beast, are consigned to their doom. God will judge not only the nations but also the Satanic powers behind the nations. We get a glimpse of these powers in Daniel 10: 13, 20.

Then shall be established a new order of things in the presence of which the very institutions of heaven will be confounded, for Jehovah of hosts will reign in glory "before His ancients." This is a remarkable word. He does not reign **over** His ancients when He reigns in Zion and Jerusalem, but **before** them. They are witnesses of His glory, and remind us of the "elders" of Revelation 5. The word here might be translated "elders," we understand, which confirms the thought.

And, who is this Jehovah of hosts? He is evidently "the King of glory," but, as Psalm 24 asks twice, "Who is this King of glory?" We know He is the One who bowed His sacred head in death for our sakes, according to Psalm 22. So our chapter ends with

the power of evil — both in its fountain head and in its ramifications — smitten from the earth and the Lord Jesus enthroned at earth's centre and reigning before the delighted eyes of His ancients.

No wonder therefore that chapter 25 opens with a note of praise. The Lord will then have visibly done wonderful things, and His counsels of old will have been fulfilled in faithfulness and truth. When these things come to pass it will be easy to sing the note of praise, but it is our privilege as Christians to praise before they have come to pass: to —

"Sing — till heaven and earth
surprising,
Reigns the Nazarene alone."

When the glad millennial day dawns it will mean the overthrow of man's strong cities and of the terrible nations that built them. It will also mean the shelter and uplifting of the godly remnant, as indicated in verse 4. Jehovah will prove Himself to be for them "a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat." We turn to chapter 32: 2, and we find that the same two things are to be found in a Man: truly an extraordinary statement, for an ordinary man in a tornado is but the sport of the elements and no refuge at all. In very deed, the MAN of chapter 32 is no ordinary man, but to be identified with the Jehovah of our chapter. We know Him as the Lord Jesus Christ.

The power of the great adversary, and of the nations who have become his tools, having been dis-

posed of, full earthly blessing will be brought to pass, described as a feast of fat things and of old, well-matured wine. It may have been to this that our Lord referred, when He uttered the words recorded in Matthew 26: 29. The day of earthly joy is coming, and it will extend to "all peoples," for the word there is in the plural. Yet the centre of it will be "this mountain," referring to mount Zion, mentioned in the last verse of the previous chapter. Jerusalem doubtless is indicated, but mentioned in such a way as to emphasize that the blessing will be given as an act of mercy and not as the reward of merit.

Moreover, there will be a work Divinely wrought in the hearts of all who enter that glad age. The power of the adversary has cast a covering, or a veil over all the peoples, and it will be completely removed. The Apostle Paul uses a similar figure in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4, only applying it more particularly to Israel, based upon the veil that Moses wore. Yet he makes it more general in chapter 4, when he claimed that he put no veil on the Gospel he preached, and that any veil that existed had its seat in those that were lost. When today the veil is lifted from a sinner's eyes, and he discovers his Saviour, it is the gracious work of the Spirit of God. Today it is an individual matter. In that day it will be on a world-wide scale, and it will result in the discovery that is brought before us in verse 9.

But we must not overlook the great statements of verse 8, particularly the one that Paul quotes in 1 Corinthians 15: 54, as finding fulfilment in the day of resurrection.

Whether the saints who lived before Christ came, discerned the resurrection in these glorious words, may be open to question, but we now know what they infer, and in the faith of them the victory enters our hearts, and we have it before the actual day of resurrection dawns. Death being removed, the tears, that by reason of it have been on innumerable faces, will be wiped away for ever, and the "rebuke," or "reproach" of His people will be gone for ever too. Primarily no doubt, His "people" here refers to the redeemed and born again Israel, who will enter the millennial age.

But it will be true for all saints — those who by resurrection enter the heavenly world, as well as those blessed upon the earth. Through all the ages God's saints have walked in reproach. Enoch must have looked odd in his day, and certainly Abraham in his. From a worldly standpoint how foolish of Moses to leave the splendid place he had in the court of Pharaoh! And so we might continue till we come to Paul and his associates who were "fools for Christ's sake." What are we who profess the name of Christ? Have we so accommodated ourselves to the spirit of the age that reproach for Christ is hardly known by us? If so, we shall miss in large measure the thrill of that hour, which will surely come, for "the Lord hath spoken it."

The salvation which will reach Israel in that day will be wholly and obviously of the Lord, and publicly owned as such. The godly, who will enjoy the salvation, will be those who have ceased from their own efforts and have waited for

Him to intervene on their behalf, just as today the sinner who receives the salvation of his soul does so when he learns to condemn himself, ends his strivings, and trusts in the Saviour. Then too he gets deliverance from his spiritual foes, just as Israel will get deliverance from Moab and other enemies, as the closing verses of our chapter show. In that day they will exclaim as they see the glorified Jesus, "Lo, this is our God."

Then in the opening verse of chapter 26, we get the jubilant song that will be heard in the land of Judah in that day. The prophecy still centres geographically in Jerusalem and mount Zion. The city will at last be strong inasmuch as its protection will be the salvation which God will have appointed. No other city has been besieged so often as Jerusalem, but at last its sorrows will be over, and its inhabitants be described as "the righteous nation which keepeth the truth."

The sequence of thought here is to be noted. First, salvation, then, righteousness, thirdly, peace. But peace is to be enjoyed as the mind and heart is stayed in simple trust on the Lord. Hence the exhortation of verse 4, where the name of the Almighty is, so to speak, duplicated. It is "JAH-JEHOVAH," to emphasize that He is indeed "the Rock of Ages" — as shown in the margin of our reference bibles. Isaiah uttered this exhortation to the men of his day, before God's delivering might was manifested. It is equally valid for us today; indeed more so, since to us God has been made known in Christ in a far more intimate way.

But this deliverance for the godly will involve the work of judgment upon the world of the ungodly, as verses 5-11 show. God is presented as the most "Upright" One in verse 7. He weighs the path of the just, which has a character in keeping with Himself. So, while the godly wait for His judgments to be made manifest, His name is the object of their desire and they are sustained by the remembrance of Him as He had been revealed to them. This saying is sometimes linked with 1 Corinthians 11: 24, 25, "in remembrance of Me," and not unjustly, we think. Only, their desires and remembrance will be directed to One, who had made Himself known to them in the past by deliverance through judgment. We remember the One who expressed Divine love through death on our behalf, while our desire goes out for His return in glory.

This passage is in complete accord with the fact that the Gospel is being preached not to convert the world but to gather out of it "a people for His name" (Acts 15: 14). Favour has been "shewed to the wicked" for over nineteen centuries, and unrighteousness is still as rampant, if not more rampant, than ever. The hour approaches when God's judgments will be let loose in all the earth, and then at last those who come out of the judgments will have learned righteousness. Verse 10 also shows that what is wrong is not merely man's circumstances but man himself. Put "the wicked" into "the land of uprightness" and still "will he deal unjustly." Many an ardent Communist or Socialist agitates, and labours to improve the conditions under which the

masses of mankind live, under the mistaken notion that granted right conditions all would be well. The fact is that the root of the evil lies in man, and the wrong conditions have been created by him. Put fallen man in his unconverted state into the most ideal conditions and he will overturn and mar them.

In verses 12-18, the prophet addresses the Lord on behalf of the remnant who fear Him. He confesses what a redeemed Israel will be brought to confess in the coming day. The peace that they then will enjoy is wholly the work of God. They will no longer speak of their works but of the works He had wrought on their behalf. Then as a result of this they are delivered from the old idolatrous powers that formerly lorded it over them. No other name but that of Jehovah will be on their lips, and the very memory of their dead idols will have perished. Then they confess that only under the chastisements that God inflicted on them, have they turned to Him and been increased. Their own efforts produced no deliverance for themselves nor for the earth.

Verses 19-21, give the answer of God to this prayer of confession. "Thy dead shall live, My dead bodies shall arise" (New Trans.). Here we have in a brief statement what is given in more detail in Ezekiel 37, and alluded to in Daniel 12: 2 — the national reviving of Israel, when God raises up and gathers His elect. They had been dwelling "in dust" — or, as it is put in Daniel, sleeping "in the dust of the earth" — they were to awake and sing. It is worthy of note that, when proving to the Sad-

duces from Scripture the fact of the resurrection, our Lord did not quote these scriptures but went back to His words to Moses.

Though many Jews are now back in the land of their fathers this national reviving of a spiritual sort has not yet come to pass, nor will it until "the indignation," of verse 20 has taken place. We identify the "indignation" with the "great tribulation" of Matthew 24: 21, which in its most intense form will fall upon the Jew, though "all the world" (Rev. 3: 10), will come under the stroke. The God-fearing remnant, owned here as "My people," are called upon to hide themselves during that terrible period, and this anticipates the fuller instructions given by the Lord in Matthew 24: 15-21.

The severity of that hour and its world-wide effects are stated in the last verse of our chapter. For well-nigh two thousand years the Lord has been in **His place of mercy** towards rebellious man. Then it is said, "The Lord cometh **out of His place to punish**," not the Jew only but "the inhabitants of the earth" generally. Judgment is spoken of as His "strange" work, but it will come to pass in its season, and we must never forget it. Israel's revival will take place when the tribulation is over. The believer today may look to be taken out of the very "hour" of the coming tribulation, according to Revelation 3: 10.

Chapter 27 continues the theme in somewhat poetic language. Note how four times is repeated the phrase, "In that day." Judgment in the first place will reach the evil

power that lies beneath the restless "sea" of nations. This "dragon" that is in the sea can be no other than Satan, and Revelation 20 reveals how he will be dealt with. Then at last Israel will be no longer a fruitless vine but rather "A vineyard of red wine." Then peace will ensue and Israel will be like a tree that is full of blossom, and fill the face of the world with fruit; becoming what God from the outset intended them to be. This will never come to pass as the result of their efforts. They will have to fulfil what is said at the beginning of verse 5, "let him take hold of My strength."

Verses 7-11 however, show that this desirable end will only be reached when God brings to a finish His governmental judgments upon that people. There is "the iniquity of Jacob" which will have to be purged from them by these severe dealings from the hand of God. Yet, even so, the smitings that will fall upon them will not reach the severity of those that will be visited upon the nations who smote them. Upon these there will fall unsparing judgment, but for Jacob the smitings will reach to the altars and groves and sun-images which shall be ground to powder. Thus the very judgments that God will inflict upon His people, largely by the hand of other people, will have the effect of destroying the very things that had been a snare to them.

In verse 12 we meet with the phrase, "In that day" for the third time. There is to be once more a gathering of His people from the land of Egypt, but this time in a very different way. Then Moses brought them out in their thousands as a nation, but in the coming day it will be an individual matter. One by one they will be put right with God, and so gathered to the place of blessing.

But verse 13 declares that in that day, though there must be the individual work indicated, there will be great publicity about it. The "great trumpet" shall sound, announcing this mighty work of God, as also our Lord Himself declared in Matthew 24: 31. Publicly the house of Jacob has been disciplined and overthrown through the long and weary centuries: as publicly shall they be recovered, restored and blessed, when God's work with them and in them is brought to completion. Then at last in the holy mount at Jerusalem they shall give to the Lord that worship which is His due. What a day that will be!

But how privileged are we, Christians, who may worship God revealed as Father, while praise is still silent in Zion. We worship today in spirit and in truth; presently God will be addressed as "Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psa. 22: 3).

No guidance of another can ever come in between an individual's conscience and God. In popery this individual responsibility to God is taken away.

“SANCTIFIED IN CHRIST JESUS”

(EXTRACTED)

LET us first of all make the enquiry:

What is sanctification?

It is a common thought that it means a growth in holiness; a process by which a person may become more and more holy, and so fitted to dwell in heaven. But this is not the way in which Scripture presents it, though doubtless practical holiness is closely connected with sanctification. The simple meaning of the word is, to be **separated**, or **set apart**, for a special purpose.

When we read of a person or thing being sanctified, two ideas are presented to our minds. First, they are set apart **from** something; **from** evil in persons or in the world. Second, they are set apart **for** a certain purpose. Now this second thought gives us the primary idea according to the Scriptures. An Old Testament verse gives us this primary thought very clearly, “The Lord hath **set apart** him that is godly **for Himself**” (Psa. 4: 3). To sanctify then is to set apart for the will and service and pleasure of God.

We may refer to a few other scriptures in confirmation of this. For instance, we read, “Thou shalt . . . sanctify the altar” (Exod. 40: 10), and again, “All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord” (Deut. 15: 19). This cannot mean that this piece of temple furniture or these animals could grow in holiness. It does mean that they were

to be set apart from all ordinary purposes to be wholly for the use of the Lord.

Coming to the New Testament we find that on two occasions our blessed Lord spoke of sanctification in connection with Himself. He was, “Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world” (John 10: 36); and again He said, speaking of His return to the glory of the Father, “I sanctify Myself” (John 17: 19). Now it is quite impossible to think that in these statements the Lord meant that He had become, or would become, more holy. He is essentially, “The Holy One,” and even as born into the world His body is spoken of as, “that Holy Thing” (Luke 1: 35). But it is blessed to know that, as sent into this world from the Father, He was altogether set apart from the world for the Father’s will and pleasure; and that, as gone back to the Father, He has set Himself apart from the earth for the service of His people — that they may be set apart by the truth for Himself.

Two more scriptures will confirm this use of the word in connection with believers. We read of “the church of God which is at Corinth . . . sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1: 2); and again, written to the same believers, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified” (1 Cor. 6: 11). Did this mean that they had been making advance in practical holiness? It did not, for alas! they were going on badly, and allowing in their midst many things that were decidedly unholy. But this did not

alter the fact that God had set them apart for Himself.

The Apostle did not exhort them to be holy **in order to be sanctified**, but to be holy **because they were sanctified**. The scriptures quoted may suffice to show the fundamental meaning of the term.

We may next enquire,

Who is it that is sanctified?

The verse we have just referred to, in 1 Corinthians 6, plainly shows that all true believers are sanctified. They had been steeped in sin but they had not only been washed and justified, but sanctified also. They had not been going on well, but this did not alter the fact of their sanctification; rather the fact of their sanctification demanded lives that should be in keeping with it.

Now the word, "saint," comes from the same root as the word, "sanctified" and simply means a person set apart, and not a person of special gift and sanctity, such as an apostle. The Apostle Paul was truly a most devoted servant but he was a saint by the call of God, just as the Corinthian believers were. This we see in 1 Corinthians 1: 2, being sanctified in Christ Jesus they were **saints** by the call of God.

But if all believers are sanctified we may next enquire:

How are they sanctified?

Now just as our justification is connected with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, so our sanctification is connected with all three

Divine Persons. If we turn to Hebrews 10: 9, 10, and then to 1 Peter 1: 2, this is manifest; for in the former passage our sanctification is according to the will of God on the one hand, and effected by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, on the other. In the latter passage our election has been made good by "sanctification of the Spirit."

So we may state the matter thus: the Father willed our sanctification, the Son came to do the work, on the ground of which it can be accomplished, and the Spirit came to give effect to the counsel of the Father and the work of the Son by working with us and in us.

As to these three things a homely illustration may help. Someone sees displayed in a shop window articles which exactly meet a need they had long felt. Not having sufficient cash with them they could not go in and buy, but mentally they set apart one of the articles for themselves. The next day with sufficient cash, into the shop they go, and purchase it. The article is taken out of the window and set apart for the buyer, on account of the price having been paid. Later, by arrangement, a member of the buyer's family calls with the car and takes home the article that has been paid for, so that it may now serve the purchaser's will and pleasure.

So, in the **mind** and **purpose** of God the believer is chosen to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit, just as at the cross the work was done which sets us apart **judicially** — that is, in accord with Divine righteousness.

The Holy Spirit sets us apart in **actuality** by imparting to us a new nature through the new birth. Thus it is that the believer stands in a new position, as set apart for God.

This leads us to ask,

How does this positional sanctification express itself?

We have been viewing the matter as God's own act, setting the believer apart for Himself, according to His will, and the sacrificial work of Christ, and the operation of the Spirit of God. In all this there can be no progress. Yet this Divine act has a practical end in view, which is progressively reached.

The difference between the two things may be illustrated thus. A man hews a stone from a quarry, that it may fill a designated place in a certain building. As soon as it was hewn from the quarry the stone was set apart for that place. Subsequently much had to be done to the stone to fit it for the place. Every blow of the chisel, knocking off a bit more of the old quarry, would be something like practical and progressive sanctification. But even so, no amount of fashioning will add to the fact of its original setting apart for the place in the building.

There are accordingly some scriptures of great importance which certainly do speak of this **progressive** sanctification. Take, for instance, 1 Thessalonians 5: 23, where Paul prays, "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly;" no part of our complex beings is to be left out. The sancti-

fication is to affect, "spirit and soul and body." This means that every part of us, our minds, our affections, our bodies are to be increasingly detached from all the lust, corruption and pollutions of the flesh and of the world.

But now a last question remains:

How is this practical and progressive sanctification brought about?

The answer is, it is brought about by a continual operation of God's Spirit upon the new nature, which is in every believer, developing it in communion with an attractive Object, outside itself.

We have already referred to John 17: 19, where we learn that the attractive Object is Christ Himself in the glory. The new nature must have an Object outside itself. God only is sufficient for Himself. Man must have an object; and the new nature is a dependent nature. A well-instructed servant of Christ has said, "Everything that diminishes our perception of Him **there** diminishes our practical sanctification **here**." It is as we behold His glory that we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (1 Cor. 4: 18).

Our souls are brought into occupation with an Object outside the world by the truth. Hence that word of our Lord, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17: 17). We need therefore to cleave to the Word of God, and study it with prayerful care. It searches us and detects in us all that is merely of the world and contrary to Christ. But it also reveals Christ to us, what He was

here on earth, and what He now is in His glory as the Man of God's counsels — Man of an entirely new order, the Leader of a chosen race.

As He is thus before us we grow more like Him, for we are sanctified "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 2). Thus we are definitely told that we are set apart to obey, and the character of our obedience is the obedience of Christ. Obedience demanded by the law of Moses was one thing. The obedience of Christ is quite another, for there was no element of compulsion with Him. He came into the world saying, "I delight to do Thy will O God." He never did anything apart from the Father's will. It meant for Him the giving up of all that men count dear. He was "obedient unto death."

As for ourselves, according to our nature we just did our own will, and turned every one to our own way. It may have been a comparatively decent way or a thoroughly bad way, still it was our own way. Paul followed his own way until he was converted, and honestly thought he was doing

well, but never till he was converted did he say, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

How wonderful then was the path of obedience trodden by the Lord Jesus Christ, and trodden in measure by His servant Paul. Now that is the aim God had in view in setting us apart for Himself. We are sanctified to do the will of God.

We must ever remember that this practical and progressive sanctification does not improve our title to heaven. It does however improve our fitness to be here on earth for the pleasure of God, as a "vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2: 21).

So the aim of every sanctified one is to do the will of God. We are conscious that "in many things we all offend," as the Apostle James has reminded us, so there is failure and breakdown, which we have humbly to confess. But let us ever keep Christ in His glory before us, and make it our aim to do the will of God in obedience, cost what it may.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE more we examine the Gospel of John, the more we shall see One, who speaks and acts as a Divine Person — one with the Father, yet always as One who has taken the place of a Servant, and takes nothing to Himself, but receives all from His Father. "I have glorified Thee:" "now glorify Me." What language of equality of nature and love! He does not say, "And now I will glorify myself." He has taken the place of man to receive all, though it be a glory which He had with the Father before the world was. This is of exquisite beauty. I add, it was out of this the enemy sought to seduce Him, in vain, in the wilderness."

(J.N. DARBY.)

SHADOW OR SUBSTANCE?

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE question may be asked: Which comes first; the shadow or the substance? Thinking of the Old and New Testaments, the obvious answer would be: The shadows came first, followed by the Substance. That answer is correct as far as **time** is concerned. But as a matter of fact, the substance is always first. Were there no substance, there would be no shadow.

So it was with the types and shadows connected with the Tabernacle in the wilderness. They were, "a shadow of things to come; but the body [substance] is of Christ" (Col. 2: 17). Men were permitted to see the shadows first, but God had His beloved Son before Him, and knowing the end from the beginning, He designed these shadows to prefigure our Lord as a Man amongst men in His sinless life, His sacrificial death and resurrection to glory.

We must never forget that the One, who was thus prefigured, was none less than the Son, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is in the unity of the Godhead. The first three verses of Hebrews I set this forth very clearly. God has now spoken unto us "by His Son:" that is, when the Son spoke, none less than God spoke.

In this scripture note carefully that our Lord is said to have been appointed "Heir of all things," before it is stated that He "made the worlds." The order of these wonderful statements is most illuminating. The first carries our thoughts back into **eternity**; the

second to His action at the beginning of **time**. Then we have what our Lord was in Manhood and in time: "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person;" finishing with the reason why He came to earth, even to die a sacrificial death, and in resurrection to take His seat at "the right hand of the Majesty on high."

In Exodus sixteen and in Leviticus seven chapters are occupied with the Tabernacle and the offerings. Many, alas! see nothing more in these shadows than a dry recital of meaningless customs of a primitive race long centuries ago; but this is surely because they have never made heart acquaintance with the great Antitype, who is prefigured. On the other hand the late Sir Robert Anderson, who wrote a number of helpful books, put it on record that it was by means of the spiritual lessons, learned from the types and shadows, that he was led to take a definite stand as a Christian.

What then are the outstanding features of the typical system? First, there is brought before us the holiness of God in His nature, and His absolute righteousness in His dealings with sinful men. These cannot be over-emphasized in our minds for they cannot be deviated from for a single moment. But if these only had been in question, they could well have brought man's sinful history to a close, and judgment might have swept the offenders off the face of the earth.

God is marked by pity and compassion, for "God is love" (I

John 4: 8). Love is His nature, and that nature must find a channel through which to express itself. Man failed even under the best conditions, and we may read God's pathetic lament over His chosen people, who were, "the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted" when, "it is burned with fire, it is cut down" (Psa. 80: 15, 16). Had the love of God no resource? Was He baffled? A thousand times, No! Immediately following we find the words, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." God's resource is in Christ, in whom is no failure, no disappointment. Our Lord, when on earth often took upon His lips the title, Son of Man; as, for instance, when He told His hearers that, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10).

The typical system brings before us, in the second place, that the only way in which a thrice-holy God can be approached by sinful man is by an atoning sacrifice. The mercy-seat was the spot where God could be approached once a year with the blood of sacrifice. We can visualize the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle, filled with the Divine presence, and the slab of pure gold resting upon the ark; the gold representing Divine righteousness. On the great day of atonement the High Priest entered with the blood of the sin-offering and sprinkled it on the gold and seven times before it. Thus the demand of righteousness was met, and the throne of righteousness became a mercy-seat.

So in the New Testament we read of Christ being, "set forth . . . a propitiation [the same word in the original as mercy-seat] through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3: 25). And again, twice in John's first Epistle is Christ our "propitiation" so that the need of any poor sinner can be met. Thus "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psa. 85: 10). What a triumph of Divine love!

The unending sacrifices on Jewish altars, whether, "Burnt," "meat," "peace," "sin," "trespass," presented in type the atoning death of our Lord from different aspects. Putting them all together we get a full view of what that death meant for God and for us.

An illustration may help here. We all know that light is colourless, yet hidden in it are vivid colours, revealed in the beautiful hues of the rainbow. So we learn in the Gospels the great fact of the death of Christ, whilst we go to the indications given to us in Old Testament types, illumined by the teaching of New Testament epistles, to fill out for us in detail the meaning of that wondrous death.

We are told of course, "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," and that therefore God in them had "no pleasure" (Heb. 10: 4, 6). They were but shadows pointing on to the great substance. When on the cross the Lord cried, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the

bottom" (Matt. 27: 51). This was an act of God, showing that the glorious substance having come, **the shadows must pass away.**

The sacrifices under the law fell into two classes:— those to which the expression "sweet savour" was applied, and those that could not be so described. The "sweet savour" offerings were the burnt, the meat and the peace offerings. Those not so described were the sin and trespass offerings. Yet all were descriptive from different points of view of the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The former looked at the atoning death of our Lord as being the supreme act of devotedness to the Father's will, and therefore the delight of the Father's heart. The latter looked at the same death as meeting the awful judgment of God against our sins. This latter aspect of the death of Christ is the one that an anxious sinner first realizes.

When we think of the burnt offering, we realize that never was God more glorified and never was our Lord more dear to Him than when Christ, "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9: 14). The Lord's supper affords a beautiful reminder of the "sweet savour" aspect of the death of Christ. The Apostle wrote, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10: 16). What a fearsome cup of Divine wrath the Lord took from the hand of God, the draining of which to its last dark drop, turned it into the cup of blessing which we bless.

The meat offering set forth our Lord's sinless and perfect life, right up to the moment when He "yielded up the ghost" (Matt. 27: 50). All went up as a "sweet savour" to God.

The peace offering does not signify the making of peace with God, which has been most blessedly and vitally accomplished, but rather the sharing in precious communion with God, of all that wondrous peace and favour before Himself, that the death of Christ has brought us into.

There remain the offerings for sin and for trespass, which were not for a "sweet savour." With the burnt offering the laying on of the hands of the offerer signified that all the value and acceptability of the offering was transferred to his account. He stood in the sweet savour of the offering. The anti-type of this we get in the scripture, "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1: 6). This is the only place in the New Testament where our Lord is described thus.

The sin offering presents the contrast to this, for when the offerer placed his hands on it, all the sins and demerit of the offerer were transferred to the sacrifice, which therefore came under the fire of God's judgment. We are thus reminded of the very solemn scripture, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5: 21).

Another point of contrast between the two kinds of offerings is

that the former were burned on the brazen altar inside the sacred enclosure, whereas the latter were burned "without the camp" (Lev. 4: 12, 21), expressive of God's utmost detestation of sin. It reminds us of the fact that, "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13: 12).

As a last indication of how the offerings for a sweet savour were differentiated from those that were not, we may mention that the Hebrew word for "burning," in connection with the former, is one used in connection with incense when its fragrance is brought out. A completely different word is used for the sin offering, indicating not incense **going up** as a delight to God, but His wrath **poured down** on the sacrifice, until it is utterly consumed. This points forward to the bitter cry of our Lord on the accursed tree, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27: 46). All words fail us, when we would express what our Lord suffered on our account. Eternity will be needed to express our praise.

Creation was necessary to afford a platform on which God could carry out His wondrous plan. The shadows of that plan are given to us in the tabernacle and its services. The earth on which we live is but the scaffolding for the erection of the building of God for all eternity. The sabbath was but a shadow of God's abiding rest, when He will be all and in all for ever and ever.

The scaffolding will be taken down one day. Then, "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 Pet. 3: 10). Then the building of God will arise majestic and eternal to God's glory and everlasting praise. God will yet rest in the complacency of His love, dwelling among His redeemed people, in a scene where there shall be no tears, no pain, no sorrow, no death.

And let us remember that, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Our response surely is, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22: 20).

"The Lord will KEEP the feet of His saints."

(1 Samuel 2: 9.)

KEEP! What a lovely word is recorded for us so many times in Scripture, and how much it means to the redeemed of the Lord. As we journey along our earthly pilgrimage, the difficulties to be encountered are too great, the burdens too heavy, the snares too powerful, and the evil in this present world of corruption too overwhelming — yet what strong consolation is ours by grace. Our blessed Lord not only saves, but He **KEEPS**, even the feeblest of His saints.

NEW TESTAMENT DOXOLOGIES

A. H. STORRIE.

DOXOLOGIES are always uplifting; and the reason is as simple as it is delightful. An ascription of praise and glory to God lifts us out of and above ourselves, and occupies us with Him whom we worship, and whose attributes and ways we seek to celebrate. For this reason the richest and highest worship will have in it as little reference to ourselves as possible.

Similarly with hymns. We are all conscious that the best hymns of worship are those which are full of Christ and of the love and work of God; but hymns that relate a good deal of our personal experience are probably in the majority. A study of the doxologies of Scripture should help to improve the tone of our worship.

As illustrating this, take the doxologies that end each of the five books of the Psalms:—41: 13; 72: 19; 89: 52; 106: 48; 150: 1-6. As is well known the Psalms are largely expressive of the experiences of saints, whether sad or glad, but running through them all is the sustained thought of God in His greatness and sufficiency, the Prime Mover in His own universe. The worship ascribed to Him reaches its climax in the closing Psalm, ending most suitably with the ardent desire, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Jehovah Himself is the Object in each doxology.

We pass over the much used doxology of the latter part of Matthew 6: 13, as its authenticity as Scripture appears to be doubtful, according to the best authorities. It is not found in the best M.S.S., is omitted

in the Revised Version and in Darby's New Translation, and does not occur in the parallel passage in Luke 11: 4. There are magnificent expressions of praise also in the opening chapters of Luke; whether by Mary, or Zacharias, or the angels, or old Simeon; but our object at the moment is to consider the doxologies that occur in the epistles of the New Testament.

We shall find it edifying to consider the truth that leads up to these doxologies, since such consideration may be expected to produce the same result in us. With this in view, let us take the two great doxologies in the Epistle to the Romans; chapters 11: 33-36, and 16: 25-27. What a wealth of truth precedes the first of these: truth revealed and reasoned out under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Having proved the universal sinnership of men, be they pagan, cultured or religious, the Apostle breaks out with the golden words, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in His blood" (New Trans.). The believing sinner is justified and it is God who has justified him, as we see in chapter 8: 33. He is cleared from every charge of guilt, and this justification is by grace, which is the motive and ground of it on the part of God.

He is also justified by the blood of Christ, as we see in chapter 5: 9, the righteous basis of it; and he is justified "by faith," (5: 1), the principle and means by which he gets the blessing. Cleared from the

guilt of his sins, and brought into new life in Christ, he is also delivered from bondage to sin. And further, being delivered from the law by, and brought under the authority of, Christ, risen from the dead, he passes into the position of peace and safety, described in chapter 8. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set free from the law of sin and death, and nothing can separate from the love of God.

Now arises the question that is raised by the irrevocable promises of God, concerning His people Israel, in relation to their present rejection and the salvation of the believing Gentiles. These vital matters the Apostle reconciles in unanswerable terms in chapters 9-11, concluding by showing that God had shut up all, Jew and Gentile, in unbelief, in order that He might show mercy to all.

Is it any wonder that, moved by the Holy Spirit, the heart of the Apostle broke forth into the magnificent doxology that follows, as to the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge, displayed in judgments and ways, that are beyond all our thoughts. All things are of Him, and through Him, and to Him. Hence all glory for ever is ascribed to Him. Amen.

From the height of that doxology, and all the marvellous revelation of truth that led up to it, comes the appeal at the beginning of chapter 12. Have we each responded to this call? Each yielding his or her body as a living sacrifice to God for His pleasure and service? Are we each maintaining thorough-going separation from the world, being transformed by having our minds renewed, occupying them

with the new things of God? Only thus may we each prove for ourselves what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

The remainder of the epistle is rich in practical teaching, as important as it is gracious. Tertius, the amanuensis of the Apostle, having laid down his pen, Paul took it up to write a further doxology with his own hand, ascribing glory to the only wise God through Jesus Christ for ever. This he did in the light of the Gospel he had expounded in the epistle, and also of the "mystery," that had hitherto been kept secret, but was now made known, which mystery he expounded in other epistles.

Surely the result of even a brief consideration of these things should be to stir us to the utmost diligence in seeking to understand and prize the great themes of the Epistle to the Romans, and by the grace of God to live lives characterized by conduct, that befits such blessing as is there revealed.

A Doxology

Oh! depths of the riches
Of wisdom and knowledge,
That God in His goodness,
To us has revealed!
How searchless His judgments,
His ways ever traceless!
To Him be the glory,
For ever, Amen!

Who e'er the Lord's mind knew?
Who could grant Him counsel?
Or who first give to Him,
Reward to receive?
For of Him, and through Him,
And for Him are all things,
To Him be the glory,
For ever, Amen!

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 28: 1 — 35: 10)

HAVING recorded this prediction of the gathering from lands of affliction to Jerusalem of a remnant, who shall worship the Lord there, the prophet again reverted to the denunciation of the existing state of the people. And first Ephraim, that is, the ten tribes, came before him — verses 1-13. They were debased as drunkards and yet wore pride as a crown. Against them the Lord would bring “a mighty and strong one,” like a devastating storm or flood — doubtless the Assyrian army.

Yet, even so, there should be found a “residue of His people,” who should have not a crown of pride but a crown of glory, in the Lord Himself. Though the mass of the people had “erred through wine” and they “stumble in judgment,” these should be like little children, who learn a little at a time, step by step.

The prophet goes on to show that, though God might condescend to deal in this simple way with the mass of the people, even using “stammering lips and another tongue,” yet they refuse to hear and are broken. The Apostle Paul refers to this passage in 1 Corinthians 14: 21, 22, to show that tongues are a sign to unbelievers rather than believers.

Then at verse 14, the prophetic message turns from Ephraim to the scornful men, who were ruling the two tribes from Jerusalem. They had made covenants and formed alliances and thus felt independent of God. Their alliance with some

worldly power or powers — Egypt probably — was really an agreement with death and hell. It was all falsehood and would not stand. What would stand would be God's own work to be accomplished in the coming Messiah.

Verse 16 is quoted by the Apostle Peter in his first epistle (2: 6), and Paul alludes to it in Romans 10: 11. Old Jacob, when dying, alluded to Christ as “the Stone of Israel” (Gen. 49: 24) and here also He is viewed in connection with Israel. In Peter we discover that what will be true for them in the day to come has an application to us today. The Christ was indeed **tried** at His first advent, and revealed as the **sure** foundation, and though He is not yet manifested as the **corner** stone, His preciousness is the portion of those who believe, as Peter tells us. Hence we shall not “make haste,” in alarm or confusion — the New Testament rendering of this word is “ashamed,” and, “confounded.” Note too that this wonderful Stone is laid in Zion, which is symbolic of God acting in His mercy.

But while mercy brings a solid foundation in blessing for the believer, it involves judgment for the unbeliever, as the subsequent verses show. “I will appoint judgment for a line, and righteousness for a plummet;” (New Trans.), and this results in the hail of God's judgment sweeping away the refuges of lies and the covenants with death that men make. This came to pass for Israel shortly after Isaiah's day, and it will come

to pass on a world-wide scale at the end of this age, though judgment is declared to be God's "strange work" (verse 21).

The latter verses of our chapter speak thus of the unsparing judgments of God, described as "a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth," so they are not to be confined to Israel. This shows indeed that the end of the age is mainly in view, and the figure used in verses 23-29, indicates that the harvest of judgment to be reaped is the result of the ploughing and sowing that has preceded it on man's part.

Chapter 29 continues this solemn strain. The city where David dwelt was once Ariel, meaning "The lion of God," but it was to be brought low. Though Hezekiah, a godly king was either on the throne, or shortly to ascend it, the state of the people was as described in verses 9-13. Their eyes were closed to God and to His word. Neither the learned nor the unlearned had any reference to His word, and any fear Godward that possessed them was taught "by the precept of men." Consequently their religion was mere lip-profession without heart-reality, and therefore offensive to God. No wonder that judgment came from the hand of God.

And thus it always must be. We find the Apostle Paul alluding to this scripture in Acts 13: 41, for he spoke of prophets — in the plural — and so he did not only have Habakkuk 1: 5 in his mind. If men close their eyes against the light and turn things upside down, they have to reap the fruit of their

ways. How much of today's religion is just a matter of drawing near to God with the mouth while the heart is far away from Him? Let each of us judge ourselves as to this matter.

Though judgment against Ariel was executed soon after Isaiah's day, yet the terms of the prophecy go far beyond that, for the destruction of her foes is plainly announced in verse 7, and again at the end of the chapter. The adversary will be judged, and those amongst themselves who were watching for iniquity and making a man an offender for a word, will be cut off. This will only come to pass at the end of the age, and then the name of the God of Israel will be feared and sanctified, and those that erred shall be rightly taught.

But at the moment the people had to be called "rebellious children" (30: 1), and the prophet recurs to what they were doing at that time. He said of them, "who take counsel, but not of Me, and who make leagues, but not by My Spirit" (New Trans.). They were relying on Egypt, instead of turning to the Lord, and they are plainly told that Egypt would be a shame and a reproach instead of any profit to them. In the New Translation the latter part of verse 7 runs, "therefore have I named her, Arrogance, that doeth nothing;" with a note that the word used is "Rahab" which has that meaning.

This was bad enough, but in the succeeding verses we get something worse. The people would not hear the word of the Lord. True

prophecy they would not tolerate. They wanted, and would only listen to, "smooth" things, even if they were "deceits." Words that were "right," they refused. So when the Lord said that they would be saved in returning to Him and resting in Him, and that their strength would consequently be found in quietness and confidence in Him, they said, No. They preferred to flee upon horses — for which Egypt was famous. As a result, judgment should fall.

This reliance upon Egypt was specially offensive to God, since from that very people He had delivered them by His judgments at the start of their national history. It is equally offensive to God if the Christian, who has been delivered from the world-system and its coming judgment, goes back to it, relying on its power or its wisdom, instead of finding his resource in God as emergencies arise. Egypt had its pleasures and its treasures, from which Moses turned, and they typify the things which are **not** for the believer.

In verse 18 of our chapter a different note is sounded, which continues to the end. The Lord speaks of mercy that shall yet be shown to them, since He delights in it. Just when everything seems lost, and they are left as a lonely "beacon upon the top of a mountain," mercy will be shown, and as we read these verses (18-33), we see that though the Lord will afflict them in His holy government, yet He will ultimately guide them, so that when they might turn aside to the right hand or the left, He will say, "This is the way, walk ye in

it." Then they will cast away the idols that once they loved.

Prosperity will then set in, but the details of verses 25 and 26 go far beyond anything yet realized, and therefore look on to the last days. So also the tremendous judgments upon the nations, of verses 28 and 30, which will make the song to rise and the holy solemnity to be kept in the mountain of the Lord, who will be known as "the Mighty one [Rock] of Israel.

The closing verses are remarkable. Tophet was a valley close to Jerusalem, defiled by horrible heathen practices (see, 2 Kings 23: 10; Jeremiah 7: 31, 32), so that it becomes a symbol of fiery judgment. Not only will the Assyrian be cast there but also "for the king it is prepared." Who this "king" may be is not specified, but doubtless he is that wilful king of whom Daniel 11: 36 speaks, and whom we identify with the second "beast" of Revelation 13; that one who will come in his own name, as the Lord Jesus predicted in John 5: 43, and who will be received by apostate Jews as their king. He will be the foe within, as the Assyrian the foe without. The doom of both is fixed.

In chapter 31 the prophet returns to the denunciation of his own people who were turning to Egypt. From a political standpoint it doubtless seemed a prudent thing to do. But it involved turning away from God — leaning upon the material and ignoring the spiritual. This is a very easy thing to do, and it is far less excusable in us than it was in them. Alas, how often have we done something similar! But,

in spite of this defection on their part, the Lord was not going utterly to forsake them, as verses 4 and 5 show. Hence the invitation to turn to the Lord and cast away their idols, which lay at the root of all the trouble. If they did this, the Lord would intervene on their behalf and the Assyrian be destroyed.

But how should all this be accomplished? Chapter 32 furnishes the answer, God's King would appear, reigning in righteousness, and a new order of things be established. We are carried back in thought to chapter II, where Christ was presented as the "Shoot" out of Jesse in His Manhood, and as the "Root" out of which Jesse sprang, as to His Deity. He is to be King, and in verse 2 His Manhood is specially emphasized, befitting the fact that as King He is characterized by the seven-fold Spirit of Jehovah, of whom He is the visible Representative.

This world has indeed been swept by tempests of Satanic power, since he is "the prince of the power of the air." In spite of all man's cleverness it has proved itself to be "a dry place," devoid of real refreshment, and also "a weary land," where men spend their lives chasing what proves to be emptiness. The futility of Man's efforts is being manifested daily, and the cry from many may be summarized as "Wanted a man!" Satan's man will first appear, bringing evil to a climax, but to be destroyed by the Man of God's purpose, who will fulfil this word. He will introduce the three things indicated — **salvation, satisfaction, and reinvigoration** in a land no longer weary but rather restful.

If verse 2 gives a lovely picture of what Christ in kingly power will be, verses 3 and 4 reveal that there will be a work wrought in the souls of those who will enter these millennial scenes and enjoy the blessedness of the reign of Christ. They will have become a people of clear vision, of opened ears, of understanding hearts, and of plain and forceful speech. Observe the order. It is just the same today. First apprehension; then heart understanding; and lastly the plain expression of what is believed, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

But the fact that grace will so work in the hearts of some must make more manifest the evil that will still control many others, and of this the succeeding verses speak. Other scriptures show us that such will come under judgment and not enter the kingdom.

In view of these predictions the prophet now makes an appeal to the people of his own day, addressing it to those on whom the lesser responsibility rests. The men of the nation were mainly responsible, but the women too were careless and ease-loving, and upon them also the sorrows would fall until God intervened, not only by Christ, the King reigning in righteousness, but also by the outpouring of the Spirit from on high, of which Joel in his prophecy speaks more specifically.

Thus in this chapter we have brought together both what will be established externally by Christ as King and Saviour, and what will be wrought internally by the poured-out Spirit. Then indeed peace,

quietness and assurance for ever will be reached as the work and effect of righteousness. These things men are seeking today, but they have not got the secure basis on which they can be established. They will come in the future age, but while we wait for that, we who believe enjoy them in a spiritual and individual way, through the faith of the work of Christ and in the power of the indwelling Spirit of God.

Israel will know these things even when judgment falls on others, as verse 19 indicates; and with that assurance the seeds of truth may be sown and cultivated "beside all waters" with confidence in the ultimate result.

Chapters 33, 34 and 35 all have the same general themes: God's judgments on Israel's foes; His disciplinary dealings with His people, leading them ultimately to look to Him; then their blessing under His hand. Let us observe in brief detail how these things are presented.

First, a woe is pronounced against some people who treacherously aim at spoiling the people; and this leads in verse 2 to a touching prayer for the intervention of the Lord, when He will be exalted, and salvation and stability will come to pass. Yet the desolations of verse 8 will precede this, and when a wilderness has been created, Jehovah will rise up and be exalted in judging the foe. There may have been some fulfilment of all this soon after Isaiah's day, but the complete fulfilment waits for the end of the age, when there will arise a man of whom it can be said,

"he hath broken the covenant . . . he regardeth no man" (verse 8). There will be great antagonistic powers in the last days.

Then in verse 13 and onwards, we learn what will be the effect of these judgments upon Israel themselves. They will have a winnowing effect, separating the ungodly from the righteous. Sinners will be found, even in Zion as the result of their hypocrisy, but they will be exposed and be fearful of the fiery judgment; while the really godly, who walk in righteousness will dwell on high in security with necessities supplied; and moreover "the King in His beauty" will be before their eyes. The fierce people will have disappeared and they will meditate upon the terror that once held sway, when their resources had to be counted and weighed.

The chapter closes with a call to view Zion and Jerusalem as at last a city of unruffled peace, of unshaken stability. Jehovah will be to them as a broad, placid river, undisturbed by men's ships of war, which are all dispersed, according to verse 23. The lame take the prey; the inhabitants are saved from their iniquities and their sicknesses, since Jehovah is Judge, King and Saviour. We hardly need add that all this has never come to pass yet.

Chapter 34 opens with a call to all the world to hearken, since all nations have to face the judgments of God, which will reach even to "the host of heaven," since there is to be that conflict in the heavens of which we read in Revelation 12: 7, 8; and as a result Satan will

lose his foothold there and be confined in his fury to earth. But in a very special manner the sword of the Lord will come down upon Idumea; that is, upon Esau in his descendents, who are specially under the curse.

In the last Old Testament book we find God saying that He hated Esau; and one of the Minor Prophets, Obadiah, is entirely occupied with predictions against him. Here we find the same thing, and we are told in verse 8 that vengeance falls upon them in recompence for "the controversy of Zion." In Zion God elected to have mercy upon Jacob, whereas Edom pursued them with undying hatred, as we see in Psalm 83: 3-6. In result judgments of special severity will fall on the land of Idumea, and the rest of chapter 34 gives us the solemn details of it.

Preliminary movements, which will lead to all this, are taking place today. Israel now has a footing in their own land, yet among the thousands are but few "just and devout," as was Simeon of old. There are all too many "sinners in Zion" who would be afraid. The sons of Esau and Ishmael surround them in very antagonistic and aggressive mood. Who can tell what may **soon** happen? But we can tell from this scripture what will **ultimately** come to pass, and how God will intervene in judgment.

The Divine intervention having taken place, the blessing for Israel and the land, predicted in chapter 35, will be brought to pass. The picture is a lovely one — a delightful scene of earthly blessing. The

curse of Genesis 3: 17, 18, will be lifted, so that the very deserts will be abundantly fruitful. The vengeance of God will mean deliverance for Israel, and safety. But not only that, since they themselves will be transformed. They will see spiritually, they will hear, they will sing with gladness, and all their hopes be realized.

The figure in verse 7 is a striking one, for the word translated, "parched ground," really means a "mirage;" the strange appearance of what looks like a lake in some dry region, but which is only an illusion. The illusion that poor Israel has pursued, while away from God, will cease, and a real lake of refreshment take its place. We may well use the same figure in the Gospel today, since men are chasing after an illusory satisfaction and joy in a variety of ways, while abiding satisfaction is only found in Christ.

Verse 8 emphasizes holiness, which must ever mark the presence of God, and the way of holiness may be trodden by the humblest of men, who would be accounted a fool by worldly standards. We may thank God that it is so.

The description of blessedness ends with the alluring picture presented in verse 10. Those who enter into the everlasting joy and gladness will be the ransomed of the Lord. We can rejoice today in this forecast of the blessedness of the earthly Zion, while we remember with gladness that we are blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1: 3). And "the heavens are higher than the earth," as Isaiah himself presently reminds us.

AN APPEAL

Written just before the first world war by, we believe, the late William Barker.

WE have it at heart to suggest that fervent prayer be made to God, both privately and publicly, for a revival of His work amongst us. We do not now refer to the conversion of souls through the preaching of the Gospel, blessed as this is and much to be desired. What is before our mind is a revival among those who are already converted — Christians, not in name only, but in reality. It is among these that we ardently desire to see a revival of the work of God — a movement bearing the unmistakable marks of the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. Such a movement God alone can bring about, but if many are led to pray — we were going to say, to agonize in prayer — for it, might we not humbly expect some gracious answer?

Back in the earlier years of the last century there was such a revival as we long to see again. It broke forth almost simultaneously in various parts of England and Ireland. Great light was thrown upon the Word of God, and many mighty truths, long hid from the eyes of Christian men, were found in its blessed pages, and ministered in very much spiritual power by tongue and pen. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth — the return of the Lord Jesus for His saints — the heavenly calling — the nature and unity of the Church of God — her calling, hopes and destiny, as distinguished from the calling and hopes of Israel — min-

istry, its source and power — the Christian standing in Christ, risen and in glory — these were among the truths ministered, and that lived and burned in the souls of very many. And along with this, the Gospel was preached in much clearness and fulness, bringing multitudes into peace and liberty before God.

But that movement, like others in their day, has spent much of its spiritual force. It is true these great themes are still with us, but for the most part they are buried in books that are seldom read. And they linger still, in a traditional sort of way, among certain circles of Christians, who are apt to think — as we all are — that in having the truth in terms they have the truth which the terms denote. A greater mistake could not be made! Who so foolish as to suppose that talking about pounds, shillings and pence, houses, lands and other forms of wealth, is the same thing as having them in actual possession? But this should only lead us the more earnestly to pray that God would revive His work in the midst of His Church, and that the great truths of "the faith once delivered to the saints" may be so ministered that they shall live and burn afresh in the hearts and lives of His people. That is the revival we ardently long to see, and for which we might well importunately pray.

And if God, in His great mercy, hearkens to our prayers, we shall find that His truth is still living and

powerful, and that it will yield the same results as it did in days gone by. Then it brought men out from the world — religious or otherwise — willing to share the fortunes of their rejected Lord and Master. They esteemed “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,” and found in Him and in His love such untold wealth that the glittering prizes of earth were no longer their object and desire. Pilgrims and strangers here, they waited for God’s Son from heaven, their Deliverer from coming wrath. Their citizenship, their home, all that they loved most, was there. Oh, that God would raise up once more in His poor Church chosen vessels — men who know the power and preciousness of these things themselves, and who shall be able to minister them afresh to His saints in the power of the Holy Ghost!

And while praying, expecting, and waiting on God for this revival, let us begin at once to give the more earnest heed to the Word of God — each for himself. Let it be read with greater attention and with more heartfelt prayer that the Holy Spirit might enrich us with its eternal treasures. “He satisfieth the hungry soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.” And this, as by the working of an un-failing law, will give intensity to

our prayers and supplications for others. It is the law of love.

Nor will that be all. We shall not forget that these imperishable things are the heritage of all believers — young and old. For there is no law of primogeniture in the family of God, no right that does not equally belong to all the children. Why then should His children wander about as mendicants? Why should they live in the workhouse and not in the house and home of their Father? Why hold out the hand to receive the world’s alms as if they were beggars? Why drink at its polluted streams and broken fountains — weary and unsatisfied — when unsearchable riches are theirs?

As we think of these things, perhaps we shall feel more than ever that all of us, in some sense, are “stewards of the mysteries of God.” Then, moved by a heaven-born impulse we shall begin to speak of these “mysteries” to others, knowing that gold buried in the earth yields no revenue, and grain in bags and barns, will cover no fields with waving corn. But to pursue this further would divert us from the immediate object of our paper. Prayer — fervent, importunate, unwearied prayer for a revival in the Church of God is what we ask for. Will the reader join us in it?

WE have in the Old Testament the Christ of prophecy; in the Gospels the Christ of history; in the Acts and Epistles the Christ of experience; and in the Apocalypse the Christ of glory.

It was predicted He would come as Prophet, and Priest, and King. In the Gospels we see the Prophet; in the Acts we see the Priest; and in the final Apocalypse we see the King.

HOW DO WE REGARD THE BIBLE?

F. B. HOLE.

IN the conflict between the truth of God and the lie of the devil, between faith and unbelief, the attitude which we adopt towards the Holy Scriptures is decisive — **decisive as regards ourselves.** The Book, and the God who inspired it, are quite unmoved by our thoughts and words.

If an airman, flying over the Himalayas, regards Everest's mighty mass as an illusion, and steers straight into it, he will not move Everest an inch. He will only move himself and his machine in disastrous fashion; and the way he regarded the mountain will prove quite decisive to him and to the result of his flight.

Ever since the Bible reached completion in the apostolic age it has been the object of attacks. For long it was removed from the common people and buried in monasteries and the like. Since the Reformation it has been widely circulated, but then began denials and criticism. The mode of attack has varied, but more recently, especially in religious circles, the fashionable thing has been to eulogize it as literature, as a repository of beautiful religious conceptions and a story of religious progress, whilst impeaching its real veracity, and undermining its authority as the Word of God.

Years ago we received a pamphlet, bearing the same title as this article, which summarized such teachings in small compass. It emanated from the "Social Problems Committee" of a certain "Church," so went forth under

the sanction of a religious organization.

No reader of our magazine would find much fault with its opening words:—

"We Christians love our Bible. As life goes on most of us come to love it more and more. We go to it in sorrow and find comfort. We go to it in perplexity and find light. We go to it when we are weary and find inspiration. It never fails us. It is out of our own experience that we call it, 'The word of Life.'"

Here are some quite nice sentiments, which our author undertook to express on behalf of Christians generally. We love our Bible, he stated, because of certain benefits it gives — comfort, light and inspiration — he did not state that we love it because it is **true**. He did not believe it to be true, as we shall see. Such benefits are indeed good and desirable, if they are true, as proceeding from TRUTH. If not, they are but destructive opiates for the soul.

A pamphlet advocating Spiritism might begin in similar fashion, "We spiritists love our seances," and proceed to eulogize their effects in similar words, ending, "They never fail us." But at this point many would wish to interrupt and observe that possibly spiritists do find what they claim in their seances, but that the supreme test is not the subjective effect produced in the devotees of any cult, but the truth or falsity of the cult to which they are devoted. Exactly! We agree as to the comforting properties of the Bible, but also affirm that there are, sad to say,

a number of false cults which, implicitly believed, also exert a similar effect. We ask, why applaud the Bible and reject them?

To such a question we should give immediate answer, because the Bible is **true**, and they are **false**. Our author, however, had no such logical reason for his choice, since for him the Bible also could not be said to be true. And so, having opened his pamphlet in this pleasing way, he proceeded to give what he called, "blunt answers to blunt questions."

"Do we hold that every word in the Bible is true? No! we do not. Do we accept the views of the Bible on scientific questions? No, we do not. Do we approve all the moral sentiments expressed in the Bible? No! certainly not. Do we regard the Bible as infallible history? No. Do we agree with all the opinions of St. Paul? No! we do not."

Our author was not alluding to the fact that here and there in Scripture we have words and sentiments of evil men and even of Satan recorded; and that obviously such words and sentiments are not to be accepted as of God. No. He just stated that he and his friends did not believe the Bible to be true and trustworthy, either as to its **words**, its **views**, its **moral sentiments**, its **histories**, or its **opinions**; and if so, there is left no respect at all in which it can be said to be true.

Thus he asserted, as though he spoke for Christians generally. But there are Christians in their tens of thousands, who utterly repudiate such weak and illogical unbelief. Leaving that aside, however, let us address ourselves to the main question. Ought we, or

ought we not, to accept the Bible in its words, its views, its moral sentiments, its histories, its opinions, and we would add, its **assumptions**, as true? Let us allow the Bible to propound to us concerning itself the very question that the Living Word addressed to His critics, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin? and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" (John 8: 46).

Take that tremendous Bible **assumption**; "Thus saith the Lord," repeated over and over again. Now, did the Lord say, or did He not say? **If He did say**, then to treat anything He said after the fashion of our author is undiluted blasphemy; and if **He did not say**, then to talk about anyone deriving comfort or inspiration from such deceitful utterances is to advocate a very silly form of sentimental, not to say, immoral religion. Nor would it improve the case by urging that the men who prefaced their writings with, "Thus saith the Lord," or its variant forms, were good men, who genuinely thought they had a divine commission; for it is not the **good men** but their **bad writings**, that we are to derive comfort from!

Now, what underlies the flagrant unbelief expressed in this pamphlet? The steady refusal to see anything in the Bible beyond purely human literature; the acknowledgment of nothing in the nature of a revelation from God, but only of the evolution of religious ideas in the minds of successive generations of men. Here are the words:—

"What then is the Bible to us?

"It is simply the story of how through long centuries men gradually

worked their way from primitive religious ideas, and very primitive moral ideas, up to the loftiest heights of spiritual perception which the race has attained.

“ Israel began with what we should call pagan ideas about God. They believed in many gods, and about their own special god they believed some very strange things. They held him capable of such feelings as jealousy and the desire for revenge. They believed he could be pleased by animal sacrifices. They thought He cared for one nation and could take pleasure in seeing others massacred. And yet, slowly and surely, such thoughts were left behind. Slowly they learnt to fill out the idea of His righteousness with ever nobler content. They rose to a belief in His mercy, and then in His love . . . And as this progress went on they discarded their earlier ideas. Many of the earlier conceptions in the Bible stand condemned by the later teaching of the Bible itself.”

Having read these statements, which purport to be instruction as to the true character and value of Old Testament Scripture, we have just our one question to ask as to them. **ARE THEY TRUE?**

They are NOT true to the facts as stated by Scripture. That can easily be verified. According to the Bible, Israel did **not** begin with pagan ideas of God. Israel himself and his immediate descendants had the knowledge of the true and only God. At a later stage in Egypt they evidently caught the infection of Egyptian idolatry to a considerable extent. From this they were again to some degree extricated by the wonders of Sinai and the law then given. Their subsequent history was the exact opposite to the picture drawn by our author. Not a steady upward evolution of religious ideas, but a steady degrada-

tion to the depths of polytheism until the Babylonian captivity, only relieved by the faithful intervention of prophets sent by the Lord. And after the captivity, though they avoided idolatry, they degraded religion into a mere matter of ceremonies and pharisaic observances, that was sternly denounced by our Lord. This, we repeat, is simply beyond all contradiction the plain testimony of the Bible. The only increasing light to which it bears witness is the increasing clearness of prophetic testimony to the Coming One, which culminated in the **COMING ONE** Himself — the Lord Jesus.

Whence, then, did our author get all these assertions as to how Israel's ideas were evolved? Is there some other history of the chosen race extant, of such unimpeachable accuracy that he felt himself authorized entirely to rewrite their story? **If there were,** it would be honest of him to have denounced our Bible as untrue, and to have said, “ We Christians despise our Bible;” rather than foist upon it statements that it contradicts. **There is, however, no such other history.** His statements represented the account of things fashionable in speculative circles where evolution is still the rage. He just moved with the times and advocated the latest evolutionary philosophy. He told us he loved the Bible, but he loved his philosophic notions more, and in their favour he handled, “ the word of God deceitfully,” and thus he corrupted, “ the word of God ” (2 Cor. 4: 2; 2: 17).

To him, of course, it was not the Word of God, for in the pamphlet

he spoke of it as "writing the world has produced."

He was pleased, however, to approve of "Jesus." Here are his words:—

"The summit of all this progress is reached when we come to the person and teaching of Jesus. It is to that that all the earlier parts lead up. In Jesus we have the perfect revelation at last. He is all the best we ever dreamed that God might be. He is the final and complete picture of what God is. His teaching is the final word about the will of God for man. He satisfies perfectly man's craving for knowledge about God. And, therefore, the book that tells us about Him must necessarily be mankind's most sacred possession."

A number of these statements are true, and yet the whole passage exemplifies how truth may be used to decorate falsehood. The main idea is that "Jesus" is the summit of human progress. The race had been striving upwards, and its dreams of goodness were consequently in advance of anything yet attained, when, lo! as the fruit of this evolution there appeared "Jesus" and fulfilled our dreams.

Now for our question — **Is this a FACT?** Not if the Gospels be true. They show us that instead of the Lord Jesus appearing as the summit of human progress, fulfilling human dreams of goodness, in which case He would have been rapturously acclaimed by all the leaders of this progress; it was precisely "the princes of this world" who "crucified the Lord of glory" (I Cor. 2: 8). Isaiah's prediction, "when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" was fulfilled.

Had our author access to some other document more reliable than

the Gospels that enabled him to recast the story? He had not. There is no other authentic history. Either he was unable to read the sober objective facts of the Gospels without importing into them ideas from his own subjective consciousness, or he so questioned their veracity that he felt at liberty thus fundamentally to alter the story. He fashioned a "Jesus" after his own ideas, and not once in his pamphlet did he speak of Him as his LORD.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect and final revelation of God, because He is God. He is not the fairest and most perfect expression of the desires and genius of Adam's race. He is the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, the Head of a new race (see, I Cor. 15: 45-49).

This quotation from an Epistle would not count for much with our author, of course. In his paper he proceeded to explain that the Old Testament, though hardly needed by us, has at least **some** value, as an interesting story of the preparation for Christ. So too, the Epistles "are of value because they fill out our knowledge of Christ;" but he did not regard them as authoritative.

The Apostle John declared otherwise. Writing of the false spirits in the world — the spirit of antichrist — he said, "We [the inspired apostles] are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (I John 4: 6). Which spirit pervaded this pamphlet? Its author considered the apostolic epistles as open to ques-

tion in many things, and the verses just quoted would be to him just John's opinions, which we need not follow. But judging by that sentence of the Word of God through John, he was deluded by "the spirit of error."

Now what is the upshot of this way of regarding the Bible? A closing quotation shall tell us:—

"From all this it must be plain that the Bible, which Christians love so much, and which proves so invaluable for life, is not the whole Bible. It is the greatest thoughts of the Bible, which feed our souls and refresh our spirits. Possibly the amount of Scripture which is thus living, and which actually operates in the lives of some Christians, might turn out to be little more than a tenth of the whole . . . Probably every reader makes his own Bible. The parts that do not grip him he passes by."

A few more lines followed, containing a pleasing sentiment or two about the Bible, and the pamphlet thus closed as it opened; bestowing its blessing upon the venerable Book!

A few more lines followed, content of the Bible's contents of any real use. The remaining nine-tenths can be discarded. No assurance is given as to which tenth is of use. We are left at liberty to make our own choice. So "we Christians," who "love our Bibles" are left each loving a different "Bible" — each loving what is totally condemned in part by the majority of other "Christians." We are thus presented with the melancholy spectacle of "Christians," every one of whom on a majority vote of other "Christians" would be condemned as foolishly credulous. If this were really the position, who

would not be an out-and-out infidel!

We do not know whether the author included Luke 24 in his "Bible." He professed admiration for the "Jesus" of the Gospels, though why he should it is hard to tell, since we owe the Gospels, as we do the Epistles, to apostles or men under their influence. If these are not to be relied upon in their Epistles, why trust them as to "Jesus" in the Gospels? Have we then anything left that is reliable as to Him?

It may be however that he did include Luke 24 in his "Bible," which is one-tenth of our Bible; and so he might yet have read that chapter, and noted what our Lord Jesus said, when He was raised from the dead:—

"O fools, and slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken."

"Beginning at Moses and ALL the prophets He expounded unto them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

"ALL things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."

The issue between the Lord Jesus and the writer of this deceitful pamphlet is complete. Had it been openly and honestly infidel we should hardly have noticed it in our pages. Its danger lies not in its negations but in its smooth professions of admiration. The "Jesus" of the author's imagination was eulogized in order the better to deny to the Bible its true character as inspired or "God-breathed"

writings, bringing us A REVELATION FROM GOD. Did not the kiss of Judas prove of old a more effective device than the swords and staves of the multitude?

We welcome the opportunity at the start of another year, by reviewing this pamphlet of years ago, to make manifest once more our glad and humble acceptance of the whole Bible as the inspired

Word of God. We consequently desire that it may have an ever increasing weight of authority in our own hearts and in the hearts of all our readers. As a result of this may we be preserved not only from **taking anything from it**, but also from **adding to it** anything claiming to be a fresh "inspiration," or "revelation," from God, no matter from what quarter it may be preferred to us.

THE LIGHT OF GRACE AND TRUTH W. H. WESTCOTT.

(Extracts from notes on John 1)

"**T**HERE was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe" (John 1: 6, 7). A Divine Person, eternal in His being, separate in His personality, God in His essence, the Creator of all things great and small — mind and matter, and force — has been down in this world, in our form of manhood. He became flesh, bringing every Divine excellency into His humanity, untainted by our evil, moving in the orbit of God's will, the contrast to, the antithesis of, wilful man, unique in holiness, full of grace and truth. In Him was **life**, really and truly **life**, lived according to God. Purity and good were there in unlimited perfection, light and love, which in a man are seen in the form of truth and grace. And this life was the light of men. Whatever benefits accrue to the rest of creation (and all creation will be affected by it), it was intended to be light to men. The true light coming into the

world is light shining for every man.

The life He lived, as well as the message He brought, was for man's good; just as the rays of the sun are for all nations and tongues, for men of every colour. Apart from the sun what should we be? Owing to its service we have light, and warmth, and life; apart from it would be darkness and death. Yet herein is a marvellous thing; **natural** light dispels darkness; **this** light — the life of Jesus — shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. The state of man was darkness, and remained so though the light shone. There were no eyes to take in the impression; the sunshine showed **them** up, but being blind, **they** saw not its light or brightness; it was lost upon them. The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. Israel with its peculiar privileges was as irresponsible as the world at large.

There was a man sent from God, his name John, to bear witness of the light. What an extraordinary mission! As though when men rose in the morning, and were surrounded by the charm of the day, it were necessary to take a message to every one to assure him that light had come. **It is necessary for the blind.** Does not the very mission of John demonstrate to us that, in God's account, men are blind, without the capacity for understanding Christ? Yet such was God's mercy to men that He sent this messenger to point Him out, that all men might believe through him. John's message, where received, prepared individuals at least to receive this Divine Saviour. How important then to repent that we may believe the Gospel.

So further we read, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1: 12).

A narrow gate, and a narrow way, lead to life. The reception of one Person leads to the blest relationship of sons unto God. Who would have thought that such hopeless conditions as men presented in this world could have been met by so simple a solution? Who would have supposed that such a solution to men's needs should be attended by so stupendous an issue? A blind man does not **per-**ceive, but he can **re-**ceive. We don't all have the chance of receiving money, and garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants and maidservants (see 2 Kings 5: 26). But to each hearer

of the good news of the Saviour, Son of God, comes the opportunity of receiving Christ. The world knew Him not in His lowliness, His own people of Israel received Him not; but some submitted to Him, opened their hearts to Him, welcomed Him within by placing their faith in His name; and so proved themselves to be born of God.

God uses illustrations of men receiving Him. At least four of the senses are employed to represent this. We **look** to Him and are saved. We **hear** His voice and live. We **touch** the hem of His garment, and are made whole. We **taste** that the Lord is gracious. To receive Him is to trust Him, it is to believe in His Name. It may be compared to eating and drinking, in which we appropriate a commodity outside of ourselves, take it within, and so assimilate it that it becomes life to us.

We hear of Christ the Son, His incarnation, His holy life, His goodness, His death as a sacrifice for sin, His resurrection and ascension, and we appropriate this as of eternal concern to ourselves. Not content to say, "He died for all," our deep need constrains us to cry "It was for me." It is no longer an external history merely; it is a vital fact to my own soul that He has told out God's love to me, and His death is God's intervention on my behalf for my blessing. This makes Christ a personal Saviour to me, and a precious Saviour; while at the same time it has secured for me the privilege of sonship; the blessedness of knowing that God is my Father, and that I am His child.

And thus all has reached us in

Christ, since, "The Word was made flesh, 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: 14).

The Word "became" flesh; grace and truth "became" by Jesus Christ. The language used is the same both in verse 14 and verse 17. When God was pleased to express Himself fully in relation to man, and in a Man, the One by whom He did so was seen to be full of grace and truth. In the proclamation of the Lord in Exodus 34: 6, 7, graciousness and truth are seen to be among His attributes; but though He shewed great favour to Moses, as in chapter 33, yet out of consistency with His truth it was necessary to forbid his entrance into Canaan, (Numbers 20: 10-13).

Grace is God's gracious manner even with a creature that is fallen. Truth represents things as they are. Truth tells me what God is, what I am, what sin is. To us it would seem impossible to maintain at its full height all that God is in absolute holiness, to expose all that the sinner is in sin, and yet shew grace. The two things are seen together in Jesus Christ. Even in His life and service both were expressed.

Never was a person so accessible, such a Minister of good, and at the same time so holy, so absolutely apart from sin. Even to His

enemies He could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" While almost in the same breath saying to the convicted sinner, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more" (John 8: 11, 46). Notwithstanding all the emptiness of the religion of the Jews as represented by the Pharisees in Matthew 15, He maintained right relations between the Jew and the Gentile, as seen in the case of the Syro-Phenician woman; yet met her need fully and richly in grace. She bowed to the truth and secured the grace (verse 27).

Nothing cuts so deeply as the truth; nothing heals so thoroughly as grace. What a comfort it is that we can go to God and welcome all the searching light of His presence, all its exposure of us down to the bottom of our nature, and over all the story of our sin and wretchedness, assured that He only probes for our own good, that the resources of His grace may be brought out in all their comprehensive fulness. Light and warmth reach us from one Sun in the heavens; grace and truth subsist by Jesus Christ. They shine if we may so say in one Face; it is the One who has come from the purity of God's heaven that is the Healer of man's disease. It is the Hand that was once pierced for our sin that now removes its guilt and defilement from us; it is the heart that bled for our transgressions that interprets to us the heart of God.

THE Word having become flesh, and dwelling among us, we discover in the latter part of John 1 the varied capacities that He fills. He is the Sacrifice in verse 29; the Blessor in verse 33; the Centre in verse 37; the Builder in verse 42; the Leader in verse 43; the Judge in verse 47; the Administrator in verse 51. Everything is vested in Him.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 36: 1 - 40: 8)

AFTER the lovely picture of blessedness on earth in the millennial age, presented to us in chapter 35, there is a break in the prophecy. The four chapters, 36-39, give us details of history in Hezekiah's reign, which are recounted also in 2 Kings, chapters 18-20, and again more briefly in 2 Chronicles 32.

Remembering that we have no **needless** repetitions in Scripture, we may ask why these chapters should be inserted here? The answer, we think, is twofold.

First, the personal piety of Hezekiah is recorded, so different from the state of the nation at large, as depicted in the earlier chapters, and particularly chapter 1; and then how God answered his faith in the destruction of the Assyrian. Second, though his faith and dependence on God was so genuine, and his prayer for recovery so strikingly answered, these very mercies led to his failure in the matter of the Babylonian envoys which is recorded. This indicated that the more immediate judgments already pronounced could not be delayed.

Chapter 36 records in detail the arguments by which the herald of the king of Assyria tried to persuade the people of Jerusalem to an immediate surrender, and we must remember that about eight years previously Samaria had fallen before the Assyrian power, and later the defended cities of Judah had also fallen. So humanly speaking the position of Jerusalem was hopeless.

Rabshakeh's words were very specious. He knew the weakness of Egypt, in which the Jews were inclined to trust, as verse 6 shows; and as to which the people had already been warned by Isaiah. He completely mistook, however, Hezekiah's action in destroying the high places, for this, instead of being an offence against the Lord, was entirely in obedience to His word in Deuteronomy 12: 1-6. So many previous kings, even the good ones, had overlooked this commandment of the Lord, but Hezekiah had been obedient and faithful.

Moreover, Rabshakeh falsely asserted that the Lord had told the Assyrian king to destroy Jerusalem, and then he appealed against Hezekiah to the citizens within hearing, for he evidently had a shrewd knowledge of their idolatrous tendencies, so different to their King. Many of them were secretly trusting in false gods and not in the Lord, so the reminder of the fact, that the gods of many other cities had failed to deliver, was calculated to have weight in their minds. Still Hezekiah's command to the men to keep silence prevailed, and they answered him not a word.

Eliakim, of whom we read in chapter 22, with others brought news of all this to Hezekiah, and his reaction to it is found in the first five verses of chapter 37, God was first in his thoughts, for covered with sackcloth, indicating sorrow and humiliation, he "went into the house of the Lord."

Then, in the second place, he

turned to the prophet, through whom God had been speaking, confessing the low estate of himself and his people. He spoke of them as "the remnant that is left." He recognized the unity of all Israel. Now that the ten tribes had been deported, he did not fall into the snare of assuming that the two, over whom he was king, were more than a "remnant," left by the mercy of God. Much of the professing church today has been by the adversary deported from their true place and portion, so let any who have escaped this, and remain in any degree true to their original calling, never forget they have no other status than a remnant of the whole. They are not reconstituted as a separate entity.

Isaiah's response was one of assurance. God would deal with Sennacherib, firstly by causing him to hear a report as to the king of Ethiopia, lastly by death in his own land, and in between by the destruction of his boasted and apparently invincible army, of which we read at the end of the chapter.

Though not for the moment attacking Jerusalem, Sennacherib sent a further boastful message to Hezekiah — verses 10-13 — and Hezekiah's response follows. Instead of replying to man, he turned to God, spreading the letter before Him. In his prayer he acknowledged the military might of the Assyrian king, yet asked for deliverance on the ground that the Assyrian had sent "to reproach the living God."

This brought forth God's immediate answer through Isaiah,

accepting the Assyrian challenge, which was not only reproachful but blasphemous also. The Assyrian would become a laughing-stock to Jerusalem. His earlier successes against other cities had been ordained of God; now turning against God, he would be utterly crushed, and the remnant of Judah should be delivered for the time being. The city should be spared for the Lord's own sake, as well as for David's sake.

The chapter closes with a brief record of the drastic smiting of the Assyrian army. No record of this has been found among the dug-up remains of Assyrian libraries and monuments, we understand; and no wonder! These ancient monarchs, no more desirous to keep their defeats and abasements in the memory of their public, than the men of today. Sennacherib himself came to an ignominious end, as the last verse of our chapter declares.

And then, "In those days," just when Hezekiah had been so marvellously lifted up by this Divinely-wrought deliverance, he was smitten with an illness that brought him face to face with death. Through Isaiah, who just before had given him the message of deliverance for his city and people, he was told to prepare for his end. Unlike Asa, one of his predecessors, who when diseased "sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians," he did go straight to the Lord and with tears besought for his life. He was heard and 15 further years were granted to him.

He asked for a sign that he should recover, as the last verse of

the chapter tells us, and a remarkable sign was given. That the shadow on the sun-dial should go ten degrees **backward** was entirely **contrary to nature**, but it was a sign befitting the fact that God was about to **reverse** Hezekiah's sickness, so that **contrary to the nature** of his disease, it should end in life and not death. A plaister of figs does not usually cure a virulently septic boil, but it did in this case as an act of God.

Unbelievers may of course refuse this story of the sun-dial incident, just as they do the incident of the long day, recorded in Joshua 10: 13, when the apparent course of the sun was arrested. It is worthy of note that in Joshua the sun, "hasted not to go down **about a whole day.**" The ten degrees of Hezekiah's time may have **completed** a whole day. He who established the course of the solar system can accelerate or retard it, if it pleases Him so to do.

The Apostle Paul has told us, in Romans 5: 3-5, what excellent results in the hearts and lives of saints are produced by **tribulation**, since it leads to the in-shining of the love of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. A faint foreshadowing of this we find in the writing of Hezekiah after he was recovered — which writing is preserved for us in verses 10-20.

It begins on notes of great **mournfulness**, occupying five verses, but it ends on **songs** which are to fill the rest of his life. The change of tone begins when he recognized the affliction as coming from the hand of God. Moreover

he discovered, as verse 16 shows, that what threatened death to his body brought life to his spirit, which is more important than the body.

Verse 17 too is full of instruction. It expresses what unconverted folk have sometimes found, as well as saints, when deeply tried or near to death. Hezekiah did not **then** concern himself with "my kingdom," or "my wealth," but "**my soul.**" He also became conscious of "**my sins,**" and that there was a "**pit of corruption,**" into which his sins threatened to cast his soul. This must have been a very acute spiritual experience for him; and so it is equally for us.

But on the other hand he made some very joyous discoveries. First, he discovered that on God's part there was "**love to my soul,**" though he could not have known that with the fulness that has only been revealed in Christ. Yet it led to the further discovery that God had dealt with his sins, though he could not have known that with the finality that the Gospel brings to us. In his day there was "the remission [i.e. passing over] of sins that are past" (Rom. 3: 25); that is, the sins of saints who lived before full atonement was made by Christ on the cross. Still he knew that God had cast all his sins **behind His back**; and since God does not move in circles but rather straight forward through the eternal ages, what He casts behind His back is there for ever, and not as He said to Ephraim in Hosea 7: 2, "**before My face.**"

Consequently he had the happy

assurance that his soul was delivered from the doom that threatened it. The pit of corruption he would never see. What a wonderful experience was brought to Hezekiah by this violent sickness! Since his day many a saint has found a period of sickness, or of loss in other ways, to be an occasion of rich spiritual gain; many a sinner has been laid low to be broken in spirit and humbled for eternal blessing.

But, before we leave this chapter, there is another sobering reflection; for 2 Kings 21: 1 reveals that his son Manasseh, who succeeded him, was only 12 years old when he began to reign; that is, he was born after Hezekiah's recovery, as the result of his added 15 years of life. And this Manasseh reigned for 55 years and did such evil in and with the nation that the Babylonian captivity had to be inflicted upon them, as is shown so plainly in 2 Kings 21: 10-16. Let us learn from this that we may earnestly beseech God for something that we regard as a favour, and it may be granted us, and yet we may have subsequently to discover that the "favour" we demanded carried with it consequences that were by no means favourable.

And this reflection is deepened when we read chapter 39. The Assyrian having been smitten of God, the revived city of Babylon began to lift up its head, though more than a century had to pass before it became the predominant power. Hezekiah had been magnified in the sight of surrounding peoples by the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army, and also by his

own miraculous recovery; hence the complimentary embassy from Merodach-baladan, which pleased him much and led to a display of his pride.

We are told quite definitely in 2 Chronicles 32: 25, 26, and 31, that God's kind deliverances led to the heart of Hezekiah being lifted up with pride, and that God permitted the testing of these men from Babylon to "try him," and to "know all that was in his heart." The Babylonians, whether they knew it or not, set a trap, and into it he fell, displaying for his own glory all that God had permitted him to acquire. Hence the solemn message Isaiah had to bring him, of coming judgment from Babylon on his sons and people.

Nor does the last verse of our chapter present Hezekiah to us in a very favourable light. He evidently cared much more for his own personal success and comfort than for the welfare of his posterity or of his nation. He had been favoured of God, but he passes from our view too much wrapped up in his own blessings, too little concerned for others on whom the judgment was to fall.

Thus these four historical chapters, whilst recording God's merciful intervention both for the nation and for Hezekiah personally, show us quite plainly that there was nothing in the people nor in the best of their kings that would avert the more immediate judgment on Jerusalem, that in the earlier chapters Isaiah had foretold.

We might therefore have ex-

pected that chapter 40 would commence on a mournful note, calling for misery and tears rather than comfort. But no, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God;" and that in view of the main theme, which is developed in the remaining chapters. In the earlier portion — chapters 1-35 — the main theme has been the **sinful state** of both Israel and the surrounding nations, and God's judgments upon them all, though relieved by happy references to Messiah's kingdom and glory, as in chapters 9, 11, 28, 32. Now, though God's controversy with Israel still continues, both as to their idolatry and their rejection of their Messiah, it is **His advent**, both in suffering and in glory, that is the main theme.

Comfort, then, is now pronounced and offered to God's people and, as to the immediate context, it is based upon the declaration in verse 2. It is not that their iniquity is condoned or made light of but rather that its "double," or **appropriate punishment**, has been exacted, and thus it has been pardoned, and the time of "warfare," or suffering, is over. The verse does not state how this "double" from the Lord's hand has been received.

The explanation of it lies in the subsequent chapters. As to the government of God, operating in this world, they receive it to the full in heavy chastisement, as indicated in chapters 57, 58 and 59. As to the more serious matter of God's eternal judgment on sin, they receive it in the vicarious sufferings of their Messiah and Saviour, whom once they rejected. This we see in chap-

ter 53, where we find them saying prophetically, "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him," since "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

So verse 3 presents us with that which the Evangelist Mark has declared to be, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God:" — the mission of John the Baptist. The prophecy here is quite unmistakable for John himself claimed to be "the voice;" as recorded in John 1: 23. Equally unmistakable is the true greatness and glory of the One that he announced; for it was "Jehovah," and "our God" for whom he prepared the way.

The language of verse 4 is figurative but the meaning is plain, and in keeping with the words of the Virgin Mary, recorded in Luke 1: 52. John's baptism was one of repentance, and that brings all men down to a common level of lowliness and self-judgment. The Pharisees saw this clearly enough and it was the reason why they, being puffed up with pride, "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7: 30).

But though the allusion to John is so plain, verse 5 carries us on to what will be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ. The glory of the Lord was indeed revealed at His first coming, and it proved to be "the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father" (John 1: 14). But in the same verse we read, "We beheld His glory," and the context of these words shows that the mass of the people did not be-

hold it. The disciples were the exception to the rule. Not until His second advent comes to pass will "all flesh" see it. Revelation 1:7, declares the publicity of His second advent.

So the prophecy here, as is usual in the Old Testament, has both advents in view. The same feature meets us in chapter 61:2, for, when the Lord Jesus read this in the synagogue at Nazareth, He stopped in the middle of the verse, knowing that the latter part of it referred to His second advent in power and not His first advent in grace. A **single** star shines in our night sky but when seen through a telescope it proves to be **two**. So this predicted advent of Jehovah in the person of the Messiah, is dis-

covered to be two advents in the clearer light of the New Testament.

But the immediate effect of the presence of the Lord and the revelation of His glory would be — What? The complete exposure of the sinfulness and frailty of mankind. Not merely Gentile flesh, or depraved flesh, but "**all flesh**" is as withered and worthless grass. The Apostle Peter quotes these words at the end of the first chapter of his first Epistle, but in contrast therewith he dwells upon the word of our God which stands for ever. And he assures us that by that living and abiding word of God we have been "**born again.**" So once more we see how New Testament grace shines above Old Testament law.

A FOURFOLD EXHORTATION

1. **Remember the Source of the Bible.** "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." "The Lord gave the Word." Remembering the one fact will enable you confidently to believe the whole Bible and patiently wait until the facts of science and the records of past ages coming to light, confirm, as they are doing, the authority of this precious Word.
2. **Respect the Sacredness of the Bible.** A godly father and mother taught me from my earliest days to reverence the Bible — not to treat it as any other book, but to handle it, read it, study it as God's Word.
3. **Recognise the Sufficiency of the Bible.** The Bible contains all that is necessary for faith and practice. The Holy Scriptures make wise unto Salvation. They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.
4. **Revive the Study of the Bible.** How little we study our Bibles; how little we know them. The commonest cause of backsliding among young Christians is that they do not study the Bible. Our failure to grow in the Christian life is because we do not feed upon the Word. "Search the Scriptures," said our Lord. "Meditate upon these things," said Paul. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word," said Peter. Let us make time to study the Bible every day without fail.

“ JESUS HIMSELF ”

A. J. POLLOCK.

THESE two words in such happy conjunction are found twice in one chapter — Luke 24. After His resurrection our Lord spent forty very fruitful days on earth, proving to His disciples that He was indeed risen from the dead. Never in all the history of the world had it been known that a man had been raised from the dead, **never to die again**; though a very few individuals had been restored to life for a time.

It took a great deal to satisfy the disciples that their beloved Lord was indeed risen from the dead, with all that it meant for them. In spite of Mary Magdalene's story that she had seen the risen Christ, and that He had sent through her the wonderful message, saying, “ I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God ” (John 20: 17), they could not bring themselves to believe her story. Was it not possible that, in her overwrought, emotional condition, and in the semi-darkness of early morning, she might have imagined something that never happened?

Our Lord, after His resurrection, did not resume His companionship with His disciples in the same way that He did before His death on the cross. His relations with them were now on a new basis, though He spent His time convincing them that He had indeed risen from the dead, bringing from the very grave the message of His triumph over sin and death and hell, on which their salvation depended. He would suddenly appear to them,

and as suddenly disappear. His place was to be at the right hand of God in glory, and for this He was preparing His disciples.

In all this we see the heart of the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep. His gracious activities began the very day He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. He knew there were two sad and perplexed disciples returning from Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus, and we have the very comforting word that, “ Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them.” But their eyes were holden so that they did not recognize Him.

This is rather like ourselves on some occasions. Circumstances test us, and we get downcast and perplexed, because we do not at first recognize that in them the Lord is dealing with us and speaking to us. But He is the same Lord, as when He, before He died, wept tears of sympathy with the sisters of Bethany in the loss of their brother, and when He, risen from the dead, went after the couple going to Emmaus. The words stand true, “ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever ” (Heb. 13: 8).

Drawing near to the two, the Lord enquired of them what it was that had caused their sadness, to be told that their hopes had been fastened upon Him with the expectation that He would deliver Israel from all their foes and troubles by a display of omnipotent power. No such deliverance had come. Instead He had been

crucified and slain by the chief priests and rulers of their nation. Some spoke of a vision of angels, who said that He was alive, but all they knew was that the grave was empty, though He had not been seen. How did our Lord meet this situation? He charged them with being slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken, for they had indicated that Christ **must** enter into His glory by the suffering of these things. He then opened up to them all the prophetic Scriptures concerning Himself. No wonder their hearts burned within them under such a wonderful unfolding, and they besought Him to stay in their home. Sitting at their table and partaking of their evening meal, their Guest rose up, took bread, blessed it, and gave it to them. In an instant their eyes were opened and they recognized their risen Lord; but at that same moment He disappeared.

He had accomplished His mission, for **Jesus Himself**, risen from the dead, was known to their hearts. Their doubts were turned into triumphant joy, which brought them back to Jerusalem that very night to tell the other disciples. They arrived with their glad news, but only to find that the Lord had been caring for another needy disciple that day, even Simon Peter.

But something further was to happen for, "as they thus spake, **Jesus Himself** stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." Still the disciples were troubled, thinking they might have seen a spirit. Therefore it was by displaying His hands and His feet, bearing the marks of His crucifixion, and by eating before

them, He showed that it really was, **Himself**.

Finally, our Lord led His disciples as far out as to Bethany and while lifting up His hands in blessing them, He was carried up into the heaven of God's glory. No wonder they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and continued praising and blessing God.

Our Lord's life on earth was ended. His death had fully met the claims of God against sin: His resurrection had shown God's full approval of His work, and had opened up the way in righteousness for the granting forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life to all who by faith receive the Lord as their own Saviour and Master.

But there is even more than this, for as we open the Acts of the Apostles we discover that a new dispensation has dawned as the result of His work. From Him, glorified above, the Holy Spirit has descended, indwelling all true believers, linking them up with their glorified Head in heaven. Thus the Church of God, which is the body of Christ on the earth, has been formed; for each being linked with Christ, they are linked one with another.

Passing on to the epistles, we find the hope of the church clearly stated. We are to be translated into those heavenly scenes where Christ is. And still it is the Lord **Himself**; for we read, "The **Lord Himself** shall descend from heaven with a shout," and we are to be "caught up," and shall, "meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be **with the Lord**" (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17).

EDITOR'S NOTE

WE have recently glanced at the first bound volume of this magazine — that for 1909 — and find that an article by A. J. Pollock, the writer of the paper printed above, appeared in its second number; entitled, "Does God care?" He pointed out that reviewing the history of God's saints, whether before or after Christ, it did not look as though He cared, until the end of the story was reached. The end of each story showed however, that He did care in full measure; and we may rest assured that He cares for all His own today in the same way. It is the end of the story that counts.

Now, this dear servant of God has reached the end of his earthly story, as a number of our readers

may already know. He departed to be with Christ in his sleep early in the morning of January 5th, having reached the advanced age of 92 years. His spirit now rests with "Jesus Himself," awaiting the glorious moment of the resurrection and the "catching up," to which he referred in the last lines of the article above.

During the past forty-eight years his writings have appeared very frequently in our pages, and we have still a few papers of his, which may yet appear, if the Lord will; but we hope for, and expect, the coming of our Lord. He rests with Christ above. Let us fill up the little measure of our service for Christ, while we wait below.

ERRATUM

On page 103 of our last issue, the first line of the last paragraph in the first column should have been inserted as a correction of the first line of the paragraph above it. This last paragraph should have read:—

So we are left with about one-tenth of the Bible's contents, etc.

"THINGS . . . TOUCHING THE KING" J. HOUSTON.

THE forty-fifth Psalm is essentially Messianic. The author tells us, his heart was inditing a good matter; and he spoke of things, which he had made, concerning the King. He gives us a beautiful poem, which is both devotional and prophetic; and in which he expresses (probably without knowing it) the deep feelings of the godly remnant of Israel.

In this way we can understand how fitting is that part of the title which says, "A song of loves" (or, "of the Beloved," New Trans.). In many respects it is not unlike Solomon's "Song of Songs;" and,

as a love song, it soars high in the appreciation and praise of the King. It is not surprising that devoted saints, at all times, have found untold delight, rapturous joy, and suitable expression for their own feelings in this inspired and sublime song.

In verse 2 we have an appreciation of the moral glory of the Messiah, whom the writer describes as being, "fairer than the children of men." Grace was indeed poured into His lips, for when He spoke in the opening of His public ministry at Nazareth, "all bare Him witness, and wondered at the

gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke 4: 22). When He acted it was in kindness. Grace marked Him in all that He said and did. He was the only begotten of the Father, "full of grace and truth . . . and of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1: 14-16). He was the full embodiment and perfect expression of grace. What a KING! Well might it be said to Him, "therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever."

In verse 3 we have reference to His official glory as the "King of kings." With His sword on His thigh He is mighty, glorious and majestic; and wields power that brooks no opposition from enemies. He rides prosperously; His course is straightforward. Nothing can resist His power; nothing can thwart His purpose.

And, be it noted, His moral glory is not divorced from His regal splendour. If He rides prosperously, it is "because of **truth** and **meekness** and **righteousness**." He not only speaks and acts in truth; but He is the truth, the full revelation of it. And though He is the greatest of all kings, He is the meekest of all men. His kingdom is set up and maintained in righteousness. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity; therefore He is well fitted to reign. God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

His fellows, as contemplated in the Psalm, are the godly remnant of Israel, who become the willing and happy subjects of His rule; though in the Epistle to the Hebrews the words are applied to

such as ourselves, whom He condescendingly calls His brethren. All the people fall under Him, yielding glad obedience. As for His enemies, His arrows will strike deep into their heart. None will escape.

In verse 6, we have His throne. In connection with it His deity is proclaimed; for He is God as well as Man. He is saluted thus: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." He fills the throne with glory, and holds the sceptre with power. And again, all His garments "smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces."

Here we have prophetically an allusion to His death, as we may see if John 19: 39, be read. What He was sacrificially is in keeping with what He was morally: what He was morally is in keeping with what He was regally. His garments smell of what he was in death, resurrection, and in glory.

What a combination of love, suffering, grace and glory! We have it all in Him, God's glorious Son, the King of Israel. What an Object for the love, worship and praise of His redeemed and happy people! Truly,

No subject's so glorious as He,
No theme so affecting to us."

Identified with the King in his glory, is the queen. She stands at His right hand in gold of Ophir. Symbolically the term, "queen" denotes Jerusalem, the earthly centre of all Jewish hope and blessing. Even Babylon is spoken of as a

queen. " She saith in her heart, I sit a queen " (Rev. 18: 7). Of course it is all usurped, deceitful and lying; for really she is " the great whore," and the counterfeit of the real Jerusalem, the city of the great King, and the hope of the true Israel of God (see, Gal. 4: 26; 6: 16).

The church, of course, is not in the Psalm at all; it is **never** spoken of as a queen. Jerusalem, and all that this metropolis represents in reference to Israel, is the queen; for she has a special place and standing before the Messiah in His millennial glory on earth. The church is Christ's body, united to Him, the Head, in heaven; and it is always and in all things heavenly (see, Rev. 21: 10, 11).

The term, " daughter," used in verse 10 of this Psalm, merges with the term, " queen." In other words, so far as God's people, coming under these names, are con-

cerned, they are one and the same. It is the queen that is to forget her own people and her father's house; and it is she that is, " all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." She is, brought to the King " in raiment of needlework."

Now all this imagery, so beautiful and engaging, is calculated to enliven the description of the Messiah's glory in reference to His people in the millennial age. The beauty put upon them is but a reflection of Him.

So it will be for His saints today for when He comes He will be, " glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe " (2 Thess. 1: 10). It is in them He will take up His inheritance; it is with them He will reign, How closely such are associated with Him! They suffer with Him, and they reign with Him. The former leads to the latter. All ends in glory, as we see in 1 Peter 5: 10.

THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM

F. W. BOYD.

IN spite of the material emphasis of the age; the metals and plastics, the controlled forces of diesel engine and turbine, of electric generator and nuclear reactor; the spiritual and emotional side of man remains. He still is happy or depressed; he still loves and hates; still experiences pain and pleasure, sorrow and joy.

On the one hand we are in the midst of a wonderful creation, much of which man is able to utilize. On the other it is still true that, " the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until

now. And . . . ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit . . . groan within ourselves, waiting for . . . the redemption of our body " (Rom. 8: 22, 23).

Who does not know in his own personal history something of those forces, which cannot but be described as evil, the fruit of sin, which produce at last the implacable enemy — death. These evil things had their bearing even upon the Lord's own pathway. Who has not meditated upon Isaiah 53? " A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief " — " taken from prison and

from judgment" — "cut off out of the land of the living."

For a short time, whilst He was here, the Lord set aside the power of evil, where men's bodies were in subjection to it, by His own personal word and touch, saying, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matt. 12: 28). This shows us that while men experience evil, behind it there are Satanic forces dominating it. Evil in many forms oppresses man, but in his fallen nature he responds to sin in a greater or lesser degree. So, sin reigns. How blessed then are the words, "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5: 21).

Bearing this in mind, we may glance at the book of Revelation to see the victory of God brought to pass. Without being dogmatic on the imagery of that book, nevertheless definite ideas are conveyed to our minds of mighty moral and spiritual forces in action on earth and in heaven. God and the Lamb are discovered as being behind everything; bringing to pass event after event and judgment upon judgment until evil is removed from the scene and men come into the blessing of God.

In Revelation 4 and 5 we find true worship. Let us note the intelligence and intimacy of the elders. The voices in heaven and on earth speak about Him, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb," but these, knowing Him that sits on the throne and the One who takes the

book from His hand, utter their praise directly to Him, saying, "Thou art worthy."

Creation and redemption are brought under review. God has created and is to be praised. The Lamb has redeemed and is to be worshipped. Is it for nothing that the elders have harps and golden bowls full of incense? They do not speak of the old, but they sing the new song of redemption, which fills heaven with melody and will find response even on earth. The divine basis has been laid for man's deliverance from sin, but not that only; God has His portion for His own pleasure: a kingdom of priests and righteousness ruling.

The cross, the darkness, the shed blood of the new covenant are answered by these heavenly songs, and the singers themselves are the firstfruits of the mighty work of redemption. The blessings promised to the patriarchs and to Israel are vested in "the Lion of the tribe of Juda," and the unfolding and bringing in of the vast universe of the counsels of God is given to Him whose likeness is, "A Lamb as it had been slain."

In Revelation 7: 14, we have those who have passed through great tribulation and washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. Salvation in a very full way is theirs and they are before the throne of God, never hungering or thirsting more. The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne feeds them and leads them to waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Again in chapter 15: 2, are those

who have victory over the beast. These stand on the glassy sea with harps of God. They sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, celebrating the marvellous works of the Lord God; doubtless seeing the maturing of the plan of the ages through redemption.

As the book is opened still further, we reach chapter 19, and see that the Lamb is to have His portion. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." The Lamb's "wife" of chapter 19 and the "holy city" of chapter 21 are apparently two aspects of the same thing. But before this holy event can take place, the evil imitation—Babylon—must go under the judgment of God. Her smoke rises up for ever. Her evil is finished, and the elders show their understanding, saying, "Amen: Alleluia."

Now the Lamb's wife can be seen in her perfection, clothed in fine linen and white, which is the practical righteousness of the saints. This helps to indicate her identity. God's plans for righteousness must first be worked out in individuals such as ourselves. We should be living today in the light of this.

Finally death itself, the last enemy, is abolished, and Satan, who wields its power, is removed into the lake of fire. Well may we anticipate this day! We do not yet see death removed, nor the kingdoms of this world, become the kingdom of God and of His Christ, but, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned

with glory and honour;" and He is, "from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" (Heb. 2: 9; 10: 13).

Who are these enemies? They are the forces of evil, operating in men like ourselves. God has started to move, and He already has His King with Him. He is not yet seen in Zion, ruling the nations with a rod of iron. But He has already secured dominion over our redeemed hearts, for we are brought into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Do we realize the value of being brought into His Kingdom? The blood of Christ has freed us from the penalty of sin under the judgment of God, but the kingdom is the sphere of safety from the power of evil. Our Lord, when on earth, was constantly wielding the might of the kingdom against all adverse powers. Today we know Him seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and anticipate the setting up of the kingdom on earth by enjoying its emancipating power in our souls.

As to our bodies, they are at present subject to death, although we have eternal life and are indwelt by the Spirit of God. We shall yet have glorified bodies, and we can say that God has, "wrought us for the selfsame thing" (2 Cor. 5: 5). Many have gone into the grave since the thief died on Calvary. Many more may yet do so: who knows? But God's purposes are being worked out in a deliberate and personal way in ourselves, as shown in the whole passage, 2 Corinthians 4: 15 - 5: 5.

So we can turn to Hebrews 2: 12, where we find the "Chief Singer," of whom David was a type. He slew Goliath, delivered his people, established a reign of much blessing, and became the sweet singer of Israel, with a wealth of material for his songs. Jesus, the Root and the Offspring of David, has defeated our great adversary and has delivered His people. The heavens have received Him. His claim to the whole earth is established, and while He waits for the consummation, He can declare the Father's name, and sing praise in the midst of His church.

Many may sing **about** Him, as we saw in Revelation 5; where also the elders, knowing Him person-

ally, and having intelligence as to His greatness and the value of His work, sing **to** Him. But here we see that it is possible so to have learned of Him, so to know His mind, His sorrows and His joys, as being in His company, that they sing **with** Him.

Are you disappointed, depressed, defeated, with little faith or hope? Or do you rejoice in His victory, and enter in some measure into the great purposes of God, which have been secured in Him? Can you sing? And if you can, do you sing **with** Him to His Father, who is now your Father? You will then sing to Him — the Worthy One — who has secured the adoration of your heart.

"HANDFULS OF PURPOSE"

T. D. BELL.

IT is often true that the beauty of a well-known passage of Scripture may hide from our eyes much of its practical instruction to the soul. The short book of Ruth furnishes us with such a case. The charm and grace of that lovely story may cause us to miss much practical guidance for ourselves. A word as to the diligent "gleaning," that becomes us as Christians, will not be amiss.

Like Ruth we have come into the field of harvest, for we have been brought into a sphere which belongs to Christ, into things which are given to us in connection with Him. Like her in the field of Boaz, we find it a crowded, busy

scene of Christian privilege, experience and service. The fruit of the Cross of Christ bestows its rich wealth all around us, and the grace of our great High Priest administers it through many channels to-day.

Ruth enters upon the field, impelled by her need. She has come into the land where the Lord's people dwell; her need is for food, that she might take an active, happy part in the new life she has entered. This too is the place of the Christian today. The Lord has drawn each true believer to Himself, and given us each that new life, which can only be fed and sustained by Him. That life has its

needs and its appetites, and so the Lord brings us into the field where His word is ministered; the place of Christian privilege.

Finding ourselves in this field, what **kind** of gleaners are we? Ruth's story may help us to answer this question, as we understand the place that gleaning has in our Christian life today.

This active scene of fellowship and its privileges, where we have the ministry of the Word, both spoken and in print, and also intercourse with fellow-Christians and service; all this constitutes the field for us. We may, any of us, take a place in this busy scene merely as onlookers, but this is not gleaning. If however, impelled by the needs of that new life in Christ which we have of God, we learn to take to ourselves a share in the harvest of the ministry of Christ, we are now gleaning and our personal store increases. We each need a personal appropriation of Christ while in the activity of Christian fellowship, that goes on around us.

With Ruth it soon became clear that someone was noticing, and he, Boaz, was the lord of that harvest field. It is surely true today that the eye of the Lord and His approval rests upon each of His own, who with heart's desires quickened after Him, claims personally a share of the harvest that lies within reach; and, "the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Prov. 13: 4). What follows is that Boaz instructs his reapers to let fall "handfuls of purpose," intended for Ruth.

Later, in chapter 3: 15, Boaz pours a wealth of barley into her vail, which her hand had not gleaned, and this too becomes true in our soul's experience. It is good to know that the Lord marks each diligent gleaner, and lets fall personal portions for such. He speaks often when we are alone over His word, yet so often too during the public ministry of the word, or when we are reading something in print by one of His servants, or even in meeting a fellow-Christian a word is let fall, and we realize at once that here is something from the Lord to meet some secret need, known only to Him. Sometimes too we hear others around us say, "That word was for me."

We may confidently say that our souls must be near to the Lord if He is going in any way to use us to let fall handfuls of purpose for others. And we may as confidently say that we need a ready hand, eager to take what He gives, in order to pick up what is let fall.

The evening work, following Ruth's day of gleaning, was that of beating out what she had gleaned. If we remember that, though administered by the Lord, human servants are employed in the work of His harvest, the need for this becomes clear. The husks and the chaff must be separated from the grain. That which is entrusted to the responsibility of the servant always needs this. The manna, which typified Christ personally as the food of the soul, was for immediate use. The gleanings require beating out, and are altogether different from that.

The Apostle Paul, writing to an infant church, newly brought to Christ, said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5: 21). How needed is this godly exercise by all our hearts to-day. We have perhaps just read a book or magazine, or listened to some ministry. Has it left an impression of truth, or doctrine, or a suggestion, which should remain in our memory? Seek the Lord's mind about it. Compare it, test it by His precious word, recorded in the Scriptures. This is the way in which the beating out is done.

The chaff will soon be separated when we prove things in this way, and the pure grain only be left. We see Christ in relation to that which we have just heard or read. This we hold fast. Only in this way does our personal store really increase. Is this difficult? The injunction by the Apostle to do this was addressed to those who were but babes in Christ.

That which Ruth had gleaned and also beaten out was now measured, "and it was about an ephah of barley." The estimation, the measure of the sanctuary could now be used, not with chaff or husk, but with the grain that remained. What an exercise for our hearts is here! Have we that in our store of ministry, whether read or heard, that can be measured? This measuring means that we bring our little store into the Lord's presence, and judge of it in communion with Him. This makes it our very own, a precious store.

All too many are saying, "There is so little for our souls in

the ministry we are getting today." That tender, affectionate question which Naomi addressed to Ruth, should say something to us about this complaint. She asked, "Where hast thou gleaned today?" If we are gleaning in the fields of this world, or even in the fields of a nominal or worldly Christianity, we may well say that we have gained little or nothing. Again, if we have gleaned in the fields of Scripture and yet have failed to beat it out, we shall retain but a little to which a measure could be applied. If however, with heart's affection set on Christ, we are like Ruth and, "glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves," it will be otherwise. In New Testament language this will mean that we do not forsake, "the assembling of ourselves together," (Heb. 10: 25). If we obey this injunction with prayerful exercise, we shall find a rich increase even today.

Finally, we read that at the close of the day Ruth gave to Naomi "that she had reserved after she was sufficed" (2: 18). The same thing is always true for us in God's things. Only those who are "sufficed;" that is, who have found their requirement filled up by present blessing in Christ, can hand on what is good. Enjoying Christ for ourselves, we can now give to others.

True Christian experience proves the truth of these lines, written long ago:—

"Thy heart must overflow, if thou
Another's heart would reach.
It needs the overflow of heart,
To give the lips full speech."

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 40: 9 — 45: 14)

IN spite of the fact that the revelation of the glory of the Lord brings to light, as nothing else does, the sinfulness and frailty of man, there is also brought "good tidings," and this it is which furnishes the "comfort" for "My people." Zion and Jerusalem are represented as lifting up the voice and saying to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

About the sixth hour on the day of the crucifixion Pilate brought forth Jesus, and said to the crowd in Jerusalem, "Behold your King!" (John 19: 14). This provoked the violent cry, "Away with Him, crucify Him." In our Scripture the prophet sees the same wonderful Person, but coming in the splendour of Deity with "strong hand." This will be good tidings indeed, after the painful display of sin and utter weakness on the part of men.

It is the Lord Jehovah who is coming with might, but it is "His Arm" who will rule for Him. As we go through these later chapters of Isaiah we shall find the Lord Jesus presented as the Arm of Jehovah some ten or twelve times. In this character He is seen as the One who executes in power all the will and purpose of Jehovah. He is also presented as the "Servant," who is to carry out the yet more wonderful work of sin-bearing and suffering. In the passages that speak of Him as the Servant we see predictions that view Him in His

first advent in grace: in those that present Him as the "Arm" our thoughts are carried on to His second advent in glory.

It is so here in verse 10. The Arm is going to **rule** for Jehovah, rather than suffer for Him. He will dispense reward and recompence to others in the day of His glory; and at the same time He will be a tender Shepherd to those who are His flock, gathering even the lambs to His bosom. In other words, while ruling in power at His second advent, He will display to His own all the grace which shone forth in Him at His first advent. As we look abroad in the earth today, we see how badly needed is the ruling power of a strong hand, and men desire to grasp that power so as to rule in their own interests. The Arm of Jehovah will rule "for Him;" and what a day that will be when the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

The verses that follow present to us the greatness and glory of the Creator-God in the most exalted language. So great is He that the mighty oceans lie in the hollow of His hand like a few drops of water; the expanse of the heavens, illimitable to us, is but the span of His hand; the dust of the earth as well as the mountains and hills are but small things, weighed in His scales. As to understanding, the Spirit of the Lord is far above taking any counsel from man.

We live in a day when nations are rising up and asserting themselves, and arming to the hilt, in order to enforce their will. What are they in the presence of God? They are like a small drop which may hang on a finger-tip, when taken out of a bucket of water; or like the small dust left on the scales when the substance weighed therein has been removed — so insignificant that no one pays attention to it. The nations that look so imposing and threatening to us, are counted by Him as "less than nothing, and vanity." It is good for us to measure them by God's standards and not by our own.

God then is great beyond all our thoughts, as verse 18 indicates, and in the presence of His glory how foolish and contemptible, as verses 19 and 20 say, are the makers of graven images that have not even the power of motion. And further, how feeble and insignificant are men, who appear but as grasshoppers, and their princes and judges but as nothing and vanity, and as stubble in the face of a whirlwind. We may also lift up our eyes and behold the mighty creation outside our little earth; all numbered and named by Him, and upheld by Him too, so that not one fails. He who created them has no equal and cannot be likened to any other. We do well to ponder this magnificent passage, for this God of ineffable power and majesty has been made known to us in Christ as our Father.

The closing verses of the chapter, while not revealing Him as Father, do make known His care and support for those who trust in

Him. Where all human power fails He gives strength to those who express their trust by waiting upon Him. As they wait their strength is renewed, and granted as it is needed. Some may need the strength that elevates; others the strength that runs the errands appointed of God, and others again that which enables for the steady and continuous walk through life for the pleasure of God. As we wait on God each shall receive the needed strength. The greatness of our God, as well as His goodness is the guarantee of it.

In view of this disclosure of the glory of God a call goes out to all mankind as chapter 41 opens—for the word "people" in verse 1 should really be in the plural, "peoples." God will reason with them as to His governmental ways in the earth. Verse 2 mentions a king, coming from the east of Palestine, who should be a conqueror, ruling over kings. It seems that this is a prophecy as regards the day in which Isaiah wrote, and was fulfilled in Cyrus, who is named in the verse that opens chapter 45. God raises up whom He pleases to carry out His designs in the earth. In contrast with this men in their folly and blindness manufacture their idols, as stated in verses 6 and 7. This controversy with Israel as to their persistent turning to idols continues till we reach the end of chapter 48.

In verses 8 and 9 of our chapter Israel is reminded that as the seed of Abraham, who is honoured as "My friend," they are a chosen people and called to be the **servant**

of God. How foolish then this turning to idols! And in the succeeding verses we find the most assuring words of encouragement and support which, if only received in faith, would have lifted them far above any reliance on idolatrous things. They should be upheld and their enemies confounded. The Holy One of Israel would be their Redeemer, and make them like a threshing instrument scattering their foes. Moreover He would be as a fountain of water to them, meeting all their needs.

In the light of this comes the challenge to the idols and their followers. Let them produce their cause; let them foretell the future and "declare things for to come." This they could not do, and an abomination were they and their votaries. A further reference to the coming conqueror from the north-east is found in verses 25 and 26, and the chapter closes with words of contempt for the men who supported the idols and the counsels they gave.

This throws into relief the opening of chapter 42, where the prophecy turns from Israel, as the failing servant of God, to introduce the Lord Jesus as the true Servant of God. Our attention is to be fixed on Him for He is the chosen One in whom the delight of God rests. He it is, who will bring forth judgment for the nations, and not only for Israel. Here again we find a prophecy which was fulfilled in part at His first advent, but awaits His second advent for the fulfilment of other details.

The prophecy is quoted in Mat-

thew 12: 14-21, as showing the lowliness and forbearance of His coming in grace. The Pharisees were indeed as unreliable and worthless as a bruised reed, and as objectionable as smoking flax, yet He neither broke nor quenched them. He was not an agitator, inflaming the multitude. The powers that were against Him were calculated to make any servant of God be discouraged and fail, yet He carried on His service to the end. He brought forth judgment according to truth by His sacrificial death and resurrection, though we must wait for the second coming to see the public establishment of judgment in the earth, so that the most distant isle shall wait for His law.

Our attention having been called to this true Servant, we have in verses 5-9, words prophetically addressed to Him. In verse 5 the acts of God in creation are stressed. Not only are the heavens and the earth the work of His hands but mankind also. He has given us not only the breath of our bodies but also the spirit, that is man's distinguishing feature in contrast to the beasts. Now this mighty Creator has called His true Servant in righteousness and established Him as a **covenant** to the people and a light to the nations. In verse 9 Jehovah is presented as declaring **new** things, so we may discern that the **new covenant** is predicted here, though not stated with the fulness found in Jeremiah 31.

We may note that Ezekiel 36 predicts the **new birth**, which is needed if the blind eyes are to be opened, as in verse 7 of our chap-

ter, to "see the kingdom of God," (John 3: 3); whilst in Jeremiah we have predicted the **new covenant**, under which the kingdom will be established. In Isaiah we have many of the **new things** predicted, that will mark the kingdom when it is finally established under the rule of Christ.

These new things will move those who enter into them to "Sing unto the Lord a **new song**;" and the thought, of how the glory of the Lord will be manifested and His praise be sung, fills verses 10-12. But the next verses show that what will bring blessing to His people will mean judgment and destruction to His foes. While the call will come to many who once were deaf and blind, that they may hear and see, the folly and judgment of those who turned to idols will be revealed.

The chapter closes with an appeal to those of Isaiah's day in view of these things. Israel had been called as God's servant and should have been a messenger to the nations on His behalf, yet they had been blind in all essential things. As to privilege they were "perfect;" as to their moral state they were blind. Still, as verse 21 indicates, God is not thereby defeated. His righteousness will be established and His law magnified and made honourable — doubtless in connection with His true Servant. But for the present all was failure on the part of Israel and consequently they were spoiled and robbed, and the law dishonoured by their disobedience.

We might have expected there-

fore that chapter 43 would have contained further warnings and judgments; but it opens rather on a note of grace. The Apostle Peter wrote to the scattered Jewish believers of his day how, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you," which grace meant "salvation" (1 Peter 1: 10); and here is a case in point. In the presence of their evil God falls back upon His original purpose and His redeeming work. Redemption by power was what the people looked for, and was mainly the theme here, as the succeeding verses show; but presently there will come before us the far deeper work of the suffering Servant — redemption by blood.

The whole chapter is characterized by two things. First, by the declaration of what God will do in His sovereign mercy for His poor blind and deaf people, who were set up to be His witnesses to the other nations. He will bring down their foes, be they Babylon and the Chaldeans or other peoples, and He will deal with their sins, as indicated in verse 25. How He will do this in righteousness is not revealed in this chapter; but the result will be that this people whom He had formed for Himself will ultimately shew forth His praise, as stated in verse 21.

But second, though all this grace is so strikingly promised, the existing state of the people in rebellion and sin is not glossed over. They are again made to face their fallen state. There is the promise of a regathering of their seed from the east and west, from north and

south, but at the moment they had turned from the Lord, as verse 22 says; they did not honour Him with offerings and sacrifices, but wearied Him with their iniquities. As their first father — Adam — had sinned, so they had followed in his footsteps. Because of this the curse and reproach lay upon them, imposed by the hand of God.

But yet again, chapter 44 opens with a word of mercy. In spite of his crookedness Jacob was God's servant, chosen by Him, and God is always true to His purpose and able to carry it out. This fact should bring comfort and strength to every believer today. The history of the church, like that of Israel, is one of failure and departure from the Divine call and way, yet the purpose of God for us will stand no less securely than His purpose for Israel. The failure and sin is not excused, though in the presence of it the sovereign grace of God is magnified.

The first eight verses of this chapter breathe out that grace in no uncertain terms. The sovereignty of God is declared, for He is the First and He is the Last, and beside Him there is no "God," or, "Rock," as the margin reads. Consequently, though He will chastise in His holy government, He will ultimately bless according to His original purpose.

But at the time when Isaiah wrote there was among the people this persistent tendency to turn to their idols and false gods. Hence once more, in verses 9-20 of our chapter, God reasons with the people about their folly in this

matter. The work of smith and carpenter are described, as a result of which an image is constructed, "according to the beauty of a man," which can be kept in the house. Then our thoughts are carried to the work of planting trees, or hewing them down, and then the absurdity of using some of the wood for warming oneself, or baking bread and roasting meat, and then out of the remainder fashioning a "god," before which one falls down and asks for deliverance!

The folly and absurdity of such doings should have been plain to all the people, but it was not. How was it that their eyes were closed and their understanding darkened? The trouble lay in their hearts, which were deceived. Hence they were unable to consider and discern the lie in their "right hand." The position today is just the same. Why do so many take up the erroneous religious cults that abound? The trouble lies not so much in their intellects as in their hearts. It is true for them as for Israel of old that, "a deceived heart hath turned him aside."

Having thus reasoned with the people, once more the prophet announces the merciful interposition of God, both in its ultimate display, which is still future, and in its more immediate display in the raising up of an eastern monarch, who should be favourable to them. As to the future, they would yet be the servant of God, their transgressions and sins blotted out. This would be accomplished on the basis of redemption so that the very heavens as well as the earth

will break into song, and the Lord Himself be glorified.

Then in the closing verses a deliverance that reached them about two centuries later is predicted, and Cyrus is named long before he was born. The statement that Jerusalem and the temple should be rebuilt clearly indicated that they should be destroyed, and this would confound the tokens of the lying diviners, who were always saying smooth and prosperous things, as other scriptures show. Judgment would fall, but mercy would in its season be shown, and the man through whom it would reach them is named.

In the opening verses of chapter 45, the prophet speaks to Cyrus on God's behalf, though as yet he had no existence. He was to be raised up as anointed for this particular service and his hand would be holden of God till it was accomplished. The details given in verses 1-3 were strikingly fulfilled, as we find recorded in the book of Daniel, though Darius the Mede is the conqueror mentioned there. He was the commander of the Medo-Persian army, but the rising power of Cyrus the Persian lay behind him. As we read these verses, we see Belshazzar, and "the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another" (Dan. 5: 6). We see the great gates of Babylon open and broken; and then, as a result of the fall of the great city "the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places" are in the hands of Cyrus. We see here an allusion to the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried

to Babylon, being restored, as recorded in Ezra 1: 7-11.

Here then is a remarkable prophecy that was literally fulfilled within two hundred years of its utterance. God called him by his name, and surnamed him, though Cyrus had not known Him. Yet the words of the decree of Cyrus, recorded in 2 Chronicles 36: 23; and again in Ezra 1: 2; would make it likely that in some way Isaiah's prophecy was brought to his notice.

With Israel's persistent idolatry still in mind, Jehovah declares in the succeeding verses His surpassing greatness. All things are in His hands. He creates the light and the darkness, the peace and the "evil," in the sense of disaster. Man is but a potsherd of the earth — the broken piece of a pot! Let man recognize his own littleness. Let him strive with another potsherd like himself if he will, but let him not strive with the Creator. It is not fitting that a man should strive with his father or mother, much less with his Maker. Verses 5, 13 and 14 again refer to Cyrus and the way in which God would raise him up. It would be "in righteousness," for he would carry into effect the will of God; and to do the will of God is righteousness.

The raising up of Cyrus and the granting to him such wide dominion was a surprising act, in view of the previous power and magnificence of Babylon. We need not wonder that it is claimed as a display of the surpassing power of God, in the presence of which idols are nothing.

“HE SPAKE THIS PARABLE”

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR Lord often spoke to His hearers in parables, for in Matthew 13: 34, we read, “Without a parable spake He not unto them.” If an uninspired writer had been the author of the Gospel according to Luke, we should have expected him to tell us in chapter 15 of **three** parables. But no, the inspired author tells us that, “He spake **this parable** unto them.” Believing, as we do, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” we cannot but see in this a plain proof of it.

We have a most wonderful revelation of God in the New Testament, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — Three in One, and One in Three — one God. In the Old Testament we have an emphatic assertion of the oneness of God, for we read, “Hear O Israel: The **Lord** [Jehovah, singular] our God [Elohim, plural] is one **Lord** [Jehovah, singular] (Deut. 6: 4).

The wise Creator has stamped this three in one feature on His creation. This is seen in nature; for instance, in the universal law of matter, which has three dimensions: length, breadth and height. This is seen alike in the mighty sun in the heavens and in the tiny insect, sporting itself in the sunshine. The remarkable thing is that, though each dimension may be mentally considered apart from the others, you cannot in practice have one without the others. The knowledge of this universal “three-ness” is in keeping with the revelation of God in the Trinity.

In the light of this, let us briefly consider the three parts of “this parable.” In the first part we have brought before us **the Good Shepherd**, who goes after the lost sheep until He finds it, and then rejoices, and creates joy in heaven over even one sinner that repents. One cannot fail to see thus illustrated the mission that our Lord came to carry out on earth. He was good enough and great enough to understand fully all that His mission involved, and ready to pay the price of sin on our behalf. He went all the way to Calvary in order to find **His sheep** that was lost. Was there ever a story like this?

The second part of the parable concerns the woman who, having ten pieces of silver and losing one, sweeps the house diligently until she finds it. Again, finding it there is rejoicing; a figure of that joy that exists in heaven, in the presence of the angels, when the lost is found. Here we have an illustration of the fact that, whilst there must be a work done **for** us, in which we have no share, even the work of redemption, there must also be a work done **in** us by **the Holy Spirit**, to bring us to repentance and faith in the Saviour. Apart from this work, we were “dead in trespasses and sins, just as the coin was dead. We may well thank God again and again for the work of the Holy Spirit **in** our hearts.

The third part of the parable, giving us the father’s welcome to the wayward prodigal on his return, is most touching, since it illustrates in the most vivid way the welcome

of the repentant and returning sinner, as the fruit of the work wrought **for** him and **in** him. What beautiful features these are, which could only have emanated from the heart of God Himself. We read, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him [literally, covered him with kisses]"

The homeward steps of this ruined but repentant "Down-and-Out" were driven by his deep need. He had no greater expectation than to be found among the hired servants, who had enough and to spare. He had been **starving**, and denied even the husks that the swine did eat. But the keen eye of the father scanned the road that led from the far country back to himself and his house.

To illustrate God's welcome to the returning sinner the father must run, and kiss frequently, and clothe with the best robe; and with a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet bring him into the house. What an astounding welcome is here described, but it sets forth the **response** of **God the Father** to repentance and the **reception** that He gives.

What is given to us here in parabolic language is beautifully expressed in Romans 3: 23 as "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ," and it not only is "unto all," but is "upon all them that believe," so that the believer stands in all the acceptance

of Christ. The best robe was waiting before the prodigal's return and into it he did not, and could not, put a single stitch. It was all of grace. Then the ring on the hand was the emblem of eternal love, and the shoes on his feet the sign of sonship, for the servants in those lands did not wear shoes.

And lastly, the killing of the fatted calf and the merriment illustrate the joy of the welcome, in which the repentant sinner has his share. They "began to be merry," and no word is given as to the merriment ceasing, for the joy of the blessed God and of redeemed men abides for ever.

Thus we see how the **three** parts of the **one** parable are all needed to present the whole picture, and how it illustrates most graphically the wonderful activity of the thrice blessed Godhead — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — in our blessing. We see portrayed the work of the Son in our **redemption**: the work of the Holy Spirit in our **regeneration**, and then the **response** produced by the way of repentance, and the amazing **reception** accorded by the Father to the returning sinner.

The grace displayed far surpasses our highest expectations. The God who has received us is able to keep us from falling, and to present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

EVERY error may be based upon some part of Scripture taken from its context, but no error can stand the test of ALL Scripture.

GOD REVEALED AND SIN REMOVED

W. H. WESTCOTT.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (JOHN I: 18).

IT stands to reason that no man hath seen God at any time. We can take account of a thing if it be a score of miles in length or breadth, and if it be a solid substance to be weighed. But can we imprison the wind to measure its dimensions, or tell where the light ends? God is a Spirit; and heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. He is everywhere present throughout this vast universe, greater than all He has created, not subject to change or break-up. Where could we begin to take account of Him? We may well ask this, as we read Job 38. He is “the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible” (1 Tim. I: 17, New Trans.).

But when the time came that God would reveal Himself in all that He is in nature and character, there was in the Godhead an adequate means of doing so; for the only-begotten Son in the Father’s bosom, in all the intimacy of His Divine and eternal relationship, knew all that God is. It was in God’s mind that His Son would become Man, and that in Man, and to men, should be made known all the depth of the Divine nature and all the lustre of the Divine glory. We cannot comprehend this by argument; it is one of those simple but stupendous facts that deny analysis. We cannot define life, nor can we measure space, nor explain eternity. So, without controversy — great is the mystery of godliness.

When I see God in the Person of His Son, a tender infant in Mary’s arms, I am dumbfounded, and can only cry, “Great is the mystery.” When I see Him, in the seclusion of a carpenter’s home, increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man, yet truly God manifest in flesh, “great is the mystery.” When this Divine Person makes Himself friendly with poor sinners to secure their ear for the holy message He brought, calling the weary and heavy laden, touching lepers, healing demon-possessed men, to express God’s mercy to them, “great is the mystery.” When at last I see Him hated and despised of men, and submitting to it; spit upon and scourged and crucified; and in the hour of His deep sorrow and suffering abandoned of God for my sin’s sake, enduring wrath and judgment for me, that nothing might remain untold of all that God is, then I bow my head, and in deepest self-abasement own, “Great is the mystery.”

God is fully told out in His Son. But the Son is now risen, glorified, seated in the Father’s throne as Man; so that there is a present and continuous delight in studying Him as the Revealer of His Father’s Name.

But soon another great fact comes to light for we read that,

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (JOHN I: 29).

There is only one gospel that speaks of the act of the soldier who pierced the side of Jesus on the cross, and it is the gospel which alone speaks of Him as the Lamb. Moreover, the page which describes Him here as the Lamb is full of His Divine glories. While we think of Him in His sacrificial character as the Victim, slain to secure God's glory and to put away sin, it is important to remember who the Lamb is. No one less than He who is God could meet God about sin, and glorify Him; and no one but He who is man could atone for men. John said, "After me cometh a Man" (verse 30). But he added, "He was before me." The first speaks of a Being who is truly a Man in His holy nature; the second refers to the truth of His eternal Godhead glory, as described in the earlier part of the chapter. Such is the Lamb. It is a title taken from the types and shadows of the Old Testament, and especially from Genesis 22.

This One is the Lamb of God. He is the One brought forth when man's lambs had had their day and served their purpose as foreshadowings of Christ. He it was whom God provided for Himself, as Abraham said, for a burnt offering. He was truly here in weakness as the very figure of a Lamb implies, yet to Him was entrusted the mighty task of securing the glory of

God, and of removing sin ultimately from the world. But it was not a living lamb in the Old Testament type that sheltered Israel from the destroying angel in Egypt; it was the blood of a slain one. It is not the life of Jesus here, though without blemish and without spot, which avails for our redemption, but the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1: 19).

To its value all the heavenly inhabitants bear witness (Rev. 5: 8-12). The representatives of sinners saved from earth, and the myriads of angels too; the first as having experienced its efficacy, and the second as spectators of God's ways, and filled with adoring praise. It is the Lamb whom God entrusts with the task of bringing order out of sin's chaos, and of establishing His supreme authority where man and Satan have so grossly and daringly refused it. It is the One who suffered here for God's glory and our sin who is the centre of all administration in God's throne; and the day of His blest intervention in the world's affairs will be the day when Satan will be bound, and there will be no more curse. From the throne of God and the Lamb will proceed life and healing and light, and holy and happy service as none have served below. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22: 20).

IT is better to believe in the supernatural than to believe in the ridiculous. The Modernist, the Evolutionist, the Infidel are often forced to give credence to the latter, because they refuse to believe in the former, as presented to us in the word of God.

THE CORINTHIAN DOXOLOGY

A. H. STORRIE.

IT is not surprising that no doxology occurs in the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, although there is a great ascription of thanks to God in chapter 15: 55-57. As is well-known, the epistle, which gives us God's order for the local assembly, is largely corrective. The Cross is applied to the flesh in its various activities; for the appreciation of Christ crucified produces conformity to His death. The flesh has been judged in the Cross, and this has its bearing upon every form in which the flesh is manifested, so that "no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1: 29).

Another has written, "It is impossible to read the two epistles to the Corinthians with the smallest care without perceiving the strong contrast between the wounded tone of the first epistle (the heart aggrieved so much the more because it loved the saints), and now, in the second, the same heart filled with consolation about them from God. This is exceedingly assuring, and it is as evidently divine, the effectual working of God's own grace." Thus we see that whereas the heart of the Apostle had been surcharged with grief in writing his first epistle, now he is able to pour forth worship to God for the comfort that had been granted, not only to the Corinthians but also to himself and his companions.

Trouble had come on them through their own errors, causing at the same time grief to himself; but now, the first Epistle having had the effect desired, the comfort

had overcome the sorrow; and this led to these worshipful words:—

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions, and God of all encouragement; who encourages us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation whatever, through the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged of God" (2 Cor. 1: 3-4, New Trans.).

Let us now briefly consider the blessedness that must follow such a doxology. It should be noted that the word "true" in verse 18 of this chapter is the same word as is translated "faithful" in the first Epistle (1: 9). So the faithfulness of God is the starting-point of the Apostle's ministry in both epistles. Just as in the first Epistle the Apostle had sought to put the Corinthian saints into practical communion with the **death** of Christ, so now in the second he proceeds to show how they may enter into communion practically with the **glory** of Christ.

To this end he indicated the threefold purpose God had in view when the Holy Spirit was given to us, as the anointing, the sealing and the earnest. The anointing brings with it both **power** and **intelligence**, as is indicated in such scriptures as Luke 24: 49; Acts 10: 38; and 1 John 2: 20-27. The sealing takes place on God's behalf, being His mark of **ownership**. The earnest is the **pledge** to us of our inheritance, and also a **foretaste** of it, as we see in Ephesians 1: 14.

A rich unfolding of truth as to Christ glorified follows. We are transformed into His image, from glory to glory, by beholding in faith His unveiled face, in chapter 3: 18. The heavenly treasure and the earthen vessel, through which the glory is to shine out, occupying us in chapter 4. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is touchingly brought before us in chapter 8: 9; and that in connection with the giving of our substance for the help of His saints and the furtherance of His work. In chapter 10: 1-6, the meekness and gentleness of Christ appeal to our hearts, so that our thoughts may be brought into the obedience of Christ.

Then simplicity as to Christ engages our minds in chapter 11: 1-3, and we are warned against being beguiled therefrom by enticements of the adversary, no matter how specious and advanced they may seem to be. And, lastly, how edifying is the record of the experience of "a man in Christ," in chapter 12. On the one hand he was caught up into the third heaven to hear unutterable things, and on the other he was still left for a time in this world, undergoing severe trial with a "thorn in the flesh." But all served to prove that the grace and power of the glorified Christ are sufficient for

the saint at all times, no matter how trying his circumstances may be.

The several references in the epistle to Satan, who would rob us of the enjoyment of these blessings, are not to be disregarded. There are his "devices," as we see in chapter 2: 11, and of these we should not be ignorant. He is "the god of this world," as stated in chapter 4: 4. His aim is to "beguile" and thus corrupt the saints, as we saw in chapter 11: 3; and to this end he will transform himself into "an angel of light," and make his servants appear as "ministers of righteousness," as the same chapter shows. Lastly, the thorn in the flesh that so tried and buffeted Paul was a direct "messenger of Satan;" and yet, as we saw, such was the grace and power of the glorified Christ that this work of the enemy was not only overcome but made a positive gain by preventing the Apostle being puffed up by the great experience he had enjoyed.

Finally, what a benediction falls on our spirits as we read the words that close the epistle:—

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

SERVICE

MUCH good work has been hindered by such anxiety to do better, as deters one from promptly doing what one can. When we so set our hearts on doing well, that we practically do nothing, we are paralysed not by humility, but by pride

“FLESH” AND “SPIRIT”

(EXTRACTED).

SPEAKING to Nicodemus, a man in whom human nature had come under the restraining influence of the law of Moses, the Lord Jesus not only asserted his need of the new birth but also said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3: 6). These words not only indicated the existence of two natures but also showed that each is characterized by the source from which it springs.

First, there is “flesh,” that old nature, which we received by natural birth through our parents, derived originally from fallen Adam.

Second, there is “spirit,” that new nature, which is ours as being born again by the action of the Holy Spirit of God, and which partakes of His holiness.

Two other things this verse clearly shows. There is no admixture of the two natures: each remains distinct and apart. And further, as to their respective characters, they never change. No amount of education, civilization, or even bringing under Christian influence, will change flesh into spirit. It was born of the flesh and flesh it remains. So we have to enquire:

What is the character of the flesh?

Men display their characters by their actions; so too the flesh may be judged by the works it produces. Let Galatians 5: 19-21, be read at this point. Here the Apostle speaks not exactly of the flesh but of “the works of the flesh,” by which

its character is discerned. It is essentially an unholy nature. It is a bad tree bringing forth evil fruit.

But we must also read Philip-
pians 3: 3-6, where we see the flesh in quite another light. Paul tells us plainly that he has “no confidence in the flesh,” and then he proceeds to describe the flesh in which he has no confidence, and to our surprise we find no list of evil things, such as given in Galatians, but rather things religious and outwardly blameless which many would highly esteem. But all this he calls “flesh,” in which he has no confidence.

Evidently then, coming under religious influences, the flesh can present a fair exterior. It did so in the Pharisees and Sadducees, who crucified our Lord, just as it did in Paul, who not only wrote the passage in Philippians but also 1 Timothy 1: 13. That both passages should apply to the same person would be unbelievable, did we not know the subtilty as well as the ineradicable character of the flesh.

This illustrates what is stated in Romans 8: 7, “The carnal mind [mind of the flesh] is enmity against God.” This was obviously so in the lustful and loose-living Herod, who beheaded John the Baptist; but it was equally so in the strictly religious Saul of Tarsus, who put his hand to the death of Stephen. Outwardly they were very different men, but the flesh in both was the same — enmity against God.

All this prepares us for the sweep-

ing statement of the Apostle in Romans 7: 18, where he tells us that he knew that "in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Most, if not all, would admit that in the flesh there is a good deal of bad, but here is the statement that in it there is nothing good. The flesh may, if it suits it, do things that would be accounted good among men, but God's standards are higher and different from ours. This being so, we can understand our Lord's words in John 6: 63, "The flesh profiteth nothing."

Turning now to Romans 8: 8, we read, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" this leads us to enquire:—

What is it, to be "in the flesh" ?

Every unconverted person has the flesh in him: it is his nature, and by his nature he is dominated. This is true all through the ranks of creation. Each creature is unconsciously controlled by its nature, and fallen man is no exception to this universal rule. This came to light very early, for of the antediluvian world God said, "He also is flesh" (Gen. 6: 3). These early sinners had the flesh in them, and it so controlled them that they could be declared **to be flesh** — a parallel statement to being "in the flesh."

The next verse in Romans 8 is in contrast to this, and we may ask:—

What is it to be "in the Spirit" ?

The contrast is there but with a difference, which is found in the qualifying words, "if so be, that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

The true Christian is not only born of the Spirit, and so has a new nature which is "spirit," but he is indwelt by the Spirit, of whom he was born. Now the new power that is to control the believer so that the new nature, which he has from the Spirit, shall characterize him, and not his old fallen nature, is found in the indwelling Spirit of God.

But this must be wrought out in our experience and in practice; which leads us further to enquire:—

What is God's way of deliverance from the power of the flesh?

The answer to this is found in the narration of Paul's experience in Romans 7, leading to chapter 8. He discovered that he possessed two natures — the "inward man," which he connects with "the law of my mind," and the "law in my members," which was at war with his inward man that delighted in the law of God. This painful discovery we have to make.

But he made a second discovery, far more painful than this, to which we have already alluded: there was absolutely no good to be found in the old nature, the flesh. What it is, it is, and it cannot be improved or altered.

On this a third and equally painful discovery is made — that in the new nature by itself there is not resident the power that will enable it to have its own way and overcome the inveterate tendencies of the old nature. This produces the agonized cry of wretchedness, which we find in verse 24 of Romans 7. This

is a point we all have to reach in varying degrees.

In this dark picture there is however a distinct ray of light. It is a fact that the shattering of our confidence in the flesh helps largely to the shattering of the flesh's power over us. And then, our confidence in the flesh being broken, we begin to look away from ourselves to find a deliverer. The cry of Romans 7: 24, is not, "How shall I deliver myself?" but rather, "Who shall deliver me?" The Deliverer is then found as the next verse shows, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

If Romans 7 gives us Paul's experience, we may find in the Gospels something similar in the case of Peter. His denial of the Lord was occasioned by his having confidence in the flesh. It is remarkable that each Gospel records a different self-confident utterance. Read, Matthew 26: 33; Mark 14: 31; Luke 22: 33; John 13: 37; and see. He had the new nature with its good desires, but he had not learned that it had no strength; hence forward he went to a collapse, and the denial of his Master with oaths and curses. In John 21 we learn how effectually the Lord dealt with him to break down his self-confidence, for his ultimate deliverance, which should be so real and complete that he would end by doing in the power of God just what he had vainly boasted of doing in his own strength. This we see in verse 18.

The enslaving power of sin being thus made manifest, we must now ask:—

What has God done with sin in the flesh?

The answer to this is found in Romans 8: 3. In Old Testament times the flesh was tested in every conceivable way. The supreme test came when God sent His own Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh," though perfectly holy Himself. The sin, inherent in the flesh, was there revealed in its darkest hue, and there on the cross in the sacrifice of Christ it was utterly condemned. God has not condoned sin but condemned it, finally and for ever.

The law had plainly showed that the flesh could neither be curbed, controlled nor reformed; so what cannot be mended must be ended. This came to pass under the judgment of God in the cross of Christ. The time of probation is over, for it has been proved beyond all question that the flesh is dominated by sin. Hence judicially it has been condemned.

Now what is the result of this for the believer? We clearly see that Christ having borne the judgment of our sins on the cross, they will never rise up against us in judgment. But it is equally clear that sin in the flesh — the old nature, that committed the sin — having been condemned in that same cross, we are clear from its condemnation, as stated in Romans 8: 1. There is no condemnation for us since its condemnation fell on Christ, when He became the Sacrifice for sin.

And there is a further result of a practical nature. If God has thus dealt with sin in the flesh, it is not

for us to be trying to deal with it by efforts of our own, but rather to accept with a humbled spirit what God has done with it. In our eyes the flesh becomes a judged and repudiated thing.

These things being so, one further question presses for an answer. It is this:—

Where is the power that delivers from enslavement by the flesh?

The answer to this is found in Romans 8: 2, where the word "law" means not a code of rules, as when we speak of "the law of Moses," but rather a controlling power, as when we speak of "the law of gravitation." Now on the ground of Christ's accomplished work, and as the fruit of His exaltation to glory, the Holy Spirit has been given to indwell believers. He takes up His abode — if we may speak figuratively — not as a passenger on a ship,

but as the Captain in control of the vessel. His control displaces the old control of sin and death.

If we wish to know how the Holy Spirit exercises His control, we may find an answer in the farewell discourse of our Lord recorded in chapters 14-16 of John's Gospel. We select one verse, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (16: 14). If ungrieved and unhindered, He will fill our hearts and minds with Christ, and employ our energies in His service. Under this new control, we are lifted above the things that once dominated us.

Then it is that we begin to obey the apostolic exhortation, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

In this lies the secret of experimental and practical deliverance.

HEART-LONGINGS

Hebrews 13: 7, 8.

NOTHING is of any value that does not spring from personal love to, and communion with, Christ Himself. We may have scripture at our finger ends; we may be able to preach with remarkable fluency, a fluency which unpracticed spirits may easily enough mistake for 'power'; but oh! if our hearts are not drinking deeply at the fountain head — if they are not enlivened and invigorated by the realization of the love of Christ, it will all end in mere flash and smoke. I have learnt . . . to be increasingly dissatisfied with everything, whether in myself or others, short of abiding, real, deep, divinely inwrought communion with, and conformity to, the blessed Master. Crotchets I despise; mere opinions I dread; controversy I shrink from; all ISMS I esteem as utterly worthless. But . . . I long to know more of His own precious Person, His work and His glory. And, then, oh! to live for Him: to labour, testify, preach, and pray, and all for Christ, and by the working of His grace in our hearts. C.H.M.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 45: 14—49: 4).

THE power of God, that, by the raising up of Cyrus, would accomplish His purpose to release those whom He calls, "My captives," would only be perceived by faith. Therefore the prophet exclaims, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." A servant of God has very truly and aptly remarked, "God's ways are behind the scenes, but He moves all the scenes which He is behind."

Men may act to achieve their own purposes without any thought of God and yet God may be behind their doings, overruling them to serve His own ends. Israel is to know God as Saviour and be delivered from their idols. This was in part accomplished when by the decree of Cyrus a remnant returned to their own land; for after that deliverance the demon of idolatry was cast out of them, and outwardly they served the God of their fathers. But the everlasting salvation mentioned in verse 17 is not yet theirs. Each "salvation" as yet granted to them has only lasted for a time. When it does come by the advent of Christ, it will abide "world without end," or, "to the ages of ages."

This promised salvation is guaranteed most solemnly in verses 18 and 19, by Jehovah Himself who is the Creator. As Creator He had formed the earth for mankind to inhabit it. He did not create it "in vain," or "as waste;" an allusion doubtless to Genesis 1: 2, where the earth was found in a condition

described as, "without form," or, "as waste;" the same expression being used there as here. When the earth, subsequent to its original creation, had become waste, He reduced it to form and order for the use of man. He who had done this now guaranteed salvation for Israel. He promised openly and in righteousness. This made it certain that the salvation when it arrived would be accomplished in a righteous way; just as the righteousness in which every believer now stands before God is brought to pass on a righteous basis.

So the call of God to the seed of Jacob had not been in vain. But not only Israel is in view but Gentiles also, as verse 20 shows. The call is to those that are, "escaped of the nations," which shows that judgment will fall on the nations, and only those that escape it will enter into the blessing that is promised, just as it is only the remnant of Israel that will be saved. The nations had been full of idolatry, praying to "a god that cannot save," so they are called, that they may know a God who can save.

Verses 21-25 furnish a remarkable forecast of the Gospel, as it is unfolded in Romans 3. Against the dark background of idolatry the Lord presents Himself as "a just God and a Saviour." The law had revealed Him to Israel as a just God, who judges all their ways. Only in the Gospel is He declared to be God, who **saves** in righteousness. Christ has been, "set forth . . . a

propitiation through faith in His blood . . . to declare . . . at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3: 25, 26).

In our chapter, not only are justice and salvation brought together but faith is also indicated, though not mentioned, for the way in which the salvation is to become effective is stated as, "Look unto Me." No works of law are demanded but the look of faith, for beyond all contradiction in an emergency we look to someone in whom we believe, and hence in whom we trust. And again, the call goes out far beyond the bounds of Israel, for any to "the ends of the earth" may look and be saved. In Romans 3: 21, this righteousness of God apart from the law is said to be "witnessed by the law and the prophets," and the verses we are considering are certainly one item of witness furnished by the prophets.

Verse 22 then conveys an invitation to faith, but verse 23 shows that God in His majesty must be acknowledged by all, though many may not have answered the invitation in faith. And how is this bowing of the knee and the swearing of the tongue to come to pass? Philippians 2: 10, 11, answers the question conclusively. The Person of the Godhead, to whom the obedience and confession will be universally made, is no other than the Lord Jesus, who accomplished the righteousness by His obedience unto death. Righteousness and strength are found only in Him, and as the last verse says, it is "the

seed of Israel" who will glory in Him as a justified people. Many who are "seed of Jacob" according to the flesh, are not "seed of Israel" according to God.

Before leaving this chapter notice how in the latter part of it the **exclusive claim** of Jehovah is emphasized again and again. Beside Him there is "none else." The faith of Christ, and the Gospel which proclaims it, have today just this exclusive claim, as witnessed in such scriptures as John 6: 68; 14: 6; Acts 4: 12; Galatians 1: 8, 9. There are today men who would go to the Buddhist or Confucian, acknowledging their religions as ways to God and only claiming that "Christianity" offers them a rather superior way. In so doing they bring themselves near to, if not actually under, the apostolic curse of Galatians 1: 8, while they avoid the reproach that the Gospel brings. It is this exclusive claim, inherent in the Gospel, which provokes the opposition.

The opening verses of chapter 46 pick up the theme that runs through these chapters — that of the persistent idolatry of the people. Bel and Nebo were two of the idols of Babylon, and the prophet sees the images representing them placed upon beasts ready for flight, just as at the beginning of the last chapter he had seen Cyrus taking the city. The word translated, "carriages," means "things lifted up to be carried," not the vehicle on which they are placed.

So verses 1 and 2 are really ironical. The heavy images were placed on the backs of oxen, that stagger-

ed and finally collapsed, unable to deliver the gods into safety. Bel and Nebo could not even deliver themselves; much less anyone who trusted in them!

Hence the appeal of verses 3 and 4. It is made, notice, to "the house of Jacob," in contrast to "the seed of Israel," mentioned previously, even if amongst them were to be found a remnant of the house of Israel. In contrast to the Babylonian gods that had to be borne on the backs of weary beasts so ineffectually, here is One who would support and carry, from their birth to the grey hairs of old age, those who trusted Him; One who would never let them down but deliver them. How great the contrast!

The contrast exists around us today. It is still a pertinent question — Do you go your way, carrying the things that you idolize, or does your God carry you? The idols of the modern English-speaking world are not images but more subtle things, such as money, pleasures, lusts; yet as life draws to its end they let you down. The God, whom we know, revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, carries us through to the finish, for we are in the embrace of the love that will never let us go.

Hence, as verse 5 declares, God stands out alone, beyond all comparison with any other. This fact is supported by a further reference to the follies that are inherent in idolatry. Here are men falling down and worshipping a god, fashioned by their own hands, which is a stationary object, unable to move or speak or save. And here is the true God, who acts and speaks, and fore-

tells things that presently come to pass. The "ravenous bird [bird of prey] from the east," is doubtless another allusion to Cyrus, whom He would raise up to execute His purpose in the near future. Then from that which was comparatively near the prophecy passes to the ultimate purpose of God, which was remote. At last God will place salvation "in Zion," which speaks of His intervention in mercy, and the redeemed Israel who will enjoy it, will show forth the glory of the God who has accomplished it.

Chapter 46 commenced with a forecast of the Babylonian gods falling into ruin and captivity. Chapter 47 from start to finish pronounces judgment on Babylon itself. Just as the mystical Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is viewed as a woman, so here, only the picture is not so dark. Babylon here, for instance, is addressed as "virgin daughter," and not as "the great whore," and as "the mother of harlots." It is a solemn thought that the mystical Babylon, to which an apostate Christendom is working up, is more filthy in the eyes of God than the literal Babylon of Old Testament times.

The ancient Babylon was indeed for a short period "the lady [mistress] of kingdoms," but her downfall is foretold. Verse 6 strikes us as very remarkable, inasmuch as the things alleged against her had not actually taken place and did not come to pass till the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Then the wrath of God against the evils of His people condemned them to be carried away, and His inheritance polluted by the temple being destroyed. God per-

mitted it; the Babylonian monarch did it with a heavy hand, and upon Babylon will come the heavy hand of God's judgment, in a day when there should be executed "the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of His temple" (Jer. 50: 28).

So Isaiah was led to prophesy what Babylon would do to Jerusalem a century before it happened, and to foretell also how Babylon later should be overthrown, since Jehovah is "our Redeemer . . . the Holy One of Israel" (verse 4). He spoke too of the unexpected way in which the destruction would come upon them, as we see in verse 11, the fulfilment of which we find in Daniel 5.

Verse 13 speaks of the men who practised the dark arts of spiritism, in which Babylon trusted, for that city was apparently the original home of idolatry, which means the worship of demon powers. All such evil powers collapse when God acts in judgment. But it is this feature, we believe, that accounts for Babylon, rather than any other ancient city, being carried into Revelation with a spiritual application; for of that Babylon we read it had "become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit," and again that by its "sorceries were all nations deceived."

Having pronounced judgment against Babylon, the prophecy turns again in chapter 48, to the "house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel." The fact that they were thus addressed constituted a rebuke. Israel was the new name given to Jacob when God blessed him, as we learn in Genesis 32: 28.

The people claimed the new name, but were displaying all the ugly features of the old crafty, scheming Jacob. Outwardly they paid lip service to Jehovah and stayed themselves upon the holy city and the God of Israel, but without reality. They deceived themselves but not God, for He saw it was "not in truth, nor in righteousness."

This kind of thing has always been a great snare to the professed people of God. It came to a head, particularly in the Pharisees, when our Lord was on earth, and His most searching words of denunciation were directed against such. It is very prevalent today, for 2 Timothy 3: 5 shows that "a form of godliness" may cover up hideous depravity. Let every reader of these lines, as well as the writer, beware of it. Spiritual pretension is a peculiar snare to those who are well instructed in the things of God, for they know the right and appropriate and even beautiful thing to say, and they may claim much without any heart and reality in it.

So the first eight verses of this chapter are filled with solemn words of exposure and warning. Here they were, trafficking with their idols, as verse 5 indicates, and giving them credit for anything favourable that came to pass, while still professedly serving God. And all the time it was God who was able to speak in advance and show the former things, and then suddenly bring them to pass, as verse 3 states. The fact was that their ears were closed to God's word so that they did not hear. They were marked by treachery and transgression as verse 8 declares.

Once more the obstinate sins of the people are thus exposed — so what then? Just when we might have expected further announcements of coming judgment, God states what He proposes to do for the sake of His own Name and praise. He will defer His anger and not cut them off entirely, though He is going to pass them through the furnace of affliction. He will consider not only their ultimate good as a nation but also His own glory and the honour of His own Name.

In verse 12 God Himself is still the Speaker. He presents Himself, saying, "I am He," or, "I am THE SAME," for it is really a name of God. He is not only "the FIRST" but also "the LAST." When we reach the book of Revelation, chapters 1: 17 and 22: 13, we find the Lord Jesus claiming these august designations for Himself; and indeed we may discern Him as the Speaker in the Old Testament passage before us, for it was His hand that, "laid the foundation of the earth," and "spanned the heavens," as Hebrews 1: 2 assures us. He who had so wrought in creation would not fail to work out His purpose and pleasure on Babylon and the Chaldeans, and in favour of His people.

We may discern the same Speaker in verse 16. There may have been a more immediate application of verses 14 and 15 to Cyrus, who was destined to overthrow Babylon and grant a respite to the Jews, but the full and lasting fulfilment is only found in Christ, who is the Sent One of the Lord Jehovah; and that, whether we read the end of the verse as in our Authorised Version, or that the Lord God "hath sent Me

and His Spirit," as in other Versions. In John's Gospel particularly is the Lord Jesus presented as "the Sent One." In the Acts we have the sending of the Spirit. We may call the closing words of verse 16 a preliminary intimation of the Trinity, though the real revelation of it awaited New Testament days.

The coming of Christ having thus been forecast, the "Holy One of Israel" is presented as Redeemer and the One who will ultimately teach and lead the people in the way that will be for their profit and blessing, though for the moment they were not hearkening to His Word. The blessing they were missing by their inattention and disobedience is strikingly pictured in verses 18 and 19. There would have been peace based on righteousness. What they missed then, in a more material way, is now being proclaimed in a spiritual way in the Gospel.

Yet, as verses 20 and 21 show, God will work in days to come for the redemption of Israel from their foes, and do for them again what once He did when under Moses He brought them through the wilderness and into the land.

But this does not mean that God is going to condone evil. Far from it. To reach the blessing Israel must be delivered from their sin, since there is no peace for the wicked, as verse 22 asserts. This verse marks the end of a distinct section — the first 9 chapters of the closing 27 chapters — in which the main offence alleged against the people is their persistent idolatry. Against that dark background the

only bright light shining is the predicted advent of Christ.

So as we commence chapter 49, and so pass into the central section, we immediately hear His voice in the spirit of prophecy, calling upon us to listen to Him. In the Gospel of John He is introduced to us as "the Word," the One in whom the whole mind of God is expressed; and at the transfiguration the voice out of the cloud said, "Hear ye Him." So we are not surprised that prophetically He should say, "Listen . . . unto Me." What might surprise us, and might well surprise an attentive Jewish reader, is that He should address His call to the "isles," and to "peoples from afar," for the word, we understand, is in the plural, indicating the distant nations, and not the people of Israel. But so it was; and thus at the start of this new section it is intimated that what He has to say, and what He will accomplish, will be for the benefit of all men and not only for the people of Israel.

His words will cut like a sword and pierce like an arrow when He comes forth from the Divine quiver, for He shall appear as the true Servant of God and the true Israel; i.e., "Prince of God." As the earlier chapters have shown the national Israel had been called to serve God but had failed completely. This true Israel is declared to be called from the womb, made a "polished shaft" to fly unerringly as directed, and in Him, Jehovah says, "I will be glorified." We can now say, In whom He has been glorified, and in whom He will yet be glorified in a supreme and public way.

And then, in our chapter, comes verse 4. How often it has been the case in this fallen world that the servants of God have had to taste the bitterness of defeat and apparent failure. Indeed it seems to have been the rule rather than the exception. The supreme example of this is found in our Lord Himself. He came, as the Apostle Paul states, "A Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm The promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15: 8); but, rejected by "the circumcision," His mission from that standpoint was marked by failure. He did indeed labour, but it was "in vain." His strength was put forth, but "for naught." Thus it was to all appearance, and according to the judgment of man.

"Yet" says the Messiah, "surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." His labour, His work, the exertion of His strength was not in vain, for God had entrusted to His Servant a task far deeper and wider and more wonderful than being just "a Minister of the circumcision," as we shall find intimated in our chapter, though we must travel into the New Testament to get a full view of its greatness.

Into that full light we today have been brought, so that with full hearts we can take up the little hymn that begins,

His be "the Victor's name,"
and go on to sing,

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

DIVINE LOVE AND ITS EFFECTS

DAVID ROSS.

From notes of an address on Ephesians 1: 1-6, 15, 16; 2: 4, 5; 3: 17-19; 4: 2, 3, 15, 32; 5: 1, 2, 25-28; 6: 23, 24.

WE have just read what I call, "the love passages in a family letter." A Christian called one morning to see a colonel, and found him sitting in the lounge of his hotel, looking very miserable. He said that the night before he could not sleep, and finding a Bible in his room, he had read the Epistle to the Ephesians, and was troubled because he could not understand it. Said the Christian, "Did you read the address?" "Address? No." "I will read it to you. 'To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.' Are you a saint?" "Oh, no." "Are you faithful?" "Oh, no." "Then no wonder you could not understand it. You must first be in the family."

This is a letter for all the children of God. It may help us to understand it, if we trace Divine love running through it like a vein of pure gold. For, as we sometimes sing,

"... Love is pure gold,
Love is what Jesus came to unfold."

We begin with chapter 1, and here we have **Love's Purpose**. All that God has purposed and accomplished has been in love, for He has pre-destined us unto the adoption of children, or, unto "sonship" by Jesus Christ to Himself "according to the good pleasure of His will." We may have been like the prodigal, hoping for bread in the kitchen; but we have had the

fatted calf in the Father's presence. Do any ask, How can I stand before God? The only way is that of acceptance in the Beloved. When God looks at us, He sees us in His beloved Son, and we are taken into favour in Him, graced in all His acceptability. Thus we are fitted for His presence. Is not that grand? Rejoice in it then.

But then, what is to mark a family? A father does not want to see his family marked by quarrels and discord, but rather by concord and helpfulness. So in these later verses we have, "love unto all the saints," and prayerfulness. Don't spread that evil report. Don't speak that unkind word. Let us tell all the good we can of those who are in this great family to which we belong. Travelling in Germany I got in with a party going to a missionary conference. We had a good time together, not arguing our differences but as members of the family. So also in Switzerland: taking my seat next to a lady of pleasing countenance, I pulled out my visiting card — my Bible! We found at once that we belonged to the family of God. Do not forget — love to all the saints. May God give us more of that.

So in chapter 1 we have God's plan. The mighty Architect is to erect a wonderful building, which is revealed in chapter 2. For that **Love's Power** is needed. In the temple God is building His whole

character is to be shown. But material is needed for this structure, and the power of love is necessary in order to produce it. We see sinners taken from the quarry of sin and made fit for such a destiny. God's glad tidings came to us when we were dead in trespasses and sins, and in His great love He quickened us together with Christ.

Can you measure that love? I cannot. God's love went down into the depths to reach the sinner, for by grace we have been saved through faith, which was not of ourselves. There is no merit in faith; it is but the hand that takes what God is offering. And not only are you a sinner saved by grace, but also a stone in that wonderful temple that God is building. He did not take up angels but sinful men, to display the power of His love and the exceeding riches of His grace. As a man in London once spoke of himself — "a wretched sinner, saved from the guttermost of sin to the uttermost of time, for the uppermost of heaven."

How grand then it is — accepted in the Beloved; children before the Father's face; or as we also see, a living stone; brought into a spiritual, living organism.

In chapter 3 we learn that we are to be "rooted and grounded in love." Now, "rooted" clearly indicates a living organism — having all the fibres of our being rooted in love. Then, "grounded" rather indicates a building; our foundation must be laid in love. The Gospel does not foster self-conceit. Looking on the love of Christ you see

that which is infinitely bigger than self.

There is breadth — broad as the universe: length — long as eternity: depth — deep as our blessed Saviour went: height — high as the throne on which He sits. Thus we may know the love of Christ, which in its fulness passes knowledge. What I want you to call that is — **Love's Plenitude**; and we may well sing, "Oh, fill me Jesus Saviour with Thy love."

But the Christian does not walk with his head in the clouds and his feet in the mud. If we have had love's plenitude in chapter 3, we have **Love's Practice** in chapter 4: first in relation to other individual saints, then as to the truth of God, and then as to the whole church of God. Someone has said, "The Lord has a lot of queer bairns." Does anyone say, "I can't get on with brother so-and-so." But can he get on with you? But what is to mark us is all lowliness and meekness. What is going to produce this lowliness in us? Why, the love of Christ in all its breadth and length and depth and height. When I first saw the Swiss mountains, oh, I did feel small. I come from Scotland but our mountains compared with the Swiss look like molehills.

If we start comparing ourselves with others, we may imagine that we have something to boast about; but if the love of God in all its fulness fills our hearts, we shall find we have nothing in which we can make our boast, and our attitude towards others will be marked by lowliness and meekness. Forbearing one another in love, we shall be us-

ing divinely given diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This is in relation to the saints we come up against every day, not some brother who lives a hundred miles away. It is in the continual daily intercourse that these things are tested.

Then in relation to the truth of God, we are to be speaking it or holding it in love. It is sadly possible to be speaking it in a spirit of intolerance or even hatred, and bring ourselves under the condemnation of Him, who has eyes that discern everything. May God Himself preserve us from a Pharisaical holding of truth in religious bigotry on the one hand, and from a foolish sentimentality, that lets anything pass, on the other. It is balance that is needed. Not only holding the truth, and not love only; but holding the truth in love.

Then there follows the beautiful figure of the body. In relation to the whole church, we have to remember that every member plays a part. There is a great danger, though we may not realize it, of drifting into clericalism. You know how it can all be left to this brother or that — he will speak; he will preach the Gospel. And, all too often, there are those who will not come together to help the brother in question by prayer. Now if my lungs ceased to function, you know what would happen. Do let us remember that as in the natural body the function of each member is needed, so in the spiritual; and the end in view is the edifying of the body **in love**. Holding and speaking the truth in love — the love of Christ — that is what builds up saints.

In chapter 5 we have **Love's Pattern**. We are to walk in love and thus be imitators of God, as His dear children. We should display the features of the One who has become our Father; and if we do, Christ will be seen in us. When the early Christians were persecuted, and they suffered rather than betray one another, it used to be said, "Behold how those people love one another!" Can that be said of Christians today? Love is not genuine unless it is willing to **sacrifice**. The love of Christ led Him to give Himself for us, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

How much do we love the Lord?
Sometimes we sing,

Love, so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my
all.

And yet we may not be ready to give a little in money or time in His service, or to suffer for His sake, or to forgive, or to submit. The proof of love is not in talk but in sacrifice. In the sacrificial love of Christ we see our pattern.

How intensely practical is the end of this chapter. Husbands and wives; parents and children; masters and servants; and in these relationships love has to be manifested. The husband is to love his wife even as Christ loved the church: and who can measure His love? It is well to ponder upon that which our beloved Lord suffered to win us for Himself, since He is our Pattern in it all.

Now we come to the last chapter, and as we do so we might not ex-

pect to find mention of love there, since it is so occupied with conflict. Yet it finishes with love — “love with faith,” toward the brethren and “love in sincerity” towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Some translate this “love with incorruption,” or again, “love in perpetuity.”

So let us take it as **Love in Perpetuity**. The idea is a love not natural but spiritual; a love that has its origin in the unseen and eternal, springing from the unseen Head, and answering to Him.

DEVOTEDNESS

IN the Gospels there are women who are very much in evidence for devotedness to the Lord, and I would draw attention to three outstanding cases, namely the woman of Luke 7, Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene.

Of the first of the three, we know but little — nothing in fact save what we learn from the closing verses of Luke 7, but what little we do know is deeply interesting! She evidently must have had previous contact with the Lord, and as the result, was marked by two things which are constant companions, a deep sense of her sinfulness, and a correspondingly deep sense of the Lord's grace in meeting her in all her guilt, and forgiving her.

She is nameless so far as the record goes, and never a word escapes her lips, but in her case the adage that actions are more eloquent than words was exemplified!

It is such a love, divine in its origin, that we want to have, manifesting itself through the saints in sincerity and in perpetuity. It will indeed be, “Love with faith.”

What a wonderful mine of gold is this. We may well desire not only to trace it, but to live in the power of it. We may well sing,

Love never faileth; love is pure
gold;

Love is what Jesus came to unfold.
Make us more loving, Saviour, we
pray,

Help us remember, love is Thy way.

G. S. HEPBURN.

When she learned that Jesus was in the house of Simon the Pharisee, immediately she found her way thither with an alabaster box of ointment, took her stand behind Him, stooped to wash his feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them and anointed them with the ointment.

But we shall better understand the import of her actions as we listen to the Lord while He recounted them to Simon, and contrasted them with his own. No water had Simon given Him to wash His feet. She had washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. No welcome kiss had he for his Guest, she, since the time she entered the house had not ceased to kiss His feet! No oil had he for the Lord's head, she had anointed His feet with ointment. Wherefore her sins which were many were forgiven her for she loved much, but he that is forgiven little, the same loveth little.

She loved much because she had been forgiven much. Such was the Lord's estimate and commendation of this woman; could He say so much of us? And if not, why not? We are certainly not less indebted to Him than she was.

The incident closes with the Lord's only recorded words to the woman: "Thy sins are forgiven . . . thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Three inestimable blessings!

Regarding Mary of Bethany, we know some of her history. The first mention of her is in the closing verses of Luke 10, where she is found sitting at Jesus' feet, hearing His Word. What she heard we are not told, but we may be sure they were wonderful communications.

Then in John 11, we have the intensely interesting account of the sickness, death and raising again of her brother Lazarus, and doubtless it was the experience gained on these two occasions that resulted in the devotedness that comes to light in her action recorded in John 12: 3, when with a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, which she had kept against the day of the Lord's burial, she anointed His feet and wiped them with the hair of her head: the house being filled with the odour of the ointment.

She evidently realized that He who brought back her brother from the tomb could not be holden by it; and this may account for the fact that we have no mention of her being at the Cross or the Sepulchre.

Again the thing to note is the Lord's appreciation of her action.

We need not be surprised at the attitude of Judas, but in Matthew 26: 6-13, where the same incident is recorded, we read that when the disciples saw it they had indignation, saying: why was this waste? They were completely out of touch, but the Lord rebuked them, "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me;" and further He said that, "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." And doubtless these two devoted women heard the Lord's commendation of them in the presence of their critics.

Of Mary Magdalene we know more than we do of either of the foregoing. She is mentioned by all four of the evangelists, fourteen times in all. Before the Lord met her in delivering mercy, she was completely under the power of the Devil, being possessed by seven demons. The next we learn about her is that she was one of a group of devoted women who followed the Lord from Galilee, all the way to Jerusalem, ministering to Him of their substance, as stated in Luke 8, and again, with other women she is found standing by the Cross.

And it would seem that her heart was completely captivated then, (whether any heart is captivated in any other way is doubtful) for she was first at the sepulchre while it was yet dark, and finding it empty, she ran to inform Peter and John, and they having come and found it so, even as she had said, returned to their own homes.

Not so Mary Magdalene, she re-

mained at the sepulchre weeping: no home on earth had she, since she had lost her beloved Lord. And what must it have been to His blessed heart to hear from the lips of this desolate woman, these words, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Mary Magdalene may have been less intelligent than Mary of Bethany, but less devoted she certainly was not.

But affection for the Lord is ever handsomely rewarded. It would seem that, when He manifested Himself to Mary, she made as though she would embrace Him, thinking to renew the previous relationship; but the Lord said to her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and My God and your

God." Thus to her first, and through her to others, was made known the marvellous truth regarding new and eternal relationships about to be established.

Before the cross He had spoken of "My Father," and but for the cross He must for ever have remained alone in the relationship; but now He had secured for Himself a company, whom he designates as "My brethren," partakers of His life and nature, and standing in exactly the same relationship to His Father and God, as that in which He Himself stands as Man, and to Mary Magdalene was this wondrous message entrusted, as we find in John 20.

These things are recorded in Scripture, not only as memorials to those devoted women, but also as incentives for us all, sisters and brothers alike.

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN'S DOMINION (EXTRACTED)

FIRST of all, notice the difference between "sin" and "sins." They are closely connected but different. Both are alluded to in one verse — Romans 5: 12. It is stated here that the fall of Adam brought sin into the world, and like a terrible disease it has infected the whole human race, so that all have committed sins. **Sin** therefore is the root principle of evil which characterizes the tree of humanity, and **sins** the evil fruit produced by the evil tree.

But let us ask,

What is sin — this evil root?

The answer to this question is found in 1 John 3: 4; a verse which unfortunately is not accurately translated in our Authorised Version, since the Greek word there means "lawlessness," and not just "transgression of the law." It is rightly translated in the Revised Version and in Darby's New Translation — "sin is lawlessness."

Now this correction is important, since to transgress is to overstep or break a definite command, and if there is no law given there can be no transgression. The whole argument of the Apostle in Romans 5: 13, 14, is that though from Adam to

Moses there was no law given, yet men were lawless, wholly insubordinate to the will of God. Men were doing their own will in defiance of all restraint, and so sin was there, manifested by the fact that death reigned. To make the matter individual and personal, we each have to confess that in our unconverted state we were doing our own wills in defiance of God's will.

Now "sin" and deliverance from its power is the great theme of Romans 6, for in this chapter of 23 verses "sin" is mentioned at least 16 times, and "sins" only once, in verse 15, where "shall we sin?" means "shall we go on committing sins?" What comes clearly to light, and what we have to face, is the dominating power of sin.

In Romans 5: 21, sin is declared to have "reigned." It is a terrible master, driving its slaves from one lawless act to another, with death lying at the end. It is the governing principle of all men's actions and the very thing they glory in — the power to do their own will. It rules in politics and parliaments. If beneficial laws are made, they are passed because it is the will of men to have it so. The principle of democratic institutions has been ably stated as, "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people." What is to prevail is not the will of God, but the will of the people, and this in its essence is SIN — the dominating principle of the world.

But the matter comes more closely home to us when we recognize the presence of sin in ourselves. It not only dominates the world but it is present still in those who have believed the Gospel, for Scripture

definitely states, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1: 8). See also the Apostle's words in Romans 7: 17, "sin that dwelleth in me." This of course raises the enquiry,

Is it God's will that for the present we should be left under the reign of sin?

The answer is, Not at all; for the Scripture definitely says, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14). God is going to deliver the believer from both the power and the presence of sin.

As to the presence of sin, such a scripture as 1 Corinthians 15: 42-57, shows that, as the fruit of the death and resurrection of Christ, the believer will be raised in a spiritual body in glory and incorruption, and then the last trace of its presence in us will be gone for ever. Until the coming of the Lord or actual death sin will be present in us.

But though this is so, it is not God's intention that we should remain under its power. So let us enquire,

How does God give present deliverance from the dominion of sin?

In brief the answer is, by death—the DEATH of Christ. It is a fact that His death stood in relation not only to our sins but to sin, the root principle in us. The first part of the Epistle to the Romans takes up the question of the believer's sins, and shows how perfectly they have been met by Christ dying for them. He was "delivered for our offences" (4: 25). The second part of the

epistle, from 5: 12 onwards, takes up the question of sin, and shows how that is met by Christ dying to sin — “in that He died, He died **unto** sin once” (6: 10). So we have to mark two things: He died **for** our sins, and He died **unto** sin. It is also a fact that He was a sacrifice for sin (see, 8: 3, margin); but we are dealing with how God wrought to deliver us from the power of sin, and that was by Christ dying to sin.

But further we must ask,

How does the death of Christ to sin deliver us from the power of sin?

The answer is that when Christ died He was not only our Substitute but also our great Representative; and therefore what took place with Him in the sight of God took place with us. We were identified with Him, and hence it can be said that, “our old man” has been crucified with Him” (Rom. 6: 6). When Christ died to sin, we died with Him as before God.

We shall do well to get definitely established in our souls these three great items of truth:

(1) Christ died **for** our sins, as our Substitute and great atoning sacrifice.

(2) Christ died to sin, as our great Representative.

(3) As a judicial sentence, we died **with** Christ, in the sight of God. The Apostle plainly says, “He that is dead is freed [justified, cleared, discharged] from sin” (6: 7). It is obvious that sin has no power over a dead man. He is discharged from it, and its dominion has ceased.

So, as it says in the previous verse, “the body of sin” is “destroyed,” or “annulled,” for that is the meaning of the word. Mark carefully, it is not said that sin has died, but that we, believers, have died from under sin’s dominion.

But here arises a very practical difficulty that has to be faced by every true believer, who earnestly seeks to be in deliverance from sin and committed to the service of God. We at once discover that sin in our flesh is alive and active. Our experience seems to contradict the truth we have been considering.

How is this difficulty to be met?

Romans 6: 11, supplies the answer to this. We read, “Reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (New Trans.). Note the word, “**reckon.**” It implies that we are not actually dead, for if we were, there would be no need to reckon ourselves dead. Note also **what** we must reckon: not that we must die, but that **we have died** and if we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, this must involve death to the world and all that in which sin operates, in order that we may live unto God; and we are conscious at once that there must be some power available, enabling us so to do. Therefore we now ask:

What power is there which will enable us to reckon ourselves dead to sin?

We discover that only true life in Christ and love for Christ will enable us to reckon thus, and so live to God, even as Christ now lives to God. To some of us this reckoning presents considerable difficulty. An

Old Testament illustration may help us.

At this point we shall do well to turn to 2 Samuel, and read the whole of chapter 9, and then 16: 1-4, and 19: 24-30. Note in the first place that though alive and receiving David's grace, Mephibosheth did from the outset reckon himself dead to the place he naturally had as descended from Saul, who had been the king. "Such a dead dog as I am," were his words; and again at the end of the story, "All of my Father's house were but dead men before my lord the king."

David being for the time driven from his throne by Absalom's rebellion, what would have been Mephibosheth's natural reaction? If alive in his spirit to his descent from the house of Saul, it would surely have been — "Now is the chance for me to claim and get the kingdom!" And this is exactly what Ziba, his servant asserted he did say. He would then have prepared to do his own will and advance his own interests.

Ziba's statement was most plausible but it was false, for the reason that Mephibosheth had reckoned both himself and his father's house as dead to their former kingly estate. Actually he was living, but as regards Saul he was dead, and regarded himself as only alive as the fruit of David's grace, and so alive to David's interests.

This incident as to Mephibosheth also helps to answer one more question that we may raise:

flow from our reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God?

Verse 24 of chapter 19, tells us that during the absence of the king he "had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace." That is to say, he was a mourner. There were great doings at Jerusalem during the absence of the true king. They were stirring times. The usurper held functions and may have bestowed favours and passed laws; but Mephibosheth was apart from it all. Why? Because he reckoned himself to be as a dead man. If he had reckoned himself as alive to his old connections, he would have been in the thick of all that was going on to further his own interests. Looking upon himself as dead, all the doings in Jerusalem were simply sin: the will of man, taking advantage of the absence of David to have its own way.

The practical result of reckoning himself dead was that the power of sin ruling in Jerusalem was for him annulled; and his case is a striking illustration of our own. Just in proportion as we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin in connection with "our old man," so will the power of sin be annulled for us.

And lastly, note that it was the power of **life with David** and **affection for him** that enabled Mephibosheth so to reckon. To David he said, "My lord the king is as an angel of God." Everything that he had he owed to David. He had shown him kindness, taken him into favour, and given him a place at his

What are the practical results that

own table and this grace had won his heart. For love of David, and that he might live to David, he had reckoned himself dead to the sin of Absalom and Jerusalem.

Has the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God which He displayed so fully, won our hearts? Then it is indeed a simple and most blessed thing to reckon

ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Sharing in His life, and rejoicing in His love, we are no longer enslaved by the lawless ways of the flesh and of the world. We become servants to God, and have, "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," as we read in Romans 6: 22.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 49: 5—51: 16)

IN this remarkable chapter we have something in the nature of a dialogue. Jehovah's word to the Messiah, whom He addressed as the true "Prince of God," we found in verse 3. The lament of the Messiah, having wooed Israel in vain, is found in verse 4, and it was historically verified, as we are told in Luke 13: 34. From verse 5 onwards we get the response of Jehovah to this lament. The latter part of verse 5 is really a parenthesis, giving us Messiah's confidence, based upon what Jehovah is about to say. Israel may refuse and be obdurate, but in the eyes of Jehovah He will be GLORIOUS — and that being so, nothing of God's purpose will fail.

The answer of Jehovah begins in verse 6. We are prophetically advised that in the coming of the Lord Jesus wider and weightier purposes were involved than the gathering and blessing of Israel and Jacob. Light was to shine for all the nations, and salvation was to be made possible and available to the ends of the earth. Here is a prediction that —

praise be to God! — is being verified today. He is the salvation. It cannot be disconnected from Him, as the Apostle Peter made so plain before the Jewish council — see Acts 4: 12.

But if we can see the fulfilment of verse 6 today, we wait to see verse 7 fulfilled in a future day, which, we trust, is approaching. Jehovah is truly the Redeemer of Israel, though the One whom He sent is despised and abhorred in the servant's place. The hour draws near when, in the presence of this Servant, kings shall rise from their seats and princes shall do homage before Him. Men refused Him but God has chosen Him.

Again in verse 8 we have the voice of Jehovah. The humbled Servant whom men would not hear has been heard by Him, helped and lifted up. And this has come to pass in "an acceptable time," and in "a day of salvation." The significance of this may have been lost on Old Testament readers, but the Apostle Paul seized upon it in 2

Corinthians 6: 2. The rejection of the Messiah, foretold in verse 7, would result in His death, and He would be "heard" and "helped" by resurrection from the dead, and this was to inaugurate the "acceptable time" and the "day of salvation."

Almost exactly nineteen centuries ago Paul reminded the Corinthian saints that they were living in that wonderful epoch: it was NOW. The epoch of grace and salvation still persists. It is still NOW. May we all be stirred to evangelize, remembering that it may not last much longer.

But in the latter part of verse 8, and onwards to the end of verse 13, the prophecy carries us into the age to come. The once-rejected Messiah is to be "a covenant of the people," for they will not enter into blessing on the basis of the covenant of law. He, and He only, will bring to pass the blessing on earth so glowingly described in these verses, so that the very heavens as well as the earth will break forth into jubilant song.

Verse 13 however, seems to indicate that an afflicted remnant of Israel is mainly, if not exclusively, in view here. Some will be prisoners, some hiding in dark places; coming over the mountains from distant spots in north and west, and even from "the land of Sinim," which some identify with China. At last the comfort, announced in the opening verse of chapter 40, will have reached "His people," and those who for so long had been "His afflicted," will find mercy. MERCY, notice; not merit, as is

shown so conclusively at the end of Romans II.

And it will be unexpected mercy, as the succeeding verses show. Zion, representing the godly seed who will receive the mercy, will be tempted to think in their extremity that they are forsaken and forgotten by their God: but they are not. Amongst mankind there is no stronger tie than maternal love. Yet under extreme pressure even that tie may break. The godly in Israel have a tie with Jehovah that will never break. While they are disowned nationally and set aside, God has wider purposes of blessing, reaching out to the remotest peoples. Yet He is marked by the utmost fidelity to all His promises, given to those who are the seed of Abraham in a spiritual as well as a material sense.

This will be the case in such abundant measure that in verse 18 Zion is told to lift up her eyes and see her children flocking to her side. In the days of her sinful desolation all her children were lost; now they appear in such numbers that the land cannot contain them, and the Gentiles — even their kings and queens — will do them honour, and that because of the glory and power of their God.

But when this great mercy reaches Israel their plight will be very great, as we may infer from verse 24, and the opening verses of Zechariah 14 confirm the inference. Just when they appear to be the helpless captives of their foes there will be a tremendous intervention of Jehovah for their deliverance. The New Testament makes it abundantly

clear that the Jehovah, who according to Zechariah 14: 3, will "go forth, and fight against those nations," is no other than our blessed Lord Jesus Christ; and by His hands, "the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered."

This will be a work of redemption by power but, as we know, it will find its righteous basis in the redemption by blood accomplished at His first coming. At the present time the poor Jew still rejects the righteous basis while hoping for national deliverance. It will be otherwise when their Redeemer does appear in power. He will then be manifested as the "Mighty One" of poor crooked "Jacob;" and not merely as the Mighty One of Israel.

This prophetic strain now ceases, for in verse 1 of chapter 50 we return to the existing state of the people, estranged from their God. This was not from God's side but from theirs. If He had issued a bill of divorcement against them, it would have been permanent and they would have been "cast away," (Rom. 11: 1), as to which Paul says, "God forbid." The fact was that they had sold themselves into disaster by their many transgressions.

And there was more than this, for the succeeding verses are a prophetic arraignment of the people as to their rejection of their Messiah at His first advent. When He came, there was, as verse 2 predicts, none among the leaders of the people to answer to His call. As the Gospels record He came announcing the kingdom is at hand. Had He no

power to bring it in? Did the establishment of the kingdom fail because He had not the redeeming energy? Why, He moved in the seas and the heavens with the power of the Creator! Yet He was to take a lowly and subject place.

The word "learned" in verse 4, really means a disciple or one who is instructed, and our Lord took that humble and subject place when He came as the Servant of the will of God. He had indeed the opened ear, as was also predicted in Psalm 40, and He took that place that He might be man's true neighbour, and speak the word in season to him that is weary. Morning by morning He heard the words He was to speak to others; hence His own statement to His disciples, "the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself" (John 14: 10).

And having taken this lowly place of Servant, He had to face the scornful rejection of men. Smiting, shame and spitting were to be His portion though He came in such grace with blessing for men. Nothing however moved Him from the path of devotion to the will of God. His face was set as a flint in that direction, and therefore the power of God was with Him.

Moreover, as verses 8 and 9 intimated, the day will come when He shall be vindicated and His adversaries confounded and brought under judgment. So here again, as is so often in these prophecies, the two advents are brought together though many centuries come between them. Verses 5-7 have been fulfilled, when He came in grace.

Verses 8 and 9 will be fulfilled when He comes in judgment.

Then in the two verses that close the chapter we pass from prophetic utterances to words of counsel and warning. There were those that feared the Lord and yet they walked in comparative darkness. This was acknowledged by the Apostle Peter, when in his first epistle he reminded the converts from Judaism, to whom he wrote, that they had been called "out of **darkness** into His marvellous light." (2: 9). But while they still dwelt in darkness, waiting for the light, they were to trust in the name of Jehovah — for so He had revealed Himself to them, and stay themselves upon His faithfulness. This they did, as the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel show. Jesus was, "the Dayspring from on high . . . to give **light** to them that sit in **darkness**" (1: 78, 79); and in chapter 2, we are given a glimpse of the godly souls who were obeying the instruction given in verse 10 of our chapter.

But there were many in those days that did not fear the Lord nor obey the voice of His Servant when He came in grace, and there are today a multitude who are of the same mind. They kindle a fire of their own to illuminate the darkness, and in the light of it and of its sparks they pursue their way. This is figurative language; but how graphic and striking it is!

In this twentieth century men have created a huge bonfire which is throwing sparks in all directions, and it appears that "science" is adding fuel to its flames at a rate

that is becoming alarming. The sparks that are generated by human cleverness are flying everywhere. So let us not miss the application of these two verses to ourselves. If saints of old were to trust in their God, while they waited for the light, should not we, who walk in the marvellous light of the Gospel, be filled with faith in the God so perfectly revealed in the Lord Jesus? Yet all around us are the multitudes charmed and intoxicated with the myriad bright sparks that spring from the fire of human inventions and cleverness, though some among them — those who know most and think more clearly — have many a twinge of fear as to the end of it all. Verse 11 indicates the end. Mankind will lie down in sorrow under God's heavy judgment hand.

Chapter 51 opens with a call to the godly; for such are those that, "follow after righteousness." The figure of a quarry is used to direct their thoughts to their origin as descended from Abraham, who had originally been called out, and in whom the promises had been deposited. When Isaiah wrote, the people had for centuries been under the law of Moses and they might easily assume that they would ultimately attain to blessing on a legal basis. But they will not. The blessing will only be theirs on the basis of the covenant with Abraham. It will be theirs not on the ground of their merit but of God's MERCY, as the end of Romans 11, so clearly states.

Therefore, remembering His covenant with Abraham, God will yet "comfort Zion," and bring about rich earthly blessing. At the

present time the diligent work of returned Jews is producing in the land fertility where barrenness has prevailed for many centuries, but there are forbodings and distress and a voice of anxiety rather than of melody. At present it is but a national and purely human movement.

Verses 4 and 5 show what will come to pass when the movement proceeds from God and they are obedient to His law and ordering. Then His salvation based on righteousness will be manifested. There will be blessing, not only for those whom He acknowledges as "My people" and "My nation," but also for "the peoples;" — for the word at the end of verse 4 and the middle of verse 5 is in the plural. The distant isles will be brought under Divine rule in that day. The secret of it all is this:— "on Mine ARM shall they trust." That ARM was introduced to us in chapter 40: 10, and is a designation of our Lord Jesus in the power and glory of His second advent.

Earlier in the verse "Mine arms" are mentioned; these we believe to be glorified saints, enjoying a heavenly portion, such as those to whom the Lord spoke the words recorded in Matthew 19: 28. In that day the trust of men, who are blessed, will be centred in Jehovah's mighty ARM, but saints will act as His "arms," deputed by Him to "judge the peoples."

What a wonderful day that will be; for nothing either in heaven or on earth, is stable, as verse 6 declares. Things physical and men

themselves pass away but the salvation which God will bring to pass in righteousness will abide. We are called upon to hearken to God's word in verses 7 and 8; and we who "know righteousness" cannot but rejoice that only what is established in righteousness will remain and all else will be worm-eaten and destroyed. In the assurance of this no saint need fear the reproach and revilings of men.

These verses have unfolded before our minds a glorious and desirable prospect, only to be realized when the Lord Jesus comes again. Hence the call of verse 9: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of the Lord." In prophetic vision John saw Him so doing, in Revelation 19: 11-16, when He will be displayed as King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord Jesus has ever been the Executor of the purposes of God. He acted in the mighty scenes of creation. It was He who cut in pieces Rahab — a name meaning "Arrogance," given to Egypt in contempt — and dried up the sea, when God brought the people under Moses out of the land of their bondage. When He puts on strength and acts in the future day, there will be a far greater deliverance, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion with singing, and their joy will be everlasting and not transient and fleeting as all joyful deliverances have been hitherto in this sinful world. We today may call upon the Arm of the Lord to awake, only the language we use is, "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

In verse 12 and onwards another call to the godly is before us. Their tendency was, as our tendency today

is, to have their eyes on man, and fear, as all his evil tendencies and activities are observed. But men die and the One who comforts His people is the Maker of heavens and earth. When God acts, where will the fury of the oppressor be? These striking verses are intended to put heart into the saints of God in all ages. They have done so in the past and doubtless they are doing so today, especially where saints are confronted with "the fury of the oppressor," whether he be Communistic or Romish.

God is far above the actions and agitations of men. The nations are like the sea with its roaring waves but He divides them at His pleasure. In verse 16 the One who is the Arm of the Lord is addressed, for He is the One who speaks on God's behalf, the Divine word being in His mouth; just as He is the One who acts beneath the Divine hand, and the result of the speaking and the acting is given.

The result is going to be three-fold, as this remarkable verse states. The first is that the heavens are going to be planted. The reference here is not to creation, for that was mentioned in verse 13, but, as we believe, to what God is doing today. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15: 13); thus showing that to plant is a figurative expression for establishing in a place of blessing. By the Gospel today men are being called out from the nations for His name, and theirs is a "heavenly calling" (Heb. 3: 1). The coming age will

display that the heavens have been planted by the grace of God in this age.

Secondly, the foundations of the earth will be well and truly laid. Again, this not the material creation, but laying the moral foundations in righteousness, for at present, "all the foundations of the earth are out of course" (Psa. 82: 5). Through the centuries men have striven in vain to establish a righteous order of things and the best of them have utterly failed. They could no more accomplish it than they could reach up to plant the heavens.

But there is a third thing that is to be brought to pass: Zion is to be formally acknowledged as God's special people. The prophet Hosea lived about the time of Isaiah, and it was through him that God said, "Ye are **not** My people, and I will **not** be your God" (1: 9). So up to this present moment they are disowned, though not set aside for ever. The day will come when they will be owned and blessed.

And these wonderful results will come to pass through the One who is presented to us in Isaiah as not only the lowly Servant but also the mighty Arm of Jehovah — our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder that the next words of the prophecy are the call, "Awake, awake." Jerusalem will awake presently: let us, who are called that we may be planted in the heavens. see to it that we are very much awake today — awake to our God; awake to His service. We are exhorted to this in Ephesians 5: 14.

ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT

I HAVE been confronted with the assertion that the church of God must of necessity pass through the great tribulation that is predicted; based upon the fact that the Lord said to His disciples, when risen from the dead, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]" (Matt. 28: 20). With this is coupled the fact that as stated in Matthew 13, the harvest is at the end of the age, when the tares are to be burned and the wheat gathered into the barn. The argument is that this shows that the church must continue in witness to the end, and not be removed before it. What do you say to this? — Workington.

We should have to say at least two things. First, that though the shining forth of the Lord Jesus in His glory will be an event that will occur with great suddenness, yet "the end of the age" is an expression which signifies not a moment of time, or even a day of 24 hours, but a period, though a short one. It will be the time of the "harvest" judgments, as mentioned in Matthew 13, as alluded to also in Matthew 24, and in the judgment of the sheep and goats, in Matthew 25; judgments also prophesied as marking "the time of the end," in Daniel 11 and 12.

Then, secondly, in Matthew 28: 20, the Lord promised to be with His disciples to the end: not, of course, those to whom He spoke, but to their successors in His service among the nations. This stands good for the church until "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11: 25), and after that comes His dealings in mercy with all Israel, as stated in the next verse.

The church was formed on the day of Pentecost by the baptism of the Spirit, and in it He dwells.

When the church is translated the indwelling Spirit will go with it, though He will doubtless be active on earth, even as He was before the church was formed. It is to this, we believe, that the Apostle Paul referred in 2 Thessalonians 2: 6, 7. There is **that** which restrains as well as **He** who restrains, as these verses show. By the former we understand the presence of the saints, forming the church; and by the latter, the presence of the Holy Spirit of God, indwelling the church here below.

What power can put restraint on the power of the devil? Michael the archangel may rebuke Satan, and successfully contend against him, but only **One who is God** can restrain him. When the Spirit, who came at Pentecost, departs, and before He is poured upon all flesh' (Acts 2: 17), in complete fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, there will be this brief period of judgment, when Satan will seem to have his own way unhindered. During that period the Lord will raise up witnesses and He will be with them according to Matthew 28: 20.

A SIGNIFICANT INJUNCTION

F. B. HOLE.

OF all the many injunctions that fill the pages of the Old Testament none is more significant than the last — Malachi 4: 4.

When Malachi prophesied many centuries had passed since the giving of the law at Horeb, and the nation to whom it had been given had seen many vicissitudes and disasters. This had been so much the case that there would surely have been with many the tendency to reason that legislation given when the people were in wilderness circumstances could hardly be binding in all respects when they were settled in a land of their own, or when later they were scattered in Assyria or Babylon, or even later still when a feeble remnant were permitted once more to dwell in the land of promise. In its main provisions it might stand, but hardly in all its subsidiary enactments. Thus they might have said.

Knowing this tendency, the final injunction was given. The remnant in the land were reminded that the law had been given to "all Israel," and therefore it applied to them. Moreover all the "**statutes and judgments,**" that had supplemented the main commandments, stood in their integrity, neither repealed nor altered. Changes in human circumstances do not impose any change upon the Divine requirements.

It is not difficult to see that this must be the case. The law given through Moses dealt with the fundamental evils and disorders that

mark men and their hearts and ways as the fruit of SIN. Changes in circumstances may produce a few ripples on the surface of the dark-flowing river of sin, but they do not alter its destination nor enlighten its darkness. In His holy law with its statutes and judgments God had in view fundamental facts and not surface changes.

Now something very similar to this verse in Malachi meets us when we turn to the closing words of the New Testament. True, it is not a vindication of the original law of Moses, but it is a warning of a very stringent and solemn kind against in any way tampering with "the words of the prophecy of this book." Primarily the warning applies no doubt to the words of the book of Revelation, but coming as it does at the very end, we believe it applies in a secondary way to the whole of the New Testament if not of the whole Bible. We are neither to add to it nor to take away.

In the light of this we are bold to affirm that the instructions given to the saints of our dispensation — the church — stand unchanged, though many vicissitudes and disasters have marked its history as a professing body on the earth. We are not at liberty either to disregard or to alter the commandments and instructions left for us.

We have, of course, to recognize dispensational changes. The coming of Christ inaugurated a new day, since He was, "the Dayspring from on high" (Luke 1: 78), bringing

light into the midst of the darkness. And further, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the beginning of a new dispensation. In His farewell discourse in the upper chamber, recorded in John 13—16, our Lord spoke of new things that the Spirit would bring to pass, and of the further revelations that would reach the disciples through Him. But what has thus been made known abides with its full authority for us today.

Our standing before God is not on a legal basis. The Scripture statement is very definite; "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14). So the commandments that we find connected with our Christian faith are not given in order that by our obeying them we may achieve acceptance before God. Yet **commandments** there certainly are; and it is remarkable how much is said about them in John's Gospel, chapters 13—16, and in John's Epistles.

In the Gospel chapters we have the Lord's farewell discourse with His disciples around Him. He spoke of a "new commandment," which He gave them, and "My commandments," and also of "the Father's commandment," which had been given to Him and which He had kept. Their obedience was to be fashioned after the manner of His. He spoke also of His "word" and His "sayings," for He had indicated His mind and will for them in many things He had said, though not expressed in definite commandments. To those who really love Him, His will for them, no matter in what form expressed, comes with authoritative force.

In John's first Epistle we find "commandment" mentioned about a dozen times, and the last mention is a significant one — "His commandments are not grievous" (5: 3). The Epistle has strongly emphasized the fact that the true believer is born of God, and hence has a nature which expresses itself in love and in righteousness, and therefore finds delight, and not a grievous burden, in the very things which are commanded.

Another fact is worthy of our very careful thought. When the Apostle Paul wrote his first Epistle to the saints at Corinth, instructing them as to many things that had been very disorderly in both the private lives of many of them and in their assembly gatherings, he called upon them to recognize and acknowledge that the things he had written to them were "the commandments of the Lord" (14: 37). This applied no doubt to all the instructions he had given to them in the Epistle, but with special force to what he had laid down in chapter 14.

Now that chapter is specially concerned with the order to be observed by the saints in Corinth when they were gathered together as the assembly of God in that city. If they carried out the instructions given, things would be done "decently and in order," as the last verse of the chapter says. And not only so, but the church would be edified and God glorified; and this latter in such a powerful way that an unbeliever coming into their assembly would be greatly affected and constrained to confess that God was indeed amongst them.

The church, according to Ephesians 2: 29, is "an habitation of God through the Spirit;" therefore in the assemblies of the saints the Holy Spirit is to be supreme, and to act as He may see fit. It is He who produces all the gifts that may enrich the church, as is stated in chapter 12, and it is He who is to control their exercise, as we have laid down in chapter 14.

The tendency today, we venture to think, is just the same as it was in the days of Malachi. Many centuries have rolled since the Apostolic letters were written, many defections and disasters have super-vened in the history of the church. Are these ancient instructions valid today? We have, on the one hand, reached a very advanced stage in the process of human civilization and scientific discovery, and, on the other hand, fallen upon very broken and divided conditions in Christendom, so are we still to observe what the Apostle has laid down? May we not accommodate things to agree more with the spirit of our times?

The answer clearly is — No, we may not. It is a remarkable fact that in this same epistle Paul was inspired to give the Corinthians his judgment on certain matters as to which they had written to him, as we see in chapter 7. In verses 6, 10, 25, 40, he differentiates between things definitely commanded by the Lord, and what he judged to be

right and pleasing to the Lord; though there was no distinct command given. Having given his spiritual judgment, he says very significantly, "and I think also that I have the Spirit of God." That being so, I trust that none of us wish lightly to set aside Paul's judgment.

But when we do have definite commands the case is decisive. Yet how often are the commands of chapter 14 set aside, or at least forgotten and ignored. All too many treat them as being merely Paul's notions, which we may disregard with impunity. Others would not lower the word of the Lord to that extent, but would nevertheless say that though suitable for the Apostolic age they are hardly the thing for the twentieth century.

And if any would say to us, Yes, but these commands were given to one special church — Corinth — and not repeated in epistles to other churches; we should have to reply, that verse 2 of chapter 1 shows that all in the Epistle, though addressed primarily to the church at Corinth, was secondarily addressed to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." The commands applied universally to all true saints in those days, wherever they might be. They apply just as universally to all true saints today.

Are we obeying them?

THINK of Abraham, who "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11: 8). He goes furthest who does not know whither he is going. If by thus going forth, you follow the line of God's guidance you do well.

“THESE ARE ANCIENT THINGS”

T. D. BELL

THE brief prayer of Jabez, recorded in 1 Chronicles 4: 10, seems to be included in the “ancient things,” referred to in verse 22 of that chapter. It is not surprising that the spirit of this prayer and the apparent abruptness, in the way it is introduced, has often been commented on.

The two books of Chronicles, we may remember, look back upon the history of Israel from the latest of all points of view in the Old Testament, since the closing words of the second book refer to the return of the remnant from Babylon. It may be noticed too that, whereas the other historical books trace the government of God in that history, these two books are more occupied in tracing God’s purpose, and with it His faithfulness and grace. The effect, as always when Divine purpose is presented, is to open a door in the midst of seen events, through which we pass to the things unseen by the natural eye; and behind the scenes learn what God is doing and what His thoughts are.

What is it then, which causes this prayer to be remembered, and the man who uttered it to be called “honourable”? It stands so strangely alone in a section occupied with tracing families descended from Judah, and is remembered too after such a lapse of time, for it is among the ancient things.

Stirring things had been going on in those early days under Joshua: nations overthrown, cities taken, giants slain! All this is recorded

elsewhere, but unnoticed here; and this man and his prayer, unnoticed elsewhere is alone remembered here. As we ponder this, and notice the marks of God’s approval, we surely learn what God is doing behind all the seen things of life, and a blessed secret of His ways surely comes to light. Through pain and pressure God is bringing exercised hearts to rest in Himself, and not merely in His ways.

Jabez was a man hemmed in and under pressure. His name means, “Causing pain.” How this resembles present conditions for many a believer today! Yet we see that from the midst of his distresses he called on the God of Israel; that is, the God of promised blessing. This is ever the resource of faith, as we learn in Hebrews 11, and his desire was for that which suited God’s purpose — enlargement: “Oh that Thou wouldest richly bless me, and enlarge my border” (New Trans.).

What immediately follows this shows the effect upon his heart, brought consciously into God’s presence. Neither Jabez in his day nor the saint today can be consciously there without a deep moral effect being produced, as we realize who He is, and what alone suits Him. However expanded the enlarged borders may be — and with us today it is not an earthly possession but present association with Christ seated in heavenly places — the heart’s desire, moving in keeping with God’s purpose, and prompted by the inward moral work, issues in the cry, “Keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.”

We need not have intimate acquaintance with evil in order to judge it. Indeed the heart which is in God's presence in happy intimacy, forms a quick judgment as to this world's things, and judges truly. To enter into acquaintance with evil is not the way to judge it, but often is the way to become affected by it. Modern invention has made avenues for evil things of this age to invade the quietest home life — avenues which our fathers never knew. Consequently we may often show even in our condemnation of present evils a very surprising knowledge of them, revealing that they have already affected us.

How truly for us the cross of Christ is the place where evil was fully exposed, completely judged, and for faith removed from before God. How the truth of that cross, known inwardly by faith, applied to all around us in the world, forms a barrier which keeps present evil at a distance. This forms in our souls God's judgment about it, and we pass on, not only kept from it, but not grieved by it. It was to saints in Rome — the metropolis of the world in that day — exposed to the development of evil, that the Apostle wrote, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." (16: 19).

The writer of Chronicles, looking back from the ruins of all that had been won in those far past days, and remembering Jabez and his experiences, could truly say, "These are ancient things." As we look back in a similar way today, we may see in the letter to the church in Philadelphia, in Revelation 3, much that reminds us of Jabez. Accustomed as

we rightly are to view these four closing addresses as descriptive of Christendom in our day, yet there was in John's day an actual assembly in Philadelphia, and this was its character: under pressure, cast upon the Lord, keeping His word, not denying His name. What a contrast to the evils and the assertion of the pride of man, in the activities of Thyatira and Sardis and Laodicea.

How striking is this parallel! The glance back in Chronicles brought that prayer into remembrance though all was in ruins. The look back today shows nominal Christianity sunk deeply into the world and therefore in ruins spiritually; yet the Lord's approval rests upon the saints with "little strength," who are consistent with His name and wait patiently for Him. He knows them, and He supports and cherishes them too; and that is enough for faith. Once any claim to the possession of the Philadelphian character is made, its grace and real character is already lost.

The answer granted to the prayer of Jabez was in full accord with its desires. "God brought about what he had requested" (New Trans.). He was brought into the full blessing of the enlarged place. Truly, it is the end of the story that counts. If under pressure we cry for enlargement and to be kept from the evil, we are assured that He is coming and then the true enlargement in blessed association with Him, as stated in Revelation 3: 12, gives us the answer to our cry.

The saints at the end of Chronicles, though returning to a ruined

Jerusalem, could count upon those "ancient things," which served to bring them back to the Lord, who prospered them at the outset. Similarly nothing new and novel is required by faith today. Our resource is still, "That which was from the beginning" (1 John 1: 1). The things of that fellowship "with the

Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," of which John speaks, remain unchanged; untouched by our failure, and still fresh for the soul. Whatever our circumstances all this may be richly known and enjoyed; and it will remain so to the very end. How good are these "ancient things" of our most holy faith.

THAT GREAT VERSE!

If we were asked what verse in the Bible is most widely known, and most frequently quoted when the Gospel is preached, we should answer, John 3: 16. Yet many of us may not have noticed how remarkably it epitomizes the drift of the Gospel in which it appears.

In that great verse four words occur, each of them strongly characteristic of John's Gospel. Here they are in the order in which they are found in the verse — LOVE; WORLD; BELIEVE; LIFE.

Someone has gone to the trouble of counting the occurrences of these four words in the four Gospels, and they record their findings as follows:

LOVE — in Matthew, twelve times; Mark, five times; Luke fifteen times; John, fifty-six times.

WORLD — in Matthew, nine times; Mark, three times; Luke, three times; John, seventy-nine times.

BELIEVE — in Matthew, eleven times; Mark, fifteen times; Luke, eight times; John, ninety-nine times.

LIFE — in Matthew, seven times; Mark, four times; Luke, six times; John, thirty-six times.

LOVE — the very nature of God — is the grand fountain head, whence all flows.

WORLD — the comprehensive scope in which the love is manifested, and toward which it flows.

BELIEVE — the result of faith being in exercise; the only way in which any of us ever enters into the blessing which the love of God bestows.

LIFE — the blessing that is bestowed when faith is in exercise. This life eternal comprises all those spiritual joys, connected with the knowledge of God as Father and Jesus Christ, His Sent One (John 17: 3), as well as the new spiritual vitality, or vital spark, which enables us to enjoy them.

In the light of the above we need not wonder that John 3: 16 has acquired such a place in the minds and hearts of those who know the Lord.

NOT ONLY "GOOD" BUT "THE BETTER"

W. H. WESTCOTT.

MAN is naturally incredulous in the things of God. It was the first form of Satan's attack upon Eve, to infuse questions as to His being the Source of all good to man; and want of faith in God's wisdom, God's ways, and God's means, still hinders the most pious and earnest souls. We propose to ourselves a certain way in which He will work, and are greatly taken by surprise when He works in another way.

To look for Israel's Messiah, in Jerusalem, in the Temple, with pomp and glory and power, — this Nathanael could understand. To see the high orders, the prelates and princes, the influential among the nation, urging His presence and His claim, — this was to be expected. To have Him overthrow Caesar's power, assume the crown, and rule in equity and peace, — this surely was the hope of the nation.

Hence when Philip found Nathanael and told him they had found the One they awaited, even Jesus of Nazareth, **Nathanael said unto him, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."** — (John 1: 46).

But **Nazareth!** A place not so much as named in the Old Testament; and again in **Galilee;** and yet

again, a village so usually unproductive of good that it had quite an ill-savour among those who knew it; for Nazareth to be the home of Israel's Saviour, seemed to tax Nathanael's mind almost to refusal. Happy he to have a friend like Philip whose wise rejoinder led him to come and see. Was he disappointed? Does God ever disappoint the man or the woman who is content to receive and learn Christ in the unexpected place?

Do we sometimes decide for ourselves that Christ is to appear to us as the Saviour, or as the Leader, in some stately building worthy of the occasion, or by the sanction of some ecclesiastical hand, or by some special form of service? Is not the Lord whom we so truly seek in some nearer, some insignificant place, void of all religious import according to man's ideas?

Or do we not hope for some general, popular move, in favour of Christ; a religious upheaval into which one can slip without being singular, avoiding the sterner discipline of individual conviction and the courage to act upon it? Yet is not the Jesus whom we seek rather the Jesus of Nazareth, to whom one and another, sinking all prejudice, attracted by the pure grace of His Person apart from all outside show, are irresistibly drawn? If attached to the stately temple ritual man may

have visits from the Lord, but His company is found with those who are the poor and afflicted remnant of His people whose only home is His presence, and whose only lure is His company. He satisfieth the longing soul.

Good did indeed come out of Nazareth in the person of Jesus, but when we pass into John's second chapter we meet with not only the positive — **good**, but that which is **better**, for the wine given by Jesus was better than man's wine. Probably at the wedding feast here spoken of, the rule had been followed, and the bridegroom had given, according to his means, the very best wine first; but the expert who presided at this feast immediately detected the quality of what was now set before him, though ignorant of its miraculous source; and chided with him, saying, "**Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.**" — (John 2: 10). But with Jesus as our Friend, do we not always find things better as we go on?

The Spirit of Christ in the prophets led them to speak of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. The Lord Jesus in grace walked the path of lowliness and humiliation, enjoying therein His Father's smile and communion with Him, and then entered into glory. At the close of His stay on earth He bore our sins and their judgment, but is risen to die no more. In glorious resurrection, made the centre of all glories, He will receive His Church, and His King-

dom and will bring out all the counsels of the Father's heart on an unshakeable basis for eternity. Truly in His case the best wine is last.

It is so with His people. Even here, and despite all weakness, suffering, persecution, isolation, we taste the sweetness of Christ's love, the sense of His approval, and communion with God. We have the joy of our relationship with the Father, the friendly power of the Holy Ghost who dwells within us, the precious privilege of the Lord's communications to us by the Holy Scriptures. We have even here the glad reality of the Lord's supper, the rare delight of worship in the Father's presence, and the happy service of the Lord toward His people, and in the world of need around. Ours is the luxury on earth of going to its dark places as dispensers of the bounty of God, with forgiveness for the guilty, life for the dead, rest for the weary, peace and satisfaction for all. The wine is good to begin with.

But the best wine is to come. We shall see His face whom not having seen we love; ours will be the joy of beholding His glory so as we have seen it in the sanctuary. Testimony, service, suffering in His Name, are all sweeter than the honeycomb; but to be with Christ is **far** better. Eternity is not to be for the saint a Sphinx-like fixture, but a flowing, an ever expanding, **life**; where the glory of God, and the grace of Christ, are by the Spirit, to be our joy; and His service our unwearying delight.

THE NORTH AND SOUTH WINDS

R. NELSON.

WHEN God forms a people for Himself, it is that, "they shall show forth My praise" (Isa. 43: 21). The same thought meets us in the New Testament, for the holy and royal priesthood of 1 Peter 2: 5-9, are to offer up "spiritual sacrifices," and "shew forth the praises" of Him who has called them. And again in The Song of Solomon 4: 16, the north wind and the south are invited to blow on the garden, "that the spices thereof may flow out."

The north and south winds may indicate the two-fold way of the Lord in producing from His people the spices and fruits that He desires. The household at Bethany may serve as an illustration of this.

The Lord Jesus was received by Martha into her house, as recorded in Luke 10: 38. In Proverbs 8: 6, Wisdom says, "Hear; for I will speak of excellent things," and this was fulfilled in the Lord, for indeed He knew how to speak "a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa. 50: 4). Now Mary's ear was opened to hear the words of the Lord and her heart to appreciate them. But Martha and Lazarus were the objects of His love as well as Mary, as we are told so clearly in John 11: 5, and from His gracious lips they all would hear many precious things. All this would answer to the south wind blowing on the garden

to bring out the spices and the fruits.

The north wind however was necessary too. So John 11 opens with the words, "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha." A message was sent to the Lord, yet He did not come until Lazarus had died and his body had been laid in the grave. When He did come each of the sisters expressed their grief by saying, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." They had already learned of His love; now they were to learn of His sympathy and of His power. How wonderful for them to observe that, "Jesus wept." Then by His divine power He brought out of death their loved one who had been taken from them.

Thus both the south and the north winds had been blowing, and in John 12 we see the result. The spices begin to flow out. "They made Him a supper," and it is recorded that Martha served without a word of complaint. She was not cumbered by it this time. She gave happy, willing service to the Lord. Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him, while Mary anointed His feet with her costly ointment. In Martha we see **loving service**. In Lazarus, **companionship**. In Mary, **worship**. These truly were spices and fruits that delighted the heart of the Lord.

So, whether for us the wind blows from the north or the south, whatever the circumstances of life through which we are called to pass, may we ever trust His unerring wisdom and His unchanging love, knowing that His way is perfect. The result for which He is looking

is that we may shew forth His praise. Thus He will be glorified in us, and we in our turn may become channels of blessing to others, helping them to understand that the north wind as well as the south wind is used to produce the spices and the fruit.

ANOTHER COMFORTER

A. J. POLLOCK.

OUR LORD in view of leaving this earth to return to the Father, from whence He came, said to His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you **another** Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." (Jno. 14: 16). By the use of the word, "**another,**" our Lord intimated He would not cease to be our Comforter, and Advocate, in heaven, but that He would send a Successor to earth, putting the one to be sent on the same level as Himself, even a Divine Person in the unity of the Godhead — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If the One sent were only an influence, an emanation from God, as some falsely teach, our Lord would not have put the One to be sent on a level with Himself. That the Comforter sent would be a Divine Person in the full sense of the word, our Lord leaves us in no doubt, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14: 26).

When the High Priest entered the Holiest of All to sprinkle the blood of the sin-offering upon the mercy-seat, the sound of the golden bells, attached to his garments, should signify to the anxious listeners outside, that the High Priest was alive, carrying out his high-priestly functions with all their wealth of typical and prophetic meaning. On similar lines the sound "as of a rushing mighty wind," filling the room where the expectant disciples of our Lord were assembled on the great Day of Pentecost, signified that the dispensation of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God had arrived upon earth, coinciding with the birthday of the church of God. (Acts 2: 1—15). This surely was a wonderful and outstanding Day in the history of the world, linking up each believer with their glorified Head in heaven, and to each other on earth, thus forming them into the one body of Christ. 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).

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 51: 17—53: 9.)

IT is worthy of note that in the passage before us there are three calls to **hearken** and three to **awake**. Those called upon to hearken in the early part of the chapter — verses 1, 4, 7 — are those who “follow after righteousness . . . that seek the Lord;” those acknowledged as “My people;” and those, “that know righteousness . . . in whose heart is My law.” The emphasis clearly is on righteousness, for nothing that contravenes that is going to stand.

The first call to awake is addressed to the “Arm of the Lord.” (Verse 9), for all is dependent upon Him. When the hour strikes for Him to awake and put on strength, there will be witnessed the awakening of Jerusalem, as indicated in verse 17, and again in the first verse of chapter 52. The awakening that will come to pass will not be merely a political or national one, but will rather involve a deep spiritual work, as is made plain when chapter 52 is reached. It will come to pass only when Jerusalem shall have suffered to the full the chastising government of God, having drunk to the dregs the cup of **His** fury and of **their** trembling.

So first of all, in the closing verses of chapter 51, we get a recital of the effect of these disciplinary dealings, and then the declaration of how God will reverse the process, and chastise those who inflicted judgment upon Israel. But there will

have been not only the sword of their enemies afflicting them but also famine, which comes from the hand of God. Under the affliction they are depicted as “drunken,” but it is added, “not with wine.” When the Arm of the Lord awakes on their behalf, the hour of their deliverance will strike, and the “cup of trembling” be taken out of their hands and put into the hands of their oppressors.

Then it is that Zion and Jerusalem not only will awake but also will put on strength, as the first verse of chapter 52 says. The language is figurative but quite clear in its import. At last holiness will mark the city and all that defiles be outside. It will be like a resurrection from the dust of death, and a release from the bands of captivity. They had sold themselves by their idolatry and sin, and gained nothing by it. Now they are to know redemption, but not by a money payment, as was customary in the days of slavery. The price of their redemption is unfolded when we come to chapter 53.

In verse 4, Egypt and Assyria are mentioned. In Daniel 11, these are referred to as “the king of the south,” and “the king of the north,” and at the present time these two powers are coming into prominence. They are noted by God, and from them Israel will be redeemed; but only when the prediction of verse 6 comes to pass.

When owned as "My people," they will have come really to know Jehovah. He will present Himself to them as, "I am He . . . behold it is I." Darby's New Translation informs us that we have here the same expression as in chapter 41: 4, and it might be translated, "**I the Same.**" All their long centuries of sin and defection have not altered His nature and character in the slightest degree. What He was to them at the outset, that He is to them still.

They will discover too that the Messiah, whom they crucified, is "the SAME, yesterday, and today, and for ever;" and then the glorious tidings of verse 7 will be announced. To Zion it will be said, "Thy God reigneth," and in the light of the New Testament we well know the Person in the Godhead who will actually ascend the throne. Then at last there will be the **peace**, the **good**, the **salvation**, of which this verse speaks. The feet of him who shall herald such news will be beautiful indeed. As Christians we know these things already in a spiritual way, and the heavenly regions, rather than Jerusalem and its mountains, are our place. But though that is so, let us rejoice in the coming deliverance of Zion, and the beauty of the One who is going to accomplish it.

The verses that follow state the happy effects that will be seen when in the Person of the once rejected Messiah God is reigning in Zion. Watchmen usually lift up the voice to **warn** but now it will be to **sing**, and moreover there will be no disharmony for they will agree in what

they see. And indeed the joyful song will be universal, breaking forth even in "waste places of Jerusalem." It will be a song based upon the redemption wrought for them by the Lord.

It is remarkable how throughout the Scriptures singing is recorded as the response to redemption. Though songs are mentioned as something that might have taken place, in Genesis 31: 27, the first actual record of singing is in Exodus 15, when Israel had been redeemed out of Egypt. Then in Psalm 22, where the death of Christ for our redemption is prophesied, the first result mentioned is a **song**, though the word does not actually occur in the Psalm. It does occur however in Hebrews 2: 12, where the Psalm is quoted. Again, just after the verses before us, we get the wonderful prophecy of the death of Christ in chapter 53; and the very first word of chapter 54 is, "**Sing.**"

In verse 9 of chapter 51, the Arm of the Lord was called upon to awake: in verse 10 of our chapter it has awakened, and the mighty effect of the awakening has been unveiled in the eyes of all the nations. Not only Israel but all men will see the salvation of God come to pass.

Verses 11 and 12 stand by themselves and reveal another effect of this great work of God. Hitherto defilement had marked the people, whether personal or caused by lack of separation from defiling things. The double cry of "**Depart,**" indicates urgency. Neither Israel nor we, who are Christians, are to

traffic in unholy things. **Separation** is essential, for as Titus 2: 14 tells us, Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." This we have to learn, and Israel too will learn it in the coming day.

And if they or we should feel that to depart thus from iniquity is sure to cost us much, we need nevertheless have no fear about it. In our passage verse 12 gives Israel the needed assurance. God will be their Defender, and cover their rear as they depart from the evil. A similar assurance is given to us in 2 Corinthians 6: 17, 18, where God in His Almightyness and Majesty declares He will own as His sons and daughters the saints who are separate from the world and its evils.

With verse 13 there begins the central chapter of the last 27. As before pointed out, the 27 divide into three sections of 9 chapters; each section ending with solemn judgment upon the wicked — 48: 22; 57: 21; 66: 24. In this central chapter of the central section we reach the **supreme height** of the prophecy, and are at once confronted with one of the greatest of the Divine paradoxes, since at the same time we touch the **deepest depths**, into which the Messiah descended for our sakes.

In chapter 49 Jehovah's Servant was presented as apparently failing in His mission to Israel, and yet glorious in the eyes of God. Now His public exaltation and glory are declared, since He has acted with such great prudence, or **wisdom**; and in 1 Corinthians 1: 23, 24, we

are told that "Christ crucified" is not only the power but also "the **wisdom** of God." His exaltation shall be definitely related to His previous humiliation. "As many were astonished" at the depth of His suffering and degradation; "SO . . . the kings shall shut their mouths at Him," silent and ashamed. Some translate "astonish" instead of "sprinkle." If, however the word "sprinkle" be retained, we should connect it with the use of that word in Ezekiel 36: 25, where it clearly has the force of an act of blessing toward Israel.

The general force of these three verses that conclude our chapter 52, is perfectly clear. This meek and lowly Servant of Jehovah, who descended to such unheard of depths of humiliation, is going to come forth in a power and splendour that will astonish all mankind. His exaltation in the heights shall be commensurate with the depths into which He went. Now, **who believes that?**

This is exactly the question with which chapter 53 opens. This being the prophetic report; who believes it? And further; who recognizes that the suffering Servant and the glorious Arm of Jehovah are one and the same Person? We must underline in our minds the last word of verse 1, for we should never have discerned it had not a **revelation** been made. A parallel thought occurs in Matthew 16: 17, where Peter's recognition and confession of Christ as "the Son of the living God," was declared by our Lord to be the fruit of **revelation** from the Father. That revelation —

whether we express it as given in Isaiah or in Matthew — has come, we trust, to every one of our readers, and a thrilling revelation it is. The chapter proceeds to show that the rejection and death of the humbled Servant does not in any way contradict the predictions of His coming glory as the Arm of the Lord, but is rather the great foundation on which it is securely based.

Verse 2 presents Him to us in two ways. First, as He was in the eyes of God. Mankind in general, and Israel in particular, had proved themselves to be "dry ground," quite unproductive of anything that was good; yet out of this there sprang up this "tender plant," which drew its life and nourishment from elsewhere. The Lord Jesus truly sprang out of Israel, through the Virgin Mary His mother, but the excellence of His holy Manhood was due not to her but to the action of the Holy Spirit of God.

But second, He is presented as He was in the eyes of men. He had "no form nor lordliness," (New Trans.), nor the kind of beauty that men admire and desire. Some haughty, imperious man of imposing appearance would have caught the popular fancy; but instead of this He was "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," as verse 3 says. Being who He was, such a One as He could not be otherwise, as He entered and walked through a ruined creation with all its degradation and woe. This men did not understand, since they were insensible to their own degradation, and consequently they despised and rejected Him, as the prophet here predicts.

How do we Christians go through the world today? Let us challenge our hearts. The world today is in principle what it was then. Here and there more polish may be seen on the surface, but on the other hand the population of the earth has increased enormously, and so its miseries have multiplied. Hence, as the Apostle has told us, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8: 22), and we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, are involved in it and groan within ourselves. Now groans are the expression of sorrow. He, who today most largely enters into heaven's joys, will most keenly feel earth's sorrows.

The language here is remarkable. The prophet is led to predict the rejection of Christ in words that will express the feelings of a godly remnant of Israel in the last days, when Zechariah 12: 10-14, is fulfilled. Then they will say, "we hid as it were our faces from Him . . . we esteemed Him not." Identifying themselves with the sin of their forefathers, they will confess, not that the forefathers did it, but that **we** did it. This will be a genuine repentance.

Moreover their eyes will be opened to see the real meaning of His death, as verses 4 and 5 show. In the days of His flesh men observed His sorrows and His grief, and deduced from them that He was disapproved of God and therefore afflicted by Him. Now the real truth of it all bursts upon their hearts. They will discover what has been revealed to us, as recorded in the Gospel: He exerted His miraculous power with

such sympathetic effect in the healing of men's bodies, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8: 17).

But if verse 4 is their confession of the truth concerning His wonderful life of sympathetic and sorrowful service, verse 5 gives the confession they will make as the true meaning of His death dawns upon them. They discover that He died as a Substitute, and it was even for themselves. This discovery we all make today as we believe the Gospel. The word, **substitution** does not occur in this verse, but the truth that word expresses does occur four times in this one verse, and it occurs ten times in this one chapter.

Now here is a remarkable fact:— as printed in our English Bibles, verse 5 is the central verse of this chapter, which really begins with verse 13 of chapter 52. It is therefore the central verse of the central chapter of the central section, of this latter part of Isaiah. And without a doubt it predicts truth which is absolutely central to our soul's salvation, and in our soul's experience. The transgressions, the iniquities were **mine**, each of us has to say, but the wounding, the bruising were not mine but **His**. The peace, the healing are **mine**, but the chastisement, the stripes that procured them, were not mine but **His**. In all this He was my **Substitute**.

This thought is again emphasized in verse 6, and it is made plain that His substitutionary work was the fruit of an act of Jehovah, for He it was who laid our sins upon Him. In these verses, we must remember, the

"we" and the "us" are those who believe, whether ourselves today or the godly remnant of Israel presently. And those who believe are those who have first confessed their sinnership; all going astray like lost sheep, though the way we took may have differed in each case. Sin is lawlessness; the doing of our own will, regardless of God's will, and the going of our own way independently of Him.

In verses 7-9, we have a series of remarkable prophecies, all of which were fulfilled on the very day of our Lord's death. Indeed it has rightly been pointed out that at least 24 Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in the 24 hours that comprised that day of all days, when the Son of God bowed His head in death.

Verse 7 emphasizes His silence before His accusers. When men are oppressed and afflicted unjustly, to protest is natural and most usual, so His silence was contrary to all experience, and it is noted in the Gospels — Matthew 27: 11-14; Mark 15: 3, 4; Luke 23: 9; John 19: 9. Truly a sheep is dumb before the shearers, as anyone may observe today if they stand and watch the shearers at work, but He was not like a sheep being sheared but rather like a lamb led to the **slaughter**. He was indeed "the Lamb of God," as John the Baptist proclaimed, yet no word of protest escaped His lips.

Then further, "He was taken from prison [oppression] and from judgment," for it is still what men did to Him that is before us in these verses. If we turn to Acts 8: 26-40, we find that the Ethiopian had in his reading of Isaiah reached ex-

actly this point, when Philip intercepted him in his chariot. He was doubtless reading from the Septuagint version in Greek, which renders it, "in His humiliation His judgment was taken away." It was so indeed, for the trial of our Lord, resulting in His condemnation and crucifixion, was the most atrocious mis-carriage of justice the world has ever seen. A legal expert has surveyed the evidence of the Gospels, and stated that every step taken by His accusers and judges, whether Jews or Gentiles, was irregular and unjust.

And the prophetic declaration of the result is, "He was cut off out of the land of the living," or as the Ethiopian read it, "His life is taken from the earth." Hence the prophet says, "Who shall declare His generation?" and to this question men would unanimously reply that, His life being taken, no generation was possible. When we reach verse 10 of our chapter we shall find the answer which Jehovah gives to this question, and it is a very different one, inasmuch as He was cut off and stricken not for Himself but for the transgression of those whom Jehovah calls "My people." We have left the verses which give confessions which godly Israelites, and ourselves also, have to make, for oracular statements made by the prophet in the name of Jehovah.

So also in verse 9 we hear the voice of the Lord, declaring how He would overrule the circumstances connected with His burial:—"Men appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death." (New Trans.) And so it came to pass. He was cruci-

fied between two wicked men, though one of them was gloriously saved before he died; and if men had had their way they would have flung His sacred body with those of the thieves in a common grave, but by the intervention of Joseph of Arimathea this was prevented, and His body lay in the new tomb belonging to Joseph. God always has the needed man for His work. Joseph was born into the world to fulfil that one line of Scripture! That one act covers all that we know of Joseph. In doing it He served the will of God.

In the margin of our reference Bibles we are told that in the Hebrew the word "death" is really in the plural — "DEATHS." It is what has been called the plural of majesty. Though crucified between two thieves, His death was MAJESTIC — ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of deaths rolled into one.

By Joseph's act the prophecy of Psalm 16: 10 was also fulfilled. The Holy One of God was not suffered to see corruption. He had done no violence nor was there deceit, or guile in His mouth. Violence and corruption are the two great forms of evil in the earth. Both were totally absent in Him. Without corruption in His Person and life, there was no touch of it in His death or His burial. Thus far we have seen how God overruled the purposes of wicked men. In the remaining verses we are to see what God Himself achieved in His death and the mighty results that are to follow for Him and — blessed be God:— also for us, who believe in His name.

HEAVENLY THINGS INTRODUCED

F. B. HOLE.

WHEN the Lord Jesus had come "into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi" (Matt. 16: 13), He was at the furthest limit of Palestine and nearest Gentile territory, and it was then that He raised with His disciples the question of who He was. He had been presented to the Jews then in the land as their God-given Messiah, but as the early verses of the chapter show, their leaders asked for a sign, when the trouble was they had no eyes to see the many signs given, though they could discern the face of the sky, giving signs of the weather. Only the sign of the prophet Jonah was left for them: which was the sign of Christ's own death and resurrection.

The religious leaders did not know who He was. The mass of the people only surmised He might be some ancient prophet appearing. Who was He?

Peter it was, who gave the right answer. He was truly the Christ, but also "the Son of the living God." This answer declared our Lord, was the fruit of revelation from "My Father which is in heaven." We may therefore truly say that the announcements made in this remarkable passage all originate from the **Heavenly Father**.

From Him there was granted to Peter the revelation of the **Heavenly Person** — not merely the long promised Messiah for the establishment of God's earthly Kingdom, but "the Son of the living God."

In answer to Peter's confession the Lord gave His first intimation

of a **Heavenly structure** which He now purposed to build, and which He called "My Church." Not that He revealed at that moment its heavenly character and destination; that we find revealed in the Epistles, after the Holy Spirit was shed forth. What is revealed here is that against His Church all the power of the adversary would not prevail, and that Peter himself was a stone, destined to be incorporated in the structure. The Lord had envisaged this at the outset, as recorded in John 1: 42; and on it Peter himself enlarged in his 1st Epistle 2: 4, 5.

Then further, the Lord told Peter that he should be given "the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven;" that is of a **Heavenly Kingdom** to be established on earth. As recorded in Matthew 13, the Lord had instructed the disciples in the mysterious or secret form this Kingdom would assume, as the result of His being refused the Kingly place at His first advent, and while we have to wait for His second advent.

That Kingdom exists today in secret form, for in receiving the Gospel we are brought under the rule and dominion of Heaven, vested in "the Son of His love" (Col. 1: 13, margin). Peter used the "Keys" in opening it to Jews in Acts 2 and to Gentiles in Acts 10. In that **Heavenly Kingdom** we are today, as having believed the Gospel.

At this point the Lord cancelled the earlier instructions given to the disciples to announce His Messiah-

ship and the nearness of that dominion on earth, centred in Jerusalem, which the prophets had predicted. This we see in verse 20.

And from that time forth, as we see in verse 21, the Lord began to lay emphasis on His impending death and resurrection, which as He knew, was to be the righteous basis on which both the Heavenly Church and the Heavenly Kingdom, would come into existence. Not realizing this, Peter spoke, as recorded in verse 22. By revelation he knew the greatness of the Person, but he did not yet know the wonder of His work.

The speed with which Peter descended from the heights of Divine revelation to the depths of the thoughts of men, behind which Satan is lying, furnishes a very impressive lesson for us. It may remind us of the apostle's reproachful word to the Galatian saints, "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh" (Gal. 3: 3). The flesh in Peter and in every one of us shrinks from the cross.

But as the Lord indicates in the verses that follow, the cross is the way into the **Heavenly things** He

was about to establish, not only for Himself, but also for all who would follow Him. A man may avoid the cross and gain the whole world, and yet lose everything worth having.

The taking of the cross entails the losing of the life of this world, but it is the door of entrance into the life that is life indeed — into that "eternal life" which is the fruit of death and resurrection. Here is found a **Heavenly Life** indeed, though that exact expression does not occur in the passage we are considering. Three disciples were permitted to see a sample of that Heavenly life by the Transfiguration scene, which the verses that follow put on record.

Thus Heavenly things were indicated by our Lord Himself in germinal form, and His death and resurrection shown to be the basis of their introduction. "These things," He spake, "being yet present" (John 14: 25), but when the Holy Spirit was come He would teach them, "all things," as the next verse says.

Thus we are brought into the full light of the Heavenly things that our Lord Jesus introduced in Matthew 16.

I have to exercise my soul every day so to keep the beauties of the Lord Jesus before me, that I may be proof against all the beauties that are around me here. It is impossible to be proof against either attraction or affliction if you have not Christ to compensate you for the one and comfort you in the other. . . . I do not go to Christ in sorrow only; every one does that; I go to Him for beauty.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

J. HOUSTON.

IT would be impossible to over-estimate the importance of Christ's resurrection. It lies at the foundation of the whole work of redemption. Were it possible to prove it unreal, the whole edifice of Christianity would collapse, becoming utterly worthless and false. Paul said to the Corinthians, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15: 14).

In view of this it is not surprising that the enemy should concentrate all his power against it, and seek to overthrow it. First of all there was the sealing of the tomb where the Lord lay, and the setting of a watch over it. But the opened door, the empty sepulchre, the angel's words, "He is not here, but is risen," bare witness to the complete destruction of his power, and that in the very place where he had power; that is, in death.

However, if he does not succeed in one way, he will try another. The seal and the watch availed nothing. The former was broken, the latter became as dead men. So he had recourse to lies, for he is a liar and the father of lies. The soldiers who were posted on watch were bribed to say that while they slept the disciples had removed the body of Jesus. This was done in secret, but the lie was proclaimed on the housetops for the lie became, "commonly reported among the Jews" (Matt. 28: 15). But this wicked ruse was frustrated, for "The lips of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment" (Prov. 12:

19). Yet many are deceived by the lying tongue to their own perdition.

Even believers can be affected by doubt, but theirs is not the rank unbelief that rejects truth with animosity as the fruit of Satan's work. The doubt of a believer is **precaution against deception**. He hesitates to accept the truth until he is fully assured it is the truth. The words of Thomas, recorded in John 20: 25, are an example of this. It was not defiant unbelief, with a background of hatred, but precautionary carefulness to guard against deception and all the disciples were on their guard in this respect. Matthew tells us, "some doubted." Luke affirms that to the disciples the news was, "as idle tales."

Peter and John went to the sepulchre and saw that it was empty. John believed though not as yet knowing the Scripture that He must rise from the dead. Peter departed wondering in himself, as Luke tells us. The two going to Emmaus were also full of doubt and were rebuked by the Lord when He appeared to them. The Lord does not excuse doubters, when they look for **signs**, and neglect **the Scriptures**, as the Jews were wont to do. In fact it was characteristic of the Jews to "require a sign" (1 Cor. 1: 22). Faith asks for no signs, but trusts the Word of God.

So another hindrance to the enjoyment of the truth of Christ's resurrection was, **not knowing the Scriptures**. The women that went to the sepulchre early in the morn-

ing were particularly affected by it. They only had before them His dead body in the sealed tomb. How to roll away the stone was the question before them. Even after they saw the empty tomb, and were told by the angel that He was risen, they did not grasp the truth, and certainly were not able to convey with intelligence to others what they had seen and heard.

The question might be asked, Ought they to have gone to the sepulchre? Did not the angel's question, "Why seek ye the **living** among the **dead**?" suggest that they were in the wrong place? The fact is they were seeking the **dead** and not the **living**. They might think that the gardener had taken Him away, but no glimmering of light was theirs; no thought that He was risen from the dead in triumph and glory. They should have paid heed to the Lord's own words, "After that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee" (Mark 14: 28). This would have guided them aright for there He revealed Himself and there "they worshipped Him" (Matt. 28: 17).

It was only Mary Magdalene who lingered long at the sepulchre weeping. She had no thought of

home like others, **without Him**. How touching it is to see this devoted woman clinging to **Him**, though without clear thought as to whether He was alive or dead. The mystery of the empty tomb did not help things for her, since she sought Him, whom her soul loved, in keeping with what we read in Song of Solomon 3: 1-4. Thus it will be with Israel's godly remnant before the day of manifested glory.

So it was with Mary Magdalene. She sought **Him**, and she found **Him**. This was everything to her. Much could be said of this beautiful scene. Sufficient it is to note the Lord's appreciation of such love, even when there was little knowledge with it, as we see in John 20: 11-18. It is not what we know that counts so much, but how much we love.

In all four Gospels, Mary Magdalene is mentioned **first**. She was the **first** to whom the Lord appeared after He was risen from the dead. She was also the first to bear the news to the disciples that the Lord was to ascend into glory. The message she bore was, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God."

THE ALABASTER BOX

"When Jesus was in Bethany . . . there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head" (Matthew 26: 6, 7).

Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheerful words, while their ears can hear them, and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go.

“LET NO MAN DESPISE THY YOUTH”

A. J. POLLOCK.

THESSE words of the Apostle Paul were addressed to Timothy, whom he described as, “My own son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1: 2). Moreover Timothy had conferred upon him the great favour of a spiritual gift from the Lord, ministered by, “the putting on of my [Paul’s] hands” (2 Tim. 1: 6). This was also given “by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (1 Tim. 4: 14); expressive of their fellowship with him in it.

From 2 Timothy 1: 6-8, we gather that Timothy was naturally of a timid and backward temperament, for Paul wrote exhorting him to stir up the gift he had received, reminding him of the power and love which were his by the Spirit of God, and hence he was not to be ashamed of the testimony nor of Paul in his imprisonment. All these instructions were not put on record for the sake of Timothy alone. They are for the help and instruction of every Christian young man from that day to this. It is in this light that the two epistles should be studied.

It was to Timothy that Paul wrote, “Let no man despise thy youth.” (1 Tim. 4: 12). Do any of us ask, In what way should a young believer act, so that his youth should not be despised? The answer is very direct and practical, and given in the same verse; for we read “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Let all who read these lines take full account of this verse in all its details. It is not the correct knowledge of doctrine, important as that is, but the carrying out of it in practice, that is enjoined upon us. And it is well to note that the Apostle Peter also stressed conduct, for he exhorted the elders to be, “**ensamples** to the flock” (1 Peter 5: 3), using the same word. Whether with the young or with the old, there is nothing sadder than a head full of sound doctrine, if divorced from the conduct which the doctrine enjoins. In such a case you have just a hypocrite.

“**In word.**” This is a very big test for each of us, for “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” What is enthroned in our hearts will assuredly govern our speech. It is not a question of how we speak about divine things for a short hour in a Bible reading, but of what kind of talk characterizes us in our homes, in our business life, among our friends, in the social circle, and at all times.

“**In conversation.**” In the Bible this word is used in its old-fashioned sense, embracing our whole manner of life and behaviour. Do we so behave as to be well pleasing to the Lord, and set forth what becomes a follower of Christ in the eyes of those who behold us? Years ago it was said of a prominent minister that he preached so well that he never ought to be out of the pulpit, but that, on the other hand, his life was so inconsistent with his preaching

that he ought never to be allowed to enter it. A sad example truly; but we knew a young man who gave Scripture expositions of a lofty nature, and yet disgraced himself in private by questionable talk and action.

“**In charity.**” You have only to study 1 Corinthians 13, to see the practical way in which **divine love** works. One sentence seems to stand out vividly. It does not “behave itself unseemly,” for it is more than a matter of kind words. It shows itself in kind actions. Love in action gives great weight to the spoken word. On the contrary, even if we could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and yet not have love, we should be simply like “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” Christian audiences to their distress are quick to recognize the sounding-brass and tinkling-cymbal speakers.

“**In spirit.**” We recognize too often the dictatorial spirit, the gossiping spirit, the frivolous spirit, or even the attractive spirit of amiable human nature; but we should rejoice that we have the Spirit of Christ, for, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. 8: 9). Surely that Spirit should permeate our spirits, resulting in the fruit of the Spirit, of which Galatians 5: 22, 23, speaks, being seen in our lives. It is well to remember what Spirit we are of.

“**In faith.**” We have five senses, which are all receptive and put us into touch with this world of time and sense, but death at one blow brings them to a finish. But the believer is connected with another

world and with eternal things by faith; things of which the unbeliever knows nothing. Hebrews 11 is the great faith chapter of the Bible, and it shows us that where there is faith there is bound to be works. Eighteen times in that chapter we find the words, “**by faith,**” or “**through faith,**” reminding us that faith is not real unless it is practical. Read down the chapter and note what a wealth of **action** in times past sprang from faith, and how also it has wonderful **sight**. Abraham looked for a city whose Builder and Maker is God; and Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible to natural sight. Faith should mark our lives.

“**In purity.**” This should unmistakably mark the Christian young man, especially in these days of loose morals on every hand. The Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to treat the younger women “as sisters, with all purity” (1 Tim. 5: 2). When the young indulge in thoughtless flirtations, which are manifestly of the flesh, great dangers are incurred, and all too many have learned too late and to their grief, how bitter is the fruit of it all. It is true for saint as well as for sinner that, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6: 7).

One thing is certain: if a young man pays heed to these six exhortations, he will be greatly respected in the circle in which he moves, and his youth will **not** be despised.

The Apostle Paul sounded a warning note to all, old as well as young, when he bade every man, “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think sober-

ly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith " (Rom. 12: 3). It is not given to every Christian young man to have conferred upon him a spiritual gift, such as that of an evangelist, or a pastor and teacher. It is sad when a young man, not so gifted, imagines himself to be gifted and consequently pushes himself forward to no profit. Real gift will always be welcomed and appreciated by godly saints. On the other hand a gifted young man like Timothy may be unduly backward. Such should be stirred up and exercised not to fail in service. We are to think soberly.

In writing thus we have in view those who meet on simple lines laid down in Scripture, and who are therefore not hindered by clericalism, which would leave everything in the hands of the clergy, and lead those called the " laity " without exercise on such matters. But it is still possible for the young brother, who does meet with others on Scriptural lines, to evade all responsibility in service, whether in testimony or in worship.

What boundless opportunities there are for the young believer to-

day, whether in preaching the Gospel, in ministry to the saints, for gathering children under the sound of the Word, for visiting the needy, for tract distribution. Not only are there vast districts abroad not yet evangelised, but at our very doors there are multitudes unevangelised. We are told that hardly ten per cent of the population attend any place of worship, so what must be the spiritual condition of the remaining ninety per cent? Moreover, when we read our Bibles we cannot but be struck by how often God used a young man in His work. In the Old Testament, Joseph, David, Daniel, come at once to our mind. In the New Testament the men called to be His apostles were evidently young. In our own time too the same thing has been seen.

May all who read these lines be marked by humility and devotedness for the Lord's sake. Let us see to it, that prayerfully and earnestly we make the most of the one life God has given us, so that at the end we may not look back with regret, having missed our glorious opportunities.

THE ORDER OF BATTLE

(Judges 7: 4, 17)

"BRING them down unto the waters, and I will try them for thee there."

Gideon's ten thousand were tested by the water. Water is not a wrong thing, it is a right thing. The right things are the mercies of God. We can take them by the way — but we are not to kneel down to them. The Lord drank of the brook in the way (Psl. 110). He did not kneel to the brook. Three hundred drank of the brook in the way; the nine thousand seven hundred knelt at the brook, and as a result, they never heard the order of battle. The great battle order was, " Look on me and do likewise . . . as I do, so shall ye do." If you want to get on you must keep your eye on Christ.

THE GALATIAN DOXOLOGY

A. H. STORRIE.

NATIONAL characteristics are sometimes taken account of in Scripture. Thus, in the Galatians we see reflected something of the characteristic fickleness of the people of their province, Galatia, meaning "Gaul-in-Asia."

The Apostle was deeply concerned at the error into which the Galatian assemblies had fallen, for it assailed the fundamental "truth of the Gospel." Hence the introductory words of the epistle are few. Nevertheless he pauses to breathe a benediction upon the erring saints, combining therewith a brief doxology:

"Grace to you, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, so that He should deliver us out of the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory to the ages of ages. Amen." (New Trans.).

May it not have been his contemplation of the Gospel as a masterpiece of God that called forth the doxology? — for such a masterpiece the Gospel surely is. Nor would the Apostle be content with ascribing everlasting glory to God; but he would demonstrate that such should be our constant aim both in doctrine and in the resultant practice thereof.

What are we to understand by the expression, "the truth of the Gospel" (2: 14)? Simply, that the Gospel, being divinely perfect, allows of no admixture of the works

of the law of Moses, such as circumcision. The Galatians had to be recovered **practically** to the great truth that our standing before God is by faith alone. It is for this reason that we have in this epistle one of the three citations of the prophet Habakkuk's great declaration: "The just shall live by faith" (3: 11).

In the first chapter the Apostle makes three references to his own experience, which are revealing: (1) The Gospel which he preached was by the revelation of Jesus Christ — that which revolutionized his soul on the Damascus road; (2) God revealed His Son **in** him; (3) The Judæan assemblies glorified God in him. He would thus remind the Galatians that he was truly an apostle by Divine call, although he was not one of the twelve who had consorted with the Lord Jesus here on earth.

By a vision of the glorified Christ he had made a stupendous discovery. He whom he had hated and persecuted — in His saints — was the Son of God, raised from the dead by God the Father, to whom he now desired indeed the glory that excels, even to the ages of the ages.

From chapter 2 we learn that Paul was adamant as to the "**truth** of the Gospel," and not yielding as was Peter on at least one occasion. How unanswerable are his arguments, recorded in the closing verses of chapter 2. As another has said in this connection: "It is by putting ourselves again under law after seeking justification through Christ, that we act as if

we were unjustified sinners, seeking to become righteous through law-works." How far this would fall short of bringing glory to God! As the same Apostle says elsewhere: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

The crowning argument comes in chapter 3. On what ground did they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? — by works of law or by the hearing of faith? What folly to rest for justification on law when the blessing rests on promise made four hundred and thirty years before the law was given! If there **had** been a law, which could give life, in very truth by law there might have been righteousness. Having received the promise of the Spirit through faith, it is by no other means that we can bring glory to God.

Great words met us in chapter 4: ". . . God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law, that He might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship" (New Trans.). Why should the sons and heirs of God turn to the "weak and beggarly" principles that could only bring them into bondage? Must they exchange blessedness for legalism?

Again and again the Apostle, zealous for the glory of God, seeks to elevate the thoughts of the Galatians to the height of his own doxology. It is not enough to sing doxologies, no matter how uplifting and inspiring they may be; let the glory of God be the main object of our lives, even down to the smallest detail.

language that the situation merited, the beloved Apostle turns to tender appeal: "My children, of whom I again travail in birth, until Christ shall have been formed in you . . .," reminding them also that believers are not children of the bond-woman, but of the freewoman, by the promise of God.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." So opens chapter 5. To be justified by law is to fall from grace. Also, it is by the Spirit that we await the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision has any force nor uncircumcision, but faith that works by love. Let us then seek to walk by the Spirit, and we shall in no wise fulfil the lusts of the flesh, the works of which are manifest, and what an ugly list they are! One solemn thought we may well note: that "heresies" — meaning divisions or schools of opinion — are put by the Holy Spirit of God in the same list as the vilest abominations of which the flesh is capable! How easy it is to **cause** a division; how hard it is to **heal** one!

With relief we turn from the works of the flesh to the beautiful nine-fold fruit of the Spirit! Does it not give us a portrait of the Lord Jesus Himself as He is presented in the four Gospels? "Love, joy, peace," as to our individual spiritual state; "Longsuffering, kindness, goodness," as to our relations with others; "Faith, meekness, self-control," as to our communion with God. Such fruit will indeed be to the glory of God!

Yet, from all the severity of

In chapter 6 the Apostle ends his

epistle where he began, showing the futility of the works of the law — circumcision as a religious rite for the Christian. Thank God, it is a question now of a new creation, according to the rule of which we are enjoined to walk.

The flesh provides a poor theme in which to boast. Well may we glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and may it stand like a mighty barrier between the Christian and the world. And surely it was the thought of the Cross that led the Apostle to add his closing benediction to an epistle, evidently written with difficulty by his own hand, because of defective vision, instead of by means of an amanuensis, as was his more usual method.

“ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.”

“ Our God forbid that we should boast,
Save in the Cross of Christ our Lord,
All the vain things that charm us most,
We'd sacrifice them at His Word.”

Let us remember, then, the brief but blessed Galatian doxology. The glory attaching to the old covenant was but transient; to our God and Father, fully revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we ascribe: “ Glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen!”

WILES

“ Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil ”
— (Prov. 4: 25-27).

A SAILOR expects to reach a direction that is in keeping with his steering. A very slight movement of the helm, a very small deviation at first, if adhered to, will lead to a port very remote indeed from the one which you would have reached if that first slight movement of the helm had been obviated. One point of the compass may seem as nothing, but the farther you proceed according to it, the more definitely are you departing from the port you are bound for. Because it appears little at the inception one is induced to overlook it, and therefore, the Scripture calls deceivings of this kind “ wiles,” that is, by-paths, which deviate so little at the beginning from the true course that to raise an objection to it might seem fastidious. If the great divergence which will eventually ensue were seen at first, no one with heart or conscience would have submitted to it. . . . One simple question tests everything — if I pursue this course, where will it lead to?

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 53: 10—55: 13)

THUS far this great prophecy of the sufferings and death of the humbled Servant of the Lord has dealt with them mainly from the human and visible side: it now proceeds to deeper things, outside the range of human sight. Verses 10-12 predict what Jehovah Himself wrought, and what He will yet accomplish by means of it.

The holy Servant was to endure bruising and grief, and even have His very soul made an offering for sin: and all this at the hands of Jehovah. What it all really involved must ever lie beyond the reach of our creature-minds, even though they have been renewed by grace. And that, "it pleased the Lord" to do this, may seem to us an astounding statement; yet the explanation lies in the latter part of the verse: since the results that should be achieved were to be of such surpassing worth and wonder. A parallel thought as regards the Lord Jesus Himself seems to lie in the words, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross" (Heb. 12: 2).

What are the results as stated in verse 10? They are threefold. First, "He shall see His seed." This carries our thoughts on to the Lord's own words recorded in John 12: 24. Falling into the ground and dying, as the "corn of wheat," He brings forth "much fruit," which will be "after His kind," if we may borrow and use the phrase which occurs ten times in Genesis 1. This

will be seen in its fulness in a coming day when:—

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

Every one in those radiant hosts
will be "His seed."

And in the second place, "He shall prolong His days," in spite of the fact that He was to be "cut off out of the land of the living," as verse 8 has told us. His resurrection is not stated in so many words, but it is clearly implied in this wonderful prophecy. In risen life His days are prolonged as the days of eternity. Raised from the dead, He "dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. 6: 9). In this risen life His seed are associated with Him.

And the third thing is that in this risen life "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." There have been devoted men who have served the Divine pleasure to a large extent, yet failing in many details. In the hands of the risen Servant all the pleasure of God will be fulfilled for ever. We have to pass into the New Testament to discover what that pleasure is, and how it will reach its culmination in the new heaven and new earth of which Revelation 21 speaks. The old creation on its earthly side was placed in the hands of Adam, only to be completely marred. The new creation will abide in untarnished

splendour in the hands of the risen Christ. The light of this shines into our hearts even now; for as we sometimes sing:—

The new creation's stainless joy
Gleams through the present
gloom.

Verse 11 gives us another great prediction. Not only is the risen Servant to fulfil all the pleasure of Jehovah, but He Himself is to be satisfied as He sees the full result established as the fruit of "the travail of His soul." We are little creatures of small capacity, so that a very little will satisfy us. His capacity is infinite; yet the fruit of His soul's travail will be so immeasurable as to satisfy Him. Do not our hearts greatly rejoice that so it is to be.

The latter part of verse 11 in Darby's New Translation reads, "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant instruct many in righteousness; and He shall bear their iniquities." In these words "the many" are of course those who by faith belong to Him: such receive the twofold benefit — both the instruction and the expiation. Neither can be dispensed with; and, thank God, both are ours in this day of grace, as is so plainly stated in Titus 2: 11-14. Grace not only saves but also teaches us effectively to live sober, righteous and godly lives. What is done for us today will be done also for a godly remnant of Israel in the days to come.

Now we reach the last verse of this great chapter. Note the first word — "**Therefore**" Jehovah speaks, and declares that because of

what Jesus accomplished in the day of His humiliation, He shall be assigned a great portion in the day of glory. Now the whole passage began by the statement that "My Servant" is to be greatly exalted, and this was followed by a challenge as to who believed that? — in view of His humiliation and rejection and sufferings. This last verse declares that instead of His sufferings being in any way contradictory of His exaltation, they are the secure basis on which His eternal fame and splendour will rest. And further, what He has won is not for Himself alone, for He will divide the spoil with others who are designated "the strong." Our Lord's words, recorded in Matthew 11: 12, may be an allusion to this, for strength was needed to receive Him, when the rejection of Himself and His claims was rising like a tidal wave to sweep all before it. Nor is the opposition of the world really otherwise for those who receive Christ in faith today.

The chapter closes with one more prediction as to the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, coupled with one more detail that had to be fulfilled in His death. It was fulfilled when they crucified Him between two thieves, as Mark 15: 27, 28, records. It is remarkable how the **soul** of Christ in connection with His sacrifice is emphasized in this chapter, for we have the two statements — Jehovah made His soul an offering for sin, and also that He poured out His soul unto death. In Hebrews 10 the emphasis is placed upon His **body**, which was prepared for Him, and which He offered, as stated in verse 10 of that chapter. In each of the four Gos-

pels His **spirit** comes into prominence. In John's Gospel the record is, "He delivered up His spirit" (New Trans.) No wonder then that the sins of the "many" — those who believe on Him — have been borne and for ever put away.

Closing the chapter, one asks oneself with wonder, How could Isaiah have written such words as these, some centuries before they were fulfilled in Christ, save by direct inspiration of the Spirit of God?

Chapter 54 proceeds to unfold the results for Israel of the sufferings of her Messiah, and the first word is "Sing." The marginal reading of Psalm 65: 1 is, "Praise is silent for Thee O God, in Sion." Thus indeed it is today. But the time is coming when, as one of the fruits springing from Christ's sacrificial death, Israel — the true Israel of God — will break forth into singing. That people who were so barren and unfruitful under the law, when on that basis outwardly married to Jehovah, will be not only joyful but abundantly multiplied and blessed.

Graphic figures of speech are used to set this forth. Her tent is to be enlarged, her cords lengthened, her stakes strengthened. The holding strength of stakes depends much on the nature of the soil into which they are driven. When Israel drove her stakes into the law, they gave way almost at once. Driven into the grace of God, which will find its expression in the atoning death of their Messiah, they will be made strong for ever.

band," will be their "Maker" as the Lord of hosts, and also their "Redeemer" as the Holy One of Israel, and He will be known as the God of **the whole earth**. The Gentile nations surrounding Israel were inclined to regard Him as Israel's own God, while they each had gods of their own; and even in Daniel, when Gentile nations were concerned, He is presented as "the God of **heaven**." In the millennial day He will be known as the God of the whole earth, though His centre will be in Israel.

How striking the contrasts which we find in verses 7-10. This time in which Israel is "Lo-ammi," covering more than two thousand years, may seem long to them, but it is "a **small moment**" to Him. When at last they are regathered it will be with "**great mercies**," dispensed righteously, since God's humbled Servant had borne their iniquities. Lay stress also on the word, "**mercies**," for no thought of **merit** will enter into their blessing. This is fully corroborated in Romans 11: 30-32.

Again, the Jew lies nationally under wrath. It lies upon them, "to the uttermost," as Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2: 16. Yet, viewed in the light of the coming mercy, it is seen as "a **little wrath**," and the kindness that will be extended to them in mercy will be "**everlasting**." Hence "the waters of Noah" are cited; for as, when that judgment was over, God promised that such judgment should never happen again, so Israel will be beyond judgment for ever.

The One who will be their "Hus-

Verse 10 reveals the basis of this

assurance. A "covenant of My peace" will have been established, based upon the fact that "the chastisement of our peace" (53: 5), was borne in the death of their Messiah. This covenant of peace will no doubt be identical with the "New covenant," which Jeremiah prophesied in his 31st chapter. Its details are given there, but the righteous basis on which it will rest we have just seen, revealed through Isaiah. We may remember also the New Testament word, "The blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13: 20).

The closing verses of this chapter reveal something of the blessings that will be Israel's portion when the covenant is established. Verses 11 and 12 may speak of favours of a material sort, but verse 13 indicates spiritual blessing. All the true children of Israel will be taught of God — and His teaching is of an effectual sort — their peace being **great**, because it will be founded on righteousness as the next verse indicates.

Adversaries there will be, and they will gather together to disturb the peace, if that were possible. Of old God did use adversaries to chastise His people, but in the day now contemplated their gathering will be "not by Me," and it will only result in their own overthrow. When Israel stands in Divinely wrought righteousness neither weapon nor word shall prevail against them. It is remarkable how righteousness is emphasized here, wrought on their behalf by the suffering Servant of chapter 53. It reminds one of the way righteousness stands in the very forefront of

Gospel testimony, as we see in Romans 1: 17.

Chapter 55 opens with a call to "**everyone** that thirsteth," and so we pass beyond the confines of Israel to consider in prophetic outline blessings that will reach to the Gentiles through the work of the Servant who has died. Illustrations of this we see in Acts 8 and 10. The Ethiopian's thirst led him to take a long journey to Jerusalem, seeking after God: the thirst of Cornelius led him to prayer and almsgiving. In both cases, seeking for water to quench their thirst, they got **more**, even, "wine and milk without money and without price." Moreover they got it by inclining their ear and coming to the Fountain-head. They heard and their souls lived; just as the prophet said in these verses. Thus we can see how strikingly his words forecast the Gospel which we know today. So even Gentiles are to enjoy the blessings of "the everlasting covenant."

Preaching in the synagogue at Antioch, the Apostle Paul cited the words, "the sure mercies of David," and connected them with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. These words connect themselves also with what we find in Psalm 89, particularly verses 19-29. In that Psalm **mercies** are specially emphasized, and the "David," is God's "Holy One" (verse 19), who is to be made, "My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (verse 27), and, "My covenant shall stand fast with Him" (verse 28). Clearly the Psalm contemplates the Son of David, of whom David was but the type. All the mercies of the

Psalm will only be verified in Christ risen from the dead. Foremost in those wonderful mercies are the forgiveness of sins and justification from all things, which Paul preached at Antioch, and which were so well responded to by **Gentiles**, as Acts 13 records.

Gentiles are definitely in view also in verse 4, since the word "people," which occurs twice, should be in the plural. God's Holy Servant, risen from the dead, is given as "a Witness to the **peoples**, a Leader and Commander to the **peoples**." As the Witness He makes God known to men. As the Leader and Commander He brings men into subjection to God. This will be fully seen in the coming age, when "men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psa. 72: 17); but the same thing is realized in principle today as men from a thousand different peoples hear the Gospel and discover in Jesus the One who has been made both Lord and Christ. Let each reader challenge his or her heart. Have I fully received His witness? Is He indeed Leader and Commander in my life?

If verse 1 gives a **call** to all who thirst; and verse 2 presents an **argument**, intended to enforce the call; and verse 3, an **invitation** to life and mercy; verses 4 and 5 make very definite **announcements**. Only the announcement of verse 4 is addressed to men, whereas in verse 5 we find Jehovah's announcement to His Servant risen from the dead, stating in different words what had been said in verse 6 of chapter 49. This has definite application to the present age, when God is visiting

the nations and taking out of them a people for His Name, and it is connected in our verse with His present **glory**. His people will be willing in the day of His **power**, as Psalm 110 predicts; but many from among the nations are running to Him in this day, and while He is glorified on high.

Verse 6 follows this by offering what we may call a **word of advice**, followed in verse 7 by a **word of assurance**. There is a time when God is near and may be found in grace, and a time when He retires from the scene to act in judgment. How often are these words uttered when the Gospel is preached, for the day of salvation is NOW. The assurance is that if any, however wicked they may be, turn to the Lord in repentance, there is mercy for him. The forsaking of one's thoughts and way is just what genuine repentance involves. Faith, we know, is needed too, but when Isaiah wrote Christ the great Object of faith, though predicted, was not actually revealed. Consequently faith is not brought to the fore in the Old Testament as it is in the New.

But it is true at all times that the soul returning in repentance finds mercy, and the offer here is not only of mercy but of pardon in abundant measure. As the margin tells us the Hebrew is that He will "multiply to pardon." Such is the freeness and the fulness of the Divine mercy to the truly repentant.

Now all this is not according to the thoughts and the ways of men, as was well known to God. Hence what we have in verses 8 and 9. In-

deed the whole of this magnificent prophecy concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, and the glorious results flowing therefrom, is totally opposed to human thoughts and ways. Christ, when He came, had nothing about Him that appealed to human thoughts and ways, as is stated in the opening verses of chapter 53, and what was true in Him personally is equally true of all God's ways and of His thoughts expressed in those ways.

But fallen man, alas! is self-centred, and prefers his own thoughts and ways to God's, ignorant of the awful gulf that lies between them, represented as the difference between the height of the heavens and of the earth. In these days of giant telescopes, which reveal the unimaginable height of the heavens contrasted with our little earth, we can perhaps better realize the force of this. God's thoughts are revealed in His purposes, with which His ways are consistent, and now that they have come to light in connection with the Gospel, they form a lesson book for angels, as is shown in 1 Peter 1: 12.

Moreover, besides the **thoughts** and **ways** of God there is His **word**, by which He signifies what His thoughts and ways are. Verse 10 assures us of its beneficent effect. Just as the rain descending from heaven brings with it life and fertility in nature, making man's labour to be fruitful for his good, so the word of God acts in a spiritual way. Received into the heart it is **fruitful** in life and blessing; and not only that, but is full of **power**, never

failing in the effect that God intends whether in grace or in judgment. This was exemplified in the Lord Jesus Himself. No word of His ever fell fruitless to the ground, for He was the Living Word. It is equally true of the written word of God. It is said of the blessed man of Psalm 1, that, "In His law doth He meditate day and night." Happy are we, now that we have "the word of His grace" (Acts 20: 32), as well as the word of His law, if we do so likewise.

God's coming grace to Israel is in view here, as the two verses that close our chapter show. The peace that had been announced in the previous chapter, should without fail be theirs, and joy also. Creation too will rejoice when the millennial day is reached. It is guaranteed here by the unfailing word of God, and when we turn to such a scripture as Romans 8, we are told how creation will be delivered from the bondage produced by the sin of man, and brought into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God, and we are carried beyond that which will be true for Israel into the largeness of the thoughts of God for the whole creation.

Thus all through the wonderful passage that has been before us we can note that what the prophets stated in germinal form comes into full revelation when, Christ having come and died and risen again and ascended to glory, the Holy Spirit was given to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. May we have hearts that receive them and appreciate their unique value.

THE GLORIES OF THE LORD JESUS W. H. WESTCOTT.

(Extracts from notes of an address on John 1)

LET us look at some of the glories of the Lord Jesus as revealed in this chapter. In verse 1 He is spoken of as "the Word" in verse 7 as "the Light;" in verse 18 as "the only-begotten Son;" in verse 29 as "the Lamb of God;" in verse 34 as "the Son of God;" in verse 41 as "the Christ;" in verse 49 as "the King of Israel;" in verse 51 as "the Son of Man." Thus the Spirit of God brings before us the greatness of the One who is our Saviour in His love and glory, and the effect of this is that we love to honour Him—to worship and serve Him.

The Word

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Suppose you could get right back behind everything, and find the point where everything that had a beginning began, there the Word was. And in verse 3 it says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." So that when things did have a beginning, they had their beginning from Him. But then He had no beginning, because in the beginning He was there to create.

Then we may well ask, When He is spoken of as "the Word," what does that mean? Well, in the simplest way, if you were to look at my face, or watch me walking in the street, or observe me in my home, you would still not be able to find out what was in my mind or in the secret working of my heart. But

when I speak and give you my word, a good deal of what is in my heart and mind is brought to light. Now in some such simple way we understand the first verse of John 1. The One, who is now our Saviour, was in the beginning of creation, is now, and at all times, competent to bring out and express every thought that was in the mind of God. All the deep thoughts of God, all His wisdom, all His knowledge and all His purpose, perfectly set out in this Person called the Word.

If we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find it stated there that God has both spoken to us and created all things by His Son. But here the same Person is spoken of as the Word. And since it was the Word who created, every little thing that He made carried with it some expression of the glory of God. We look at the grandest part of the creation — the heavens, — and observe its order and beauty. Well, as the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare the glory of God." And so it is with the earth apart from the mischief that sin has wrought. Everything created expresses in some way the glory of God, because it was made by One who is Himself the expression of all that God is — "the Word."

Because we belong to a different order or things, being a new creation in Christ, it does not do for us to overlook the wisdom and glory of God seen in all His works. The One who is our Saviour was competent, being Himself God, to put some

expression of the glory of God into everything He made; and becoming Man, as verse 14 says, He has brought the glory of God into full display.

The Light

Then notice that in verse 7, John the Baptist is only a man sent to bear witness of the Light, whereas Christ was the Light, for in Him was the Life that was the Light of men. If we consider the creation that surrounds us today, we might wonder how it could in any way set forth the glory of God. We think of the centuries of sorrow and of death, of misery, of pain and suffering and wickedness. This is not like God nor according to His will. The sin of man has spoiled everything.

Well now, this glorious Person who is the everlasting Word came down here and shone as the Light, representing perfectly what God is, and living wholly for the pleasure of God in the midst of the surrounding sin and darkness. In every point the eye of God must have rested upon Him with infinite delight. But while the Life shone as the Light, making God known in all His purity, it brought into display the awful background of man's sin. The coming of the Light has been the great test, and has shown up the blackness and evil of mankind. He was in the world and the world did not know Him. Its ignorance and blindness were revealed.

Also He came to His own things and His own people did not receive Him, though there were some that did receive Him and thereby became

children of God, and were born of God. So the Light has shone and such as these saw it, while for the rest it only brought to light their awful condition as fallen sinners. Our condition has been exposed. When tested, we are shown to be just "Adam," sinning against God, hiding from God, delighting to get rid of God, even when showing Himself in grace.

The Only Begotten Son

Now the Word became flesh, and so the 18th verse brings to us a third view of His glory. The Father has been declared by the only begotten Son, who is ever in His bosom, knowing all the thoughts of His heart. So the coming of the Lord Jesus not only exposed down to the bottom all that man is but also brought to us full knowledge of what God is. In His becoming Man there was God's approach to man in truth, showing them the grace that is in His heart.

In the early days of pioneering work on the Congo, there was a Dr. Grenfell, who had a small steamer built on the upper river, on which he went exploring. One day they got into a large tributary river quite new to them, and they found the hitherto undiscovered natives very hostile. They could not make out what this thing was that came panting up the river, breathing out fire and smoke. From the bank they could see it was being fed with logs, and they thought it was some kind of monster come up to do them harm. Whenever there was any attempt of the missionaries to land so as to get provisions, they were armed and showed fight. The posi-

tion got serious, for at every place it was just the same.

Then Dr. Grenfell thought of a plan. His wife and child were on board but had been kept in the cabin because of the danger. He spoke to her and got her consent to come up and show herself and the infant child to the natives. This simple plan was effective. Though the natives did not understand the new monster before their eyes, they did understand that men do not go out to fight with women and babies. They interpreted it at once as a message of peace, a message to do them good. The men were allowed to land and they got on all right after that.

In the coming of the everlasting Word into the world, as recorded in Luke 2, when He was seen as a Babe in His mother's arms, we can see God approaching men in such a way as to take away their fears. The angels spoke to the shepherds not of fear but of "great joy." And as we read through the Gospels, we see Him in incident after incident so acting as to remove all fear. He "went about doing good." Thus it was up to the cross when God forsook Him as the Sin-bearer. There we see the immeasurable awfulness of sin and the immeasurable love and holiness of God. But how can these two things — man's need, and God's love and glory — be reconciled?

The Lamb of God

We look at the 29th verse to see the One that "taketh away the sin of the world." Nothing has been slurred over. Sin in all its terrible

darkness has been judged. The glory of God — His holiness, His righteousness, the sovereignty of His throne, the truth of His judgment — all has been taken account of and displayed, as well as the love and grace of His heart. We see the solution of this great question of good and evil in the cross and death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus. This Gospel which starts by presenting Him as the Lamb, ends with the record of the shedding of His blood by the thrust of the soldier's spear. How precious must that blood be to God!

I read some time ago an affecting story of a friend visiting a very wealthy man in the United States, shortly after the war between the north and the south, who took him to a fine view-point and bidding him look in every direction said, "All this is mine." An immense estate it was. Then taking him into his house he went to a cupboard and took out a small piece of a pot, saying, "I value this piece of pot more than all my estate." The friend wondered and waited for an explanation, which was given. In the civil war his son had been killed and a friend by his side, when he was shot down, picked up this piece of a pot on which his blood had fallen, and gave it to his father. The poor father said, "I value this piece, on which is a drop of my son's blood, more than all the property you see today."

I think you can understand this feeling of a father's heart. But think of God, and the Lamb of God, who shed His blood. No wonder it is called, "the precious blood of Christ." We can rejoice that our

need is met — our sins are pardoned, our sinful nature condemned — but at the same time the glory of God has been maintained, His holiness and love brought into full display.

The Son of God

Before John spoke of Jesus for the second time as the Lamb of God, he had seen Him, and he bore witness to Him, as the Son of God, as we find in verse 34. John knew that He was to be made manifest to Israel, but he did not know Him in the full sense of the word until at His baptism the Spirit descended and remained on Him. Then he realized His greatness and could testify that He would Himself baptize with the Holy Spirit. This He did when He had ascended up into glory.

Speaking of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus, John could say, "I saw it," with my natural eyes. Can we say, not with natural eyes but by faith, that we have seen the Son of God in His glory, from whom the Spirit has been shed forth upon us who believe the Gospel. We rejoice when a sinner's eyes are opened to see in Jesus their Saviour, but we rejoice further when our eyes are open to see the greatness of the Son of God, from whom the Spirit is given, to see Him superseding all others in His supremacy and majesty and glory. The day when the Lord Jesus Christ simply outshines all others and everything else, is a grand day in the history of the soul. Then, as in the case of the two disciples in verse 37, we follow Jesus. The two disciples were set

free from the trammels of their old religion to follow Him. So may we be.

The Messiah

One of these two disciples who followed Him was Andrew, and he sought out his own brother Simon, as we see in verse 41. His testimony was, "We have found the Messiah — the Christ." This means that they recognized Him as "the Anointed One," as He had been prophetically announced in Psalm 2: 2, and again in Isaiah 61: 1. All the way through the Old Testament there occurs this promise of the Messiah who was to come as the Centre of all God's good purpose for the earth — the One in whom Israel should be blessed and the nations of the world healed. This was as far as they knew at that moment, and although we have obtained an inheritance as connected with a heavenly Christ, we can rejoice in it too. What the sun is to this planet in a material way, the Lord Jesus will be to the whole earth in a spiritual way in the millennial age which is to come.

The King of Israel

The blessed Lord Jesus has been constituted God's Centre, and as the risen Man He will hold every part of the creation in its right relation to God. We have our part as associated with Him in a heavenly portion, but that does not mean that He has abandoned His promises to Israel. Hence what we have in verse 49, from the lips of Nathaniel. He who is our Saviour is so great that He can hold all God's system of

blessing together. He will claim all the land of Israel for His people. At present people may be going into it from national or political motives, but that is not in accordance with the mind of God.

Whatever men may do the Lord Jesus will bring Israel into the land according to God. All Israel will be saved and blessed there, and through them blessing will go out to the nations. He shall sit upon the throne of His father David, and establish all that God has promised.

The Son of Man

We come now to the last verse of the chapter, and are introduced

“TEN TIMES BETTER”

AT the present time great stress is being laid upon science. We are frequently told that scientific training is of the utmost importance, and that not enough scientists are being produced in Universities and Technical Colleges, to cope with and develop the immense fields of human knowledge and discovery, that have opened out during the past half century.

Those of us who are advanced in years can appreciate how tremendous the progress has been, and those who are young, and who consequently have stepped into a world where these amazing devices have become commonplace things, may yet tremble, **if they dare to think**, at the prospect that lies ahead. Destruction of life and property can now be easily achieved on a gigantic scale by evil-disposed persons. And **such** persons have never been lack-

to the great moment when God will put everything into the hands of the Son of Man, as predicted in Psalm 8. He will rule and exercise His beneficent sway over the whole of the creation. Angels will be His servants and do His bidding in every direction. All will be subject to Him.

We began with the Word in a past eternity. We end with everything in the hands of the Son of Man in a future eternity. He is “The First.” He is also “The Last.” He is our Saviour. May God give us to value Him more, to honour Him, to delight in Him, and count it a privilege to serve Him, while we wait for Him.

F. B. HOLE

ing in this sinful world, **nor are they lacking today.**

In our Bibles (A.V.) the word “science” only occurs twice, once in the Old Testament and once in the New; and both occurrences are instructive. In ancient Babylon, 2,500 years or so ago, science was highly esteemed. It ran in different channels from today, but was great in its own selected regions of thought and achievement. A friend who visited the ruins of Babylon a few years ago, gave us a picture he got there, showing how the city must have appeared, according to modern architects, who have examined the ruins. Looking at it, one could only say that, if at all correct, no modern city would approach it in magnificence.

Into this gorgeous treasure-house captive Jews were brought, and

amongst them Daniel and his three companions, as related in Daniel 1: 3—6. They were picked as, "Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans." The great Nebuchadnezzar meant to get out of his captives all the profit and progress that their scientific ability and learning could produce. He was just like the leaders of the nations today.

The middle verses of Daniel 1 reveal that the educational and technical training of three years duration — very like a University course today — involved their being fed on rations from the king's table which were doubtless connected with idolatrous rites which he practised. This led Daniel and his friends to decline these luxuries and be content with the simplest food and drink. God honoured the separation that they practised in this matter, and He "gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom," as we see in verse 17. The "science" they possessed they got not from man but from God.

The day came when they with others were brought in before the king, that their science might be tested, and in result Nebuchadnezzar found them "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." A great deal of the "science" of Babylon was obtained through various arts, by which men trafficked with demonic powers, so that Daniel and

his companions were in competition with a "science" that proceeds from Satanic sources, as well as that evolved by clever men. And the verdict, pronounced even by the heathen king himself, was that the knowledge and science and wisdom that comes from God, was **ten times better**.

The knowledge that was given to Daniel was great, as we see when we read the second chapter of his book. Gaining his science from God, he was able to reveal to the king not only his forgotten dream but also its significance; outlining as it did the whole course of Gentile dominion in the earth and its catastrophic end, when the God of heaven should set up His kingdom, which will never be destroyed. Into science of this sort no element of human conjecture or deduction ever enters. The same note of Divinely-given certainty is struck throughout all the revelations contained in the book.

Yet the knowledge that is available today for the simplest Christian goes far beyond anything that was made known to Daniel. It has reached us in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we have knowledge of a high and heavenly sort, which is available for us as the fruit of Divine revelation and not human investigation: knowledge which confers untold blessing of a spiritual sort, as the Apostle Peter wrote, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet. 1: 2). The Psalmist could say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation" (Psa. 119: 99). If that were true of him

in his day, the same thing will be more abundantly true in our day of those who make the New Testament Scriptures of Truth their meditation.

In the New Testament the word "science" occurs by way of warning. No sooner had the true knowledge of God been revealed than the adversary began working to corrupt it. Hence the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, telling him to "keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6: 20). The Greek word, which here is translated as, "science" is the usual word for "knowledge," and we are told that the earliest corrupters of the faith, to whom the Apostle John more particularly referred in his epistles, were known as the Gnostics, meaning "the knowing ones," since their title was derived from this word.

In those days there was of course "science" of the Athenian type, as we see in Acts 17. Their scientific philosophies were continually seeking "some new thing," and expanding or altering in accordance therewith. What Paul preached with Divinely-given assurance was "ten times better" than all they could produce. But what Timothy was warned against was a more seductive type of "science" than that, though doubtless both types were in view.

The early Gnostics came under cover of a Christian profession. The apostles of our Lord, such as Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men," (Acts 4: 13). So they were able to claim that they presented a more refined and intellectual

version of the Christian faith, and what they advocated was really the "scientific" thing. But in clever fashion it cut away the foundations of the faith. It was in opposition, and its so-called "science" was false.

Why should we concern ourselves with things such as these in a magazine entitled, **Scripture Truth**? Because "science" of a false kind, in both these forms that we have briefly considered, is very much the vogue today; and the volume of it is ten times greater than it was in the days of old. There is of course much science which is sound and demonstrably true and effective. It is not of this that we speak; but of the other type, which is really speculative philosophy. And there are a great number of religious cults, astray from "That which was from the beginning" (1 John 1: 1), which was the theme of the apostolic testimony.

The remnant of the Jews, who had returned to Jerusalem were admonished by the prophet Haggai that God's word and His Spirit remained among them. This we see in verse 5 of his second chapter. It is, thank God, the same today, only in larger measure. As a new year opens, may we exhort all our readers to renewed zeal in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, with an increased sense of dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, who now indwells them.

If all of us are moved to act in this direction, we shall find ourselves possessed of, and by, a spirit of understanding and true science, which is "ten times better" than all we can derive from any other source.

COMMUNION

W. ANGLIN.

“Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”

I. JOHN I: 3.

ANY desire of the heart expressed in words to God we speak of as prayer. It may take the form of confession, intercession, thanksgiving, praise or worship. In addressing the divine Persons, the believer should seek to do so intelligently. The highest form, worship requires intelligence, for it is the fruit of appreciation of the Person, attributes and work of the Father and the Son. Thanksgiving is the fruit of gratitude for blessings received.

Communion (or fellowship) includes prayer, though it means more than prayer. The Holy Spirit operates in the heart of the believer, producing communion with the Father and the Son. He does not call attention to Himself but to Them.

What is practised in private will be evident in public prayer. The believer, in addressing the Father or the Son, should not confuse these divine Persons. One often hears both addressed indiscriminately in audible prayer as “Lord.” The epistles do not refer to the Father as “Lord.” That title is reserved for the Son. When in public prayer a brother addresses the Father and the Son indiscriminately as “Lord,” those present cannot follow the prayer with intelligence; yet this is a common fault. A child does not get confused in addressing his father or mother, but uses suitable terms to each. Whilst God may interpret a confused public

prayer, the hearers will not be able to do so, and prayer offered in the church should be for the edification of the hearers, who say: “Amen” (1 Corinthians 14: 16). Not only do the hearers become confused, but so does the one who prays thus, at times. The remedy is the practice of the presence of the Father and the Lord Jesus appropriately in private.

The question arises: when should a believer address the Father and when the Lord? May one make the following suggestions.

The Christian begins the day by committing himself to God the Father, asking for His care, guidance, and blessing. He ends the day with prayer to God the Father. In the prayer-meetings we make supplications, intercessions to the Father, and offer thanksgiving.

When should we pray to the Lord? One can suggest appropriate occasions. Firstly as to individual prayer. In the Lord's last words to His disciples, when He told them to go to all nations to teach and baptize, He added: “Lo, I am with you always.” That means that they were to be conscious of His presence in their service. It implies obedience to His will. They were to be directed by Him and to be given His power, and to seek His blessing on their service. This implies intimate communion with the Lord in service and converse with Him or prayer to Him. The believer should con-

nect his service with the Lord, not so much with a church, a meeting, or a mission, but with the Master.

Apart from service the believer needs to practise the presence of the Lord Jesus in private. Some may say that they have but little spare time. Some set time, however, should be utilized daily to be with "Jesus alone." When we look at our hymn-books, we cannot but notice how many of our hymns are prayers addressed to the Lord Jesus. The old-time saints seem to have practised His presence. Two well-known hymns by Bernard of Clairvaux, and some by Heinrich Suso show us what intimate communion these saints had with the Lord.

We are taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews to come to the Throne of Grace where sits our High Priest longing to extend to us the mercy and grace we daily need.

Another occasion, most appropriate for addressing the Lord Jesus is during the Lord's Supper. We realize that we are in His presence. He is our Host, who has invited us; it is His death we celebrate, and we meditate upon His love and sacrifice as "we survey the wondrous Cross." He, being present, we should address Him as "Thou" or "Thee," not as "He" and "Him." In Revelation 5: 9 those in the inner circle say "Thou art worthy," those more remote speak **about** Him, not **to** Him.

The Lord's Supper consists of two integral parts, the spiritual and the material, or the thanksgiving and the partaking of the emblems. Surely the thanksgiving should be addressed to the Lord, as an essential

part of the Lord's Supper, which is sometimes spoken of as the "Eucharist," meaning "Thanksgiving." It is not that the symbols have some virtue in themselves. In the second century the elements were carried to the bedside of a sick Christian, a practice which led to reverence of the "Host," and other Romish practices.

There may be meetings for the Breaking of Bread in which not a word of thanksgiving is addressed to the Lord. All thanksgiving is **about** Him in the third person (grammatically) as though He were far away. Being thus referred to in the third person as "He" or "Him" it is evident that the participants do not regard Him as "in the midst." The Father is made the Mediator of thanksgiving to the Son. It is as though a king invited a number of friends to a banquet, to celebrate his birthday. They come, partake of the banquet, make speeches as though the king was in some far country, for they refer to him only in the third person and finally depart without addressing one word to him whose birthday they have celebrated! This may sound absurd, yet it is possible to treat the Lord, whose death is celebrated, in a similar way to that illustrated.

The Lord's Supper is also an incentive to produce worship to the Father.

It has been taught that we have to substitute the Holy Spirit in place of the Lord in Matthew 18: 20 and 28: 20. In Matthew's Gospel however, the Lord does not teach anything as to the Holy Spirit, so such a view is out of place. Suppose

we were to make this substitution in Matthew 18: 20, the result would be that the prayer and thanksgiving would be addressed to the Holy Spirit, and the Lord would not be the object of worship.

In the 14th of John, however, the Lord does plainly teach that the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete; was coming as His Representative. The Lord tells His disciples that He is going away, but sending the Spirit. When He added: "I will come to you." the disciples perfectly understood what to us might appear a contradiction. Dr. James Niel, an authority on the Hebrew language, and at one time resident in Jerusalem, explains in his book "Strange Figures" that this form of speech was common in Hebrew and in the

language used in the Lord's time. It is known as a "**Metonymy**" in which the principal is put for the agent. So when the Lord said: "I will come to you" the Paraclete is intended. Today the man in a law-suit is spoken of as the defendant, but it is his paraclete (advocate) who does the defending. So in verse 23 of the same chapter where He says that the Father would make His abode with the disciples, it was by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Such is the wonderful union of the Persons of the Godhead. The Metonymy, however, is not used in the two verses cited in the Gospel of Matthew, for the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in these chapters, and any such substitution would undermine the truth the Lord was teaching.

"THE BRIGHT LIGHT"

A. J. POLLOCK.

We read in the Scriptures that, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28). How often saints of God, tried by sickness, pain, disaster or bereavement, find it difficult to believe it. And yet, they say to themselves:— We must believe it, because these words are in the inspired Scriptures of Truth.

Job of old might well have thought that his troubles were more than he could bear. Stripped of great wealth in one short day, bereaved of ten sons and daughters in a single hour, stricken a little later with a loathsome disease, that made every nerve of his body an avenue of ex-

quisite pain, he might well have been excused, if he had sunk under such a concentrated load of misery and sorrow. It must have looked like a hollow mockery, when Elihu addressed to him such words as these: "Men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth and cleanseth them" (Job 37: 21).

And yet for our great encouragement we know that Job bore his trials wonderfully. We read the testimony of James, who wrote, "We count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (5: 11). So

Elihu at least gave voice to the truth, when he spoke of " the bright light which is in the clouds."

There is a very familiar saying that, " Every cloud has a silver lining;" and we who know God as a loving Father, might well be inclined to change the word " silver " to " golden." The writer can never forget his experience when flying above the clouds in an aeroplane. Above our heads shone forth the glorious sun in a cloudless sky. Everything overhead was indeed golden — a glorious sight. Soon our plane had to descend, and on landing we found to our utter astonishment that rain was falling in torrents, and the cheerful light of the sun was obscured by the thick clouds. Down below men could not see what we had seen above the clouds — " the bright light which is in the clouds."

This can be happily illustrated in the life of the Apostle Paul. He had the unique experience of being caught up to the third heaven, the paradise of God. There he heard unspeakable words, not lawful to be uttered on earth, as we read in 2 Corinthians 12: 1-15, and for fourteen years he maintained secrecy as to this wonderful experience. On his return to earth there was given to him a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure. This must have been a most humiliating experience, and thrice he besought the Lord, that this affliction might be removed from him. He got the answer to his prayers in the gracious assurance, " MY grace is sufficient for thee: for MY strength is made perfect in weakness."

What was the result of this? Listen to his triumphant response, " **Most gladly** therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I **take pleasure** in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Surely, to the glory of God, he had recognized, " the bright light which is in the cloud." And surely every tried saint of God can take the words, that were such a blessing to Paul — " MY grace is sufficient for thee " — and make them their own. The grace of the Lord is illimitable. There is no chance that its stream will ever run dry. It is indeed not a stream but a boundless, limitless ocean.

Then also we have the cheering promise that, " There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10: 13). The illustration of the experience of the Apostle Paul appears therefore to be all the more remarkable, since his trials and afflictions were not of a sort that are " common to man," and yet he was given the grace that enabled him to bear them in a triumphant way.

Note that in this scripture too the trial may not be taken away, but rather grace will be ministered, as a way of escape for the grieved or burdened spirit. Something of this was known even in Old Testament days, for the Psalmist could write, " The Lord will strengthen him up-

on the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness" (41: 3).

What a wonderful God we have to do with! Horatio Bonar could sing — surely his own experience; and may it be ours,

Not mine, not mine the choice,
In things, or great or small;
Be Thou my Guide, my Strength,
My Wisdom, and my All.

There we can rest, as we tread
our pilgrim way to the heavenly
home.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 56: 1—58: 14)

AT the end of chapter 55 the wonderful prophetic strain, concerning the One who was to come forth as both the "Servant" and the "Arm" of the Lord, comes to an end. In chapter 56 the prophet had to revert to the state of things among the people to whom previously he addressed himself.

He spoke in the name of the Lord, and the fact that He called for equity and justice reveals that these excellent things were not being practised among the people. His salvation and righteousness were "near to come," though not fully revealed until after Christ came. When we open the Epistle to the Romans, we meet with both salvation and righteousness in verses 16 and 17 of the first chapter. Both are fully manifested in the death and resurrection of Christ; not as antagonistic the one to the other, but in the fullest agreement and harmony. While waiting for this manifestation the man who lived in accordance with righteousness would be blessed indeed. The sabbath was the sign of God's covenant with Israel, therefore it must be observed faithfully.

Moreover the blessings, that came from obedience to God's holy requirements in His law, were not confined to the seed of Israel, but extended to the stranger who sought the Lord. This passage, verses 3-8, is one to be noted with care. The door was open to any, no matter whence they came, who really feared the Lord, and sought Him and His covenant amongst His people. The Queen of Sheba, for instance, came to question Solomon, not because of his vast knowledge of natural history, and his great literary output (see, 1 Kings 4: 29-34), but, "concerning the name of the Lord" (1 Kings 10: 1). So too the eunuch is specially mentioned in our passage, and in Acts 8, we have the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, who was indeed one of the "sons of the stranger," who were seeking to "join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord." What was promised to such by the prophet here was made good to him, only in a more abundant measure, since he was not given a place "in My holy mountain," but rather "called . . . into the grace of Christ." (Gal. 1: 6).

Even under the law the Divine thought was, "Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." This is just the scripture quoted by the Lord on His last visit to the temple, just before He suffered; and He had with sorrow to add, "but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21: 13). Such was the awful state into which the Jews had lapsed, and we are painfully aware that they were well on the way to it as we read this book of Isaiah. Yet the gracious promise of verse 8 abides. God will yet gather a remnant of His people, who are outcasts amongst men, and when He does so, He will gather others, who hitherto have been strangers. Today God is specially concentrating upon the strangers, visiting "the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15: 14).

Having uttered the promise of God, the prophet now turned abruptly to denounce the state of the people, and especially those who were in the place of watchmen and shepherds. The one were both blind and dumb, the other greedy for their gain and not for the welfare of the sheep. As a result the beasts of the field would break through and devour: a warning this of oppressing nations about to assail them from without, while those who should warn and defend were like drunkards, filled with false optimism.

Hence the opening words of Chapter 57. The time had come when God would remove from their midst the righteous and the merciful, and so it might appear as though these were under His judgment; whereas the fact was that it were better for them to be removed

by death than to live to share the judgment that would fall. A striking example of this was seen somewhat later when God-fearing Josiah was taken away that his eyes might not see the disasters impending. It could then be said of him that "he shall enter into peace."

The evil state of things that existed among the people is again exposed, beginning with verse 3. Even in Hezekiah's day the state of things was thus. Reading the account of his reign in both Kings and Chronicles we might imagine that the mass of the nation followed their king in the fear of the Lord, but evidently they did not, and idolatrous evils still largely characterized the people. Down to the end of verse 14, these idolatrous practices and the moral filthiness that accompanied them are denounced, and it is plainly foretold that, even when disaster came upon them from without, no object of their veneration would be able to deliver them. Their works, and what they considered to be their "righteousness" would be of no profit to them. The whole spirit that animated them was wrong.

The right spirit is indicated in verse 15. Jehovah presents Himself in a light calculated to produce that right spirit in those that approach Him. He is high and elevated in the depths of space, far above this little world. He inhabits eternity, not restricted by the times and seasons that confine us. His name is "Holy." Are we sensible of this? If so, we shall at once be contrite as regards the past, and humble in the present. And it is the heart and spirit of the humble

and contrite that God revives, so that they may dwell in His presence in the high and holy place.

These things were promised to those that feared the Lord in Israel in the past days, and they are more abundantly true for us today, who are not under the law but called into the grace of Christ. Self-satisfaction and pride are the last things that should characterize us. We may well rejoice that we know God as our Father; but let us never overlook the fact that our Father is **God**.

The succeeding verses go on to speak of God's governmental dealings with the people. He had to deal in wrath with them because of their sin and rebellion, but He would not contend with them as a nation for ever. The moment would come when He would heal and bless, and establish peace, both for those far off and for those near. The term, "far off" may refer to the sons of Israel, who would be scattered, as distinguished from those who would be in the land. But what is said is true, if we understand it as referring to Gentiles, who were "far off," in the sense of Ephesians 2: 13. But also in either case the peace has to be "created" by God, and is not something produced by men. Chapter 53 has told us how the peace is created.

The peace is only for those who are brought into right relations with God. It is not for the wicked who, far from Him, are as restless as the sea. The winds keep the sea in perpetual agitation. Satan, who is "the prince of power of the air," keeps the wicked in a condition similar to the sea, and all their vis-

ible actions are like "mire and dirt."

Hence there can be no peace for the wicked. This solemn statement closed the first section of nine chapters. There seems however to be a deeper emphasis in its repetition, since we have now had before us the judgment of sin in the death of the Messiah, the sinless Substitute, in chapter 53.

The third and last section of nine chapters now opens with a command that the prophet himself had to fulfil. Loudly and forcibly to accuse the house of Jacob of their transgressions and sins was no pleasing task; rather one that would be met with resentment and anger. The same thing however is necessary in connection with the Gospel today. In the Epistle to the Romans the Gospel is not expounded before the sinfulness of all mankind is plainly and fully exposed. In the Acts of the Apostles we see the same thing in practice. In Acts 7, Stephen did it with great power, and paid the penalty with his life. The same thing in its measure marked the public preachings of Peter and Paul; and when Paul faced Felix privately, "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," so much so that Felix trembled. We venture to think that this solemn note has far too often been missing in these days, as the Gospel is preached.

Verses 2 and 3 reveal why such a testimony of conviction was so needed, and for just the same reason is it needed today. The sins of the people were being covered up with a round of religious duties. They were going up to the temple, appar-

ently seeking God. They took delight in acquaintance with God's ways, in observing His ordinances, in fasting and afflicting their souls. Were not all these outward things enough, and to be commended?

Yet they were but a mask, and when this was removed, what was beneath? Verses 3-5 show us what was beneath. Their "fast" was really a time of pleasure. There was exaction, strife, debate, the ill-treatment of others, though they bowed down their heads in a false humility and spread sackcloth and ashes beneath them. Their fast was just a matter of outward religious ceremony, and had nothing in it of that inward self-denial that it was supposed to indicate.

Is this the fast that God had chosen? is what verse 6 asks. And verse 7 proceeds to indicate the fast that would be acceptable unto God. Before Him what counts is what is moral rather than what is ceremonial. By Hosea God said, "I desired mercy and not sacrifice" (6: 6); and the Lord quoted this twice (Matt. 9: 13; 12: 7). Thus we see here exposed the hypocrisy that came into full display and reached its climax in the Pharisees when our Lord was on earth; and as often noticed the severest denunciations that ever fell from the lips of our Lord were against the Pharisees. To none of the publicans and harlots did the Lord utter such words as are found in Matthew 23: 1-33.

This evil was plainly visible in Isaiah's day; but having exposed it, the prophet was led to show that if his rebuke was accepted and the people repented there was yet bless-

ing in store for them. Then, of course, they would walk in righteousness, and as a result there would be for them light and health and glory. The light would be like the dawning of new day. Their health would spring forth speedily. Their righteousness would open the way before them, and the glory of the Lord would protect their rear. Is Israel ever going to achieve this desirable state as the result of their law-keeping? The answer is, No. The New Testament makes this very plain.

Will this state then ever be reached? The answer is, only through their Messiah, whom they have rejected. When first He came, it was as, "the Dayspring from on high" (Luke 1: 78); it was the dawning of a new day in which Israel's light was to break forth. But they would have none of Him. What is predicted here is deferred consequently until He appears again in His glory. They will then be a born-again people, with the Spirit poured forth on them as objects of Divine mercy. Then, and not till then, will the glory of the Lord be a guard to their rear.

But in Isaiah's day the people were still being dealt with as men in the flesh and on the ground of their responsibility under the law, so the blessing proposed is based on their obedience. Hence there is found that fatal, "If . . ." in verse 9. When the law was given it was, "If ye will obey . . ." (Exod. 19: 5), and so again is it here; and thus it must be as long as a law regime prevails. All through Israel's national history there has never been the taking away of the things mentioned in

verse 9, nor the drawing out of their soul to the things mentioned in verse 10. Hence the good things of verse 11 and 12, have never yet in any full sense been realized, though a limited revival was granted under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah.

The fatal, "If . . ." meets us again as we look at verse 13. This time it is linked with the due observance of the sabbath, and this seventh day was given to Israel, we must again recall, as the sign between themselves and God, when the law was given, as is stated in Ezekiel 20: 12. Sabbath-keeping had therefore a very special place in the law economy. If therefore the people turned away their foot from its due observance and merely used the day for the doing of their own pleasure, it was to do despite to the covenant of which it was the sign. This is just what the people were doing in the days of Isaiah.

In John 5 we read how the Lord Jesus healed the impotent man on a sabbath day. This gave great offence to the Jews and because of it they sought to slay Him. The Lord's answer was, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The fact was that the covenant of law

which demanded works of obedience from Israel, was hopelessly broken, and the sabbath, which was the sign of it, was **being set aside**. The time had now arrived for the work of the Son and of the Father to come into display, as indeed it did on the first day of the week, when our Lord rose from the dead, now known to us as "The Lord's day."

We can however read the last verse of this chapter, as also the verses that precede, as setting forth what God will eventually bring to pass for Israel in the millennial day that is coming, not as the result of their doings, but solely as the fruit of what their Messiah has already done, coupled with the righteous power to be put forth when He comes again in His glory. Then Israel will be like, "a watered garden," and "the old waste places" shall be built. Then shall Israel delight itself in the Lord, and consequently "ride upon the high places of the earth."

They are far from doing this at present; but they shall certainly do so. And, Why? "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." His word is stable. What He says always comes to pass.

THREE IMPORTANT THINGS

HAVE you noticed that, as recorded in the Acts, prison doors were opened miraculously on three occasions. In chapter 5, the Apostles were delivered by the angel of the Lord, and sent forth to **preach**. In chapter 12, Peter was delivered by the angel, in response to the united, persistent **prayer** of many saints. In chapter 16, Paul and Silas were delivered by an earthquake, while they sang **praises** to God, in addition to praying. So all this seems to lay stress on preaching, and praying, and praising. Let us not be slack in any one of these three things, which are as important today as they were in the apostolic age.

A CENTURY AGO

IN January 1858 there appeared the first number of a monthly magazine entitled "Things New and Old." It was edited by the late C. H. Mackintosh, whose six volumes on the Five Books of Moses had a wide circulation, bringing spiritual help and blessing to many. The first article in the first number was entitled, "Address to the Reader," in which he gave his reasons for issuing the periodical. Here is a substantial extract from it.

"We do not deem any apology necessary for adding another to the numerous publications already extant, having for their object the circulation of pure truth. We want them all, and thousands more, if we could get them. We cannot have too many agencies for the furtherance of that which is good, and the suppression of that which is evil.

"For, first of all, it is a lamentable fact that the enemy of souls has wrought, far more diligently, at the printing press, than the servants of the living God. Numerous as are the books, the pamphlets, the tracts, and the periodicals in which the words of eternal truth shine, for the instruction and comfort of souls, yet are they outnumbered, to an appalling amount, by publications of the infidel, immoral, and irreligious tendency.

"2. We believe that the art of printing was designed, by a gracious Providence, as a powerful engine for the diffusion of scriptural knowledge; but we cannot shut our eyes to the startling fact that the enemy is making diligent use of that

very art, for the purpose of corrupting, in all directions, the springs of thought and feeling. He is publishing, in the cheapest and most attractive form, gross evil, soul-destroying error, and perverted truth. And, we may safely say, if positive error has slain its thousands, perverted truth has slain its tens of thousands.

"3. Now, we are fully assured that, notwithstanding all the enemy's efforts, the Lord is gathering out His own — that He is accomplishing His purposes, and hastening His everlasting Kingdom. But should this be the reason for slackness, coldness, and indifference, on the part of the servants of Christ? The very reverse; yea, the assurance thereof is the basis of 'stedfast' and 'unmovable' service. It is because we know, on divine authority, that 'our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord,' that therefore we work. Thank God for such a solid foundation! It would be sad, indeed, if what our God has graciously given us as a soul-stirring encouragement to **work** should be used as a plea for **inactivity** — if the assurance of reaching God's end were to be the reason for neglecting God's means. This would be a grievous use to make of the goodness and faithfulness of God.

"4. But, further, we undertake this service because we feel bound to serve and testify, while the time for service and testimony lasts. The day is rapidly approaching, in the which we shall not be called upon to render such fruits. When we get into the Master's presence,

we shall admire and worship; but, now, in 'the little while,' in the night of His absence, it is our holy and happy privilege to be 'always abounding in the work of the Lord' (1 Cor. 15: 58). We are responsible to let the light shine forth, in every possible way — to circulate the truth of God, by all means, by word of mouth, by 'paper and ink,' in public and private, 'in the morning and the evening,' 'in season and out of season;' we should 'sow beside all waters.' In a word, whether we consider the importance of divine truth, the value of immortal souls, or the fearful progress of error and evil, we are imperatively called upon to be up and doing, in the name of the Lord, under the guidance of His word, and by the grace of His Spirit.

"Such, then, beloved reader, are our reasons for issuing this monthly paper. We are anxious, so far as in us lies, to lend a helping hand in the good work. We desire to spread the glad tidings, to feed the lambs and sheep of the flock of

Christ, to move in the current of His thoughts and sympathies, and to promote the glory of His name. We believe there cannot be too many heralds of gospel of the grace of God—too many hands stretched forth to scatter the good seed of the kingdom, or to feed the beloved Church of God. Alas! that there should be so few. May the Lord raise up and send forth gifted and holy labourers into His vineyard!"

How does the above extract, printed in 1858, strike the readers of 1958? Has the passing of one hundred years altered things for the better? One glance at the book-stalls of our land would enable us to answer that question with an emphatic — NO. The amount of harmful literature produced and scattered is colossal, and the number of readers has multiplied. Many of our readers have profited by the writings of "C. H. M." Shall we allow his words of a century ago to stir us up today!

CORRECTION

WE are told in 2 Timothy 3: 16 that the Scriptures are profitable for "correction," as well as for other excellent things. But this is a thing we do not naturally like. It implies that we are wrong, or at least deficient in something. For the Christian it is however very necessary, and to refuse it is a perilous thing when the correction comes from God. Eliphaz spoke truly when he said, "Happy is the man whom God correcteth" (Job 5: 17). His statement is supported by Proverbs 3: 12.

On the other hand notice the prophetic statements made against Israel before Judgment fell on their heads. Read, Jeremiah 2: 30; 5: 3; 7: 28; and again Zephaniah 3: 2. When Israel refused all correction, nothing was left for them but judgment.

The same spirit will mark the closing days of the professing church, as seen in Revelation 3: 17. The Laodicean state is one of supreme self-satisfaction; and no one in that state of mind could entertain the thought of correction. No prospect therefore remains but that of being spued out of the mouth of Christ.

Let us be humble enough to welcome the correction given by the Word of God.

FOUR TYPES IN GENESIS

F. B. HOLE.

MOVED by the opening words of the Lord's prayer, recorded in the first verse of John 17, the late Sir Edward Denny wrote a beautiful short poem, which he entitled, "The Hour." The opening verse is,

One hour there is in history's page
Pre-eminent o'er all the past;
'Twill shine and shine from age to
age,
While earth, while heaven itself,
shall last.

The closing verse runs,

Christian, 'tis thine alone to know
And prize it more than all beside;
So bright with love, so dark with
woe, —
The gracious hour when Jesus
died.

In so writing he expressed the spirit that breathes through the whole Bible; for the first type of the death, that signaled that hour, was given the very day that sin entered into the world, and in the last New Testament book, recording God's ultimate victory, we are never allowed to overlook "the Lamb," in whose sacrificial death the foundation of the victory was laid.

For the moment, let us consider the four earliest types of the death of Christ.

The first is found in Genesis 3: 21. The record is very brief. Having pronounced judgment on the serpent, on the woman, and on Adam, the Lord God covered the guilty pair, who had found their

own hand-made fig-leaf aprons of no value, with coats from the skins of animals. Now, though not stated in so many words, this clearly implies DEATH — the death of the animals that furnished the skins. When this was done, there stood before God two guilty sinners, covered by that which spoke of the death of a victim.

The word used here in the Hebrew is the ordinary one for **clothing**, but it is well for us to note that the Hebrew word, signifying a **covering**, is the one used for "**atonement**" throughout the Old Testament. In the light of the Gospel truth revealed in Romans 3: 25, this is significant, for as the margin of our Bibles shows, the word, "remission" in that verse is really, "passing over." Until propitiation was actually and eternally made by the death of Christ, God was passing over the sins of the saints, in view of what Christ would accomplish. Their sins were covered from His holy eye by the offering of the appointed sacrifices.

So the first of these atoning sacrifices was made by the hand of God Himself. It was **provisional** and typical of the great Sacrifice to come. It foreshadowed the death of Christ in what we call its simplest and most primitive aspect: that of providing a **covering**, which enables a sinful man to stand before a holy God.

But immediately we pass from Genesis 3 to the next chapter, another type confronts us, which carries our thoughts a step for-

ward. Being sinful, we need, as we have seen, the covering which averts the judgment stroke that we deserve, but we need more than this. Sin has raised a barrier between us and God and, separated from Him, we shall never be happy. Is there any way by which approach to God may be realized?

Not understanding the dire effects of sin, Cain evidently thought that approach to God was quite a simple matter, to be attained by presenting to God the best fruits of his own labour. Abel on the contrary had some sense of the fact stated in Romans 6: 23, "The wages of sin is **death**," for he brought, "of the firstlings of his flock and **of the fat thereof**." The words we have printed in black type reveal to us that these firstlings or lambs had **died**. It was by faith that he did this, as is stated in Hebrews 11: 4; and by it he got evidence that he was right with God and accepted in his approach.

This second type has carried us a distinct step forward. It is one thing to be effectually covered from any stroke of judgment that otherwise would come from the hand of God: it is another, and yet more wonderful, to be able to approach God and find acceptance there. Moreover, here the action was Abel's as the fruit of his faith; whereas with Adam and his wife the action was wholly God's, and nothing is said as to faith on the part of the guilty pair. Thus far then we have seen the death of Christ typified as averting judgment on the one hand, and as the righteous basis of approach to God on the other.

But now we have to move forward to Genesis 8: 20-22, where is recorded Noah's sacrifices after the judgment flood had subsided. The clean beasts and fowls had been taken into the ark by sevens, and now the seventh of each is offered as a burnt offering. The record is that "the Lord smelled a sweet savour," or as it literally is, "**a savour of rest**." As a result of this a new order of things was established, though the evil imaginations of men's hearts were unaltered, and blessing descended on Noah and his sons.

In this third type therefore we have our thoughts further enlarged as to the significance of the death of Christ. In it God has in the fullest sense discovered "a savour of rest." When His millennial rest is reached, and when even beyond that He rests in those new creation scenes, predicted in Revelation 21: 1-6, all will be secured on no other basis than that of the sacrificial death of Christ; even as on the same basis the old fallen creation will have been removed.

We may say, therefore, that just as the first and second types have portrayed the death of Christ, meeting our needs — whether as covering our sinful nakedness or enabling us to approach God in acceptance — so this third type has indicated that same death as meeting the necessity of the heart of God Himself; even the establishment in righteousness and holiness of an incorruptible order of things, the old corrupted order having been judged and removed for ever.

In Genesis 22, we have the

fourth of these early types of the death of Christ, granted before the law and its sacrifices were given. It is characterized by great fulness in its details. Let us note a few of them.

First, in this picture there appear both a father and a son — Abraham and Isaac. Isaac is called, "thine only son" (verse 2); though Abraham's son Ishmael had been born years before; and again in Hebrews 11: 17, he is called "his only begotten son." The type is made the more striking by the fact that Isaac was a child supernaturally born, for both parents were dead from a reproductive standpoint.

To the sacrifice, it is recorded, "they went both of them together," the great display of **faith** being on the part of Abraham, while Isaac, the son, was marked by **subjection**. It was Abraham who told the servants that he and the lad would "come again" to them, for he accounted, as Hebrews 11 tells us, that God was able "to raise him up, even from the dead." The only remark of Isaac recorded being the question as to, "where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

The moment came when the son was bound to the altar ready to be offered and no word is recorded as coming from his lips, prefiguring the One who, as Isaiah prophesied, was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and who would be dumb as a sheep before its shearers.

Viewed, as we have been viewing it, the type ceases at this point, for the death stroke on the son never fell. Abraham's hand was arrested, and instead his eyes fell on the ram, caught in the thicket by its

horns. The record is that "Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering **in the stead of his son.**" So here from another viewpoint we see a remarkable type, for the words "in the stead of," are equivalent to, "as a substitute for," and thereby we are permitted to see that the application and efficacy of the work of Christ would be on the principle of **substitution**.

The strength of a ram lies in its horns, and by its horns the ram was held, and brought to its substitutionary death as an offering to God. So here really we have a double type, and dropping the first part, which we have considered, we now look at Isaac as he was, a sinful lad, and see him exempted from death by the offering of a substitute. The cords that bind the sacrifice to the altar, spoken of in Psalm 118: 27, were, in the case of our Lord, the strong cords of His invincible LOVE. The strength of that brought Him to the place of sacrifice, when as the Substitute He died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3: 18).

This fourth type completes the picture, granted in those far-off days, of God's way of blessing through the death of Christ. How far the types were understood by the early saints, if at all, it is impossible for us to say, but in the light of the New Testament they should speak loudly to our hearts. It is remarkable that there are four of them, foreshadowing such truth as was suitable to those days, just as we have four Gospels, completing for us the picture of the Lord Jesus when revealed on earth. We

can view Him four-square, so to speak; observing Him from all four points of the compass of truth.

So it is in these four types that we have briefly considered. His sacrificial death was prefigured as the only way in which sinful man can be covered from judgment; as the only basis of approach to God and acceptance with Him; as the foundation on which God's eternal rest will stand. And fourthly in a twofold way: not only as to be faced by the Son in subjection and obedience to the Father, but also as

really brought to pass on the principle of substitution.

Let each of us therefore more and more rejoice and worship, in that we can say with adoring hearts — not in the light of the typical shadows only, but rather in the light of the accomplished sacrifice of our Saviour — “The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2: 20). We shall never forget,

“The gracious hour when Jesus died.”

REMNANT EXERCISES

T. D. Bell.

THE prophecies of the Old Testament speak much of a godly residue, or remnant, of Israel, who will be seen in testimony here, after the Church has been caught up, according to 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17. This honoured and greatly blessed company will — though many suffer unto death — be brought through the coming judgment in a spirit of deep repentance, and to them the Lord will be revealed at His appearing, when, “They shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced” (Zech. 12: 10).

The Psalms, though primarily recording the actual experiences of the writers, like David, yet include many, which use language, that can only be fully descriptive of the experiences of this godly remnant. Psalm 29 is one of these, in which we hear the voice of this company speaking out of the midst of their trials.

that they are hidden behind closed doors, “until the indignation be overpast.” In this Psalm we hear them speaking from their hiding-places, and the mighty ones of the earth are in their hour of apparent triumph. The beast and false prophet of Revelation 13 rage and destroy, but a voice is raised from those hidden chambers as these despised and persecuted ones rise in moral superiority to those who are mighty, calling upon them to “give unto the Lord glory and strength.”

The same judgments, we may recall, are seen by John in his vision at Patmos as the seven seals, and trumpets, and vials. In the Psalm these earthly saints experience them as an awful storm, created by “the voice of the Lord,” which is uttered seven times in the Psalm. In Revelation 5, as the storm is about to break, the heavenly saints are heard, leading from glory universal praise in the new song of redemption. In the Psalm the song of the godly on

From Isaiah 26: 20, 21, we learn

earth is heard in the midst of those judgments.

In language familiar to us from the Revelation, every part of man's sinful world is brought under judgment. The "waters" of verse 3 are symbolic of restless, moving multitudes. Then "cedars," hills and mountains, like "Lebanon" and "Sirion," indicate those eminent among men, and their settled powers and governments. Then the voice of the Lord divides, shakes, discovers for judgment, the hidden things of the moral wilderness, that man has created. Here is the experience of that remnant in Palestine, the centre of the 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 of God. In the Psalm the judgment falls on man on the earth. In Hebrews the word deals with our moral and spiritual beings. The action is the same in both — dividing, revealing, exposing. But, how different the results! In the Psalm, man and his evil world exposed to judgment. In Hebrews, our equally evil natures searched and exposed; but, thank God! judgment is past in the cross of Christ, and we, who are constantly searched and humbled by that word, have full access to the sympathy and succour of our great High Priest in the heavens.

Faith, under trial, always looks from present circumstances to the Lord. "In His temple doth every one speak of His glory," shows the direction of their gaze. This leads to the expression of complete con-

fidence in the Lord, though the world is shaken by judgment. Nothing happened in Israel's history to be compared with this. Only one great past event can rank with it, and of this they speak in verse 10, for "flood" indicates the deluge of Noah's day. The peculiar word so translated only occurs here and in the account of the flood in Genesis.

Then too the small company of eight were shut in while the world outside was destroyed. In the Psalm the remnant utter their song, just as David did, when delivered from the raging of Saul, as shown by the heading of Psalm 18. Soon, like Joseph's brethren, they are going to see the One once despised and rejected, exalted on high. Like them in Genesis 44, a work of softening and repentance can be the only preparation for that meeting. All history moves forward to the Lord's appearing, and Israel's history presents in type and figure the necessary preparation. As the priest of old, before entering the sanctuary, had to pause and wash at the laver, so there must be the softening ministry of that "spirit of grace and of supplications," of which Zechariah speaks, leading to whole-hearted repentance.

The true preparation for seeing "the King in His beauty," is that broken-hearted mourning because of their national rejection of Christ. Is not the Lord teaching us, who are soon to be "caught up," to meet Him in the air, above the coming storm, that a quiet, confident, but humble, contrite heart is the true spiritual preparation for that meeting?

“HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER”

A. J. POLLOCK.

IT has been truly said that Scripture is never marked by **needless** repetition, as we sometimes are. It is a weariness to the flesh, and an insult to the congregation, when a preacher, for lack of matter, keeps on repeating what he has already said.

Now Psalm 136 contains far more repetition than any other portion of God's holy Word. It consists of 26 verses, each of them ending with the words, “His mercy endureth for ever,” coupled with an exhortation, several times repeated, to “give thanks to the Lord.” There will be no need whatever to stimulate the saints in glory to render their thanks, for there will be nothing to hinder the outburst of praise; the notes of which will never die nor diminish throughout the ages of eternity. But it is different here on earth, and we do well to bear in mind the exhortations of this beautiful Psalm, for the repetition that marks it is far from being needless.

The prominent word, **mercy**, is connected in this Psalm with compassion on the one hand, and needs to be met on the other — Divine compassion meeting human needs. In the New Testament we find Divine mercy extending its favours far beyond human needs; but when the mercy contemplated in the Psalm is rightly understood, it leads to an outflow of thanksgiving.

Why, we may ask, are these comforting words repeated no less than 26 times? There must be a rea-

son, and that an urgent one. The answer is that human beings are so easy-going and complacent in accepting the wonderful mercies of God without being thankful. And further, the history of Israel is mainly in view in this Psalm, and they were a people under the law, and forgetful of the fact that the law only brought condemnation on them, whereas all the good things they enjoyed reached them on the ground of God's mercy.

We too live our lives day by day as debtors to the mercy of God. An infidel was having dinner with his Christian brother. Annoyed that his brother had first given thanks for the food, he brought his fist down with a blow on the table, exclaiming, “I'm not indebted to your God for the food I eat. I work hard, earn wages, and pay for what I eat.”

His brother replied to the effect that not all the money in the world could purchase a single grain of wheat, unless God had created it, giving it the power to reproduce itself, and then to sustain human life when used as food. He created the sun which ripens the grain, and gave water, as rain, to bring it to maturity. This, and more, showed how hopelessly shallow his unthankful spirit was. Alas! countless multitudes are unthankful. Scripture warns us that one of the signs of the last days is that of men being “unthankful, unholy” (2 Tim. 3: 2).

Does Scripture say anything on

this subject? Yes, we read of food being "sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4: 5). In Genesis 9: 3, we find how ample food supply was placed at man's disposal by the word of God. Sad indeed it is, if this sanctification is not completed in Christian households by prayer, as the food so mercifully provided is used.

But let us look at the lessons to be learned from Psalm 136, which was written in Old Testament times and is full of allusions to the history of the children of Israel. There is mention of God's wisdom in creation, in the heavens and the earth; in making the sun to rule the day, and the moon by night. To Noah was given the assurance, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8: 22). If this promise were not kept, how devastating it would be!

Then the Psalmist recounts God's amazing mercy to Israel, when they were but slaves in Egypt, delivering them from their misery, and slaying the firstborn of the Egyptians. No gentler blow would have broken the stubborn will of Pharaoh. Defenceless as the children of Israel were in themselves, with a strong hand He brought them out, overthrowing Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea.

Verse 16 summarizes their wilderness journey. We know that Manna descended from heaven, and water from the smitten rock followed them, though these things are not mentioned in this short verse. The Psalmist proceeds to remind

them of how God led them into the land of their possession, overthrowing great kings to place them there. He had told Abraham that, when the iniquities of the Amorite nations should come to the full, his descendants should be brought into the land; and the Divine promise was fulfilled.

Was ever a story such as this told in all the history of the world? We need not wonder that Israel was called upon to render thanks to God for such abundant and continuing mercy.

But are we, as Christians, as mindful as we should be of the many and abundant mercies that are bestowed upon us? We fear not. And we must never forget that, great as are the mercies we receive in matters pertaining to this life, we have them yet more abundantly in a spiritual way. When the Apostle besought saints "by the mercies of God," to present their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," he was alluding to the great spiritual benefits that are conferred by the Gospel, when it is received in faith. Whether Jew or Gentile we are blessed on the ground of mercy. We have been blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1: 3).

And God has blessed us thus, in the abundance of His mercy, not only that we may be moved to offer gratefully our thanks to Him, but that also we might respond to the exhortation that says, "Ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2: 9).

CHRIST ON HIGH — THE SPIRIT GIVEN

J. HOUSTON.

THE time had come when Christ was to depart from the world, and go back to the Father and to heaven. Those spoken of as "His own" (John 13: 1), were to be left in the world; and, during His absence, they were not to have an easy time. They would be put out of the synagogues, persecuted, and some even put to death. So great would be the fanaticism of their persecutors, that they would think they were by this doing God service; and we see this spirit exemplified in Saul of Tarsus. Their enemies would do this because they had known neither the Father nor the Son.

While Christ was with them in the world He kept them in the Father's name, as He said in John 17: 12, but during His absence they would have to suffer, and sorrow filled their hearts as He told them this. Nevertheless it was expedient for them that He should go, for on this depended the coming of the Holy Spirit. In fact Christ's **absence** and the Spirit's **presence** in us and with us, are the essential things characterizing the present dispensation.

The Holy Spirit, when He came, would lead them into all truth, for He is the Spirit of truth. He would not draw attention to Himself, but rather take of Christ's things, and draw attention to them and to Him. Christ was to be the Object of their faith, and the Spirit the power in them, uniting them to Christ, and engaging them with Him, the Source of all their blessing. Thus He would glorify Christ.

An interval was to come when He

would be out of their sight; and then a time would come when they would see Him, as He told them in John 16: 17. During the interval their hearts would be filled with sorrow, but when they saw Him again they would have a joy that no man could take from them. So in resurrection He was the cause of their joy. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

But the Lord in risen life made it very clear to His disciples, that He did not take up any relationship with them on earth, in connection with the Jews, His earthly people. Their relationship was to be with Him in heaven, where He was going; His Father being their Father, and His God their God, as He said to Mary Magdalene. This was indeed the first time He ever called them "My brethren" (John 20: 17). The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is thus the source of all our blessing; blessed as we are with "all spiritual blessings," and that "in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1: 3). We have the richest blessings that grace can bestow, and that in the most exalted sphere. As blessed in Christ, we share, as His co-heirs, all that He has. What grace! It is grace in all its fulness, flowing from the eternal counsels of God.

When Christ was on earth He could not reveal the rich grace that is now made known to the church. The disciples could not bear the revelation, as He told them. They had neither the capacity nor the power. Now that He is gone to heaven, glorified on the Father's throne, and

the Spirit of truth has come down, to guide us into all truth, it is clear that the whole position has changed, and a completely new dispensation has been introduced, which may well be called the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. This dispensation began at Pentecost, as narrated in Acts 2. It will end when Christ comes into the air to call away His church to be with Him for ever. This is the hope of the church, and in reference to it the church says, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

Meanwhile the Spirit of truth is here in the church, to lead us into all the truth. What infinite fulness we have before us! "All truth," and Christ is the truth. The Spirit has taken of His things, infinite as they are, and has revealed them to us. He also enlarges our capacity to take them in, and fills us "with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

What we have to guard against

is the danger of our being diverted from these heavenly things; that we may not be dragged down from our calling on high to an earthly order of things, such as is the hope of the Jews, God's earthly people; that we may not allow the church, which is the body of Christ, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23), to be brought down to the level of an earthly kingdom with earthly hopes.

We look **up** to heaven; not **down** to the earth. If we do, like Stephen, we see the glory of God and Jesus at the right hand of God. Our destiny is to be in that glory with Him, for our citizenship is in heaven, "whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ". (Phil. 3:20). When He comes our very bodies will be changed into the likeness of His body of glory, by the working of that power by which He will subdue all things to Himself.

A U T H O R I T Y

IT is clear that in this fallen world some kind of authority is needed; and in things relating to God how **much more** it is needed. But where is it to be found? In the dark "Middle Ages" multitudes assumed that it was to be found in "The Church," speaking through its imposing hierarchy, centred in Rome. The painful, and often revolting, history of that institution, has disproved the claim.

When **Romanism** was displaced in the minds of many of the more enlightened, not a few were inclined almost to deify their instructed minds, and to them **Rationalism** became the authority. A strange conceit truly, for hardly two minds think alike on all themes. Whose thoughts are we then to take? Where is authority?

Later still another competitor entered the lists, and **Mysticism** presented itself as authoritative to a smaller and select group. Such do not look to the Church, nor to human reason as being authoritative but rather to their own intuition or feeling, which they assume is granted to them by the Spirit of God. This it is that accounts for the large variety of what are sometimes called the "freak," or "crank" religions.

True authority lies in the fact that **God has spoken**, firstly by the prophets, and lastly, and supremely, in His Son. And that speaking has been committed to writing in the inspired, or God-breathed, Scriptures, according to 2 Timothy 3:16. We know those God-breathed Scriptures as the Bible. On that solid rock we base the contents of this magazine.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 59: 1 — 60: 5)

THE glorious promises contained in the closing verses of chapter 58, may have sounded idealistic and visionary even in Isaiah's day, and more so in our day, when in spite of every effort the problem of Israel and its land seems insoluble. What has delayed, and still delays, the realization of such promises? The opening verses of chapter 59 give the answer.

Unbelieving men would make Israel's plight a ground of complaint and reproach against God. Either He was **indifferent** so that His ear never caught their cries, or He was **impotent** and unable to deliver them. The true state of the case was that their sins had driven a wedge of separation between them and God. They were utterly alienated from Him.

This is a matter that some of us are inclined to overlook. In considering the havoc sin has wrought, we are apt to think mainly of the guilt of our sins and the judgment they will incur; perhaps also thinking of the enslaving power exerted by sin in our lives, while giving but little thought to the way in which it has separated us from God. But none of the effects of sin is more disastrous than this — **alienation**.

If any desire proof of this, let them read Romans 3: 10-12. The whole human race having fallen under the power of sin, there is none righteous; and, worse still, sin has darkened the understanding, so that by nature men do not realize

the seriousness of their plight. Worst of all, sin has undermined and alienated their beings so that none seek after God. That being so God must seek after man, if ever he is to be blessed: in other words, God must take the initiative. We fall back therefore upon the sovereignty of God. To the recognition of His sovereignty God was leading the people through Isaiah, as we shall see before we reach the end of this chapter.

But before that is reached Isaiah has to speak to the people again in the plainest and most detailed fashion about their manifold sins. This is ever God's way. He never glosses over sin, but exposes it before men's eyes, that they may be brought to repentance. The preacher of the Gospel today had better recognize this fact. The deeper the work of repentance in the soul the more solid the conversion-work that follows.

Verses 3-8 give in full and terrible detail the sins that had separated them from their God, and we note that the indictments of verses 7 and 8 are quoted in Romans 3, in support of the sweeping statements of man's utter ruin, to which we have already referred. And further, having quoted these verses and others from the Old Testament, the Apostle Paul observes that these things were said, "to them who are under the law;" that is, the denunciations are against not Gentiles but Jews, who were the picked sample of the

human race. . If true of them, true of all.

If in verses 3-8, the prophet speaks on God's behalf, denouncing the sins of the people, he turns in verses 9-15, to make confessions on behalf of the people, such as well might be made by those in their midst who feared God. He owns the miseries that existed on every hand:— no justice, obscurity and darkness just as if they had no eyes, desolation and mourning; every kind of oppression, falsehood and injustice rampant. Anything like truth utterly failing. A darker picture can hardly be imagined.

And one further feature of a very grievous sort was to be seen. There were some, however few they might be who walked in the fear of God and hence departed from all these evils and walked in separation from them. Such came under judgment from the mass who went on with the evils; for, "he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." It was a very unpopular thing to do, since it cast a discredit and rebuke on the mass who indulged in the sins. The same thing may be seen today, though the injunction to depart is far clearer and more definite:— "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ [or, the Lord] depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2: 19). Such departing is no more popular today than it was then, but it is the clear command of the Lord to the saint of today.

Such being the state of things in the Israel of those days, and more or less so ever since those days, what will God do about it? The answer begins in verse 16. As we indicated a little earlier, God falls

back upon His sovereignty in mercy. He indicates that though there was no hope in man, His mighty "Arm" would act and bring salvation. So here we have prophesied that which the Apostle expounds more fully in the closing verses of Romans II. Through the Gospel at the present moment salvation is being brought to Gentiles in the mercy of God, but when "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," God will revert to His promises to Israel, and they will be saved; but not as the fruit of law-keeping. It will be altogether as the fruit of His sovereign mercy. The contemplation of this wonderful mercy to Israel, as well as to us, moved the Apostle to the magnificent doxology with which he closed that chapter.

In the closing verses of our chapter the "Arm" of verse 16 is to be identified with the "Redeemer" of verse 20, and this verse is referred to in Romans II: 26, and the verbal differences we notice between the two passages are instructive. The Redeemer is now referred to as the Deliverer, for the Arm of the Lord will prove to be both. When He came as the humbled Servant of the Lord He accomplished redemption's mighty work. When He comes to Zion in His glory, He will bring the deliverance, made righteously possible by the redemption.

Then, according to Isaiah, He will come "unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob;" whereas in Romans we read that He "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." This again is what He will do in His delivering might, while Isaiah shows us rather how He will do it. He will come unto

the God-fearing in Jacob, when judgment falls upon the evil-doers.

Verses 17 and 18 of our chapter speak of the judgment that must be executed by the Arm of the Lord. There is "no man" who can act and be an intercessor, just as earlier we saw that "none calleth for justice." No man has any merit, and no man is able to act to put things right. This latter fact we meet with again in very striking form in Revelation 5, where "no man" was found worthy to take the book of judgment and break its seals, save the Lamb that had been slain. What is so plainly shown in the Revelation is indicated in our verses. The Arm of the Lord will be clothed in righteousness and salvation. The salvation will reach His people, but His righteousness will bring fury and recompence to His adversaries, so that from west to east the name of the Lord will be feared and His glory known.

But how does it come to pass, we may ask, that there will be found the God-fearing remnant in Jacob when this tremendous hour is reached?" This is answered for us in verse 19. The testimony of Scripture is clear that just before the Redeemer comes to Zion, the enemy will have "come in like a flood." This will be the case in a double sense. According to Psalm 2, the kings of the earth and the rulers will have set themselves against the Lord and His Anointed, and Jerusalem will be the target for **antagonistic nations**; but also, Satan having been cast down to earth, as related in Revelation 12, **spiritual wickedness** will reach its climax. But just then, the enemy coming in like a flood,

the Spirit of God will act, to raise up a standard," or "banner," against him.

The meaning of this is clear. Another scripture says, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Psa. 60: 4). Just when the enemy's action reaches flood-tide height, there will be the counter-action of the Spirit of God, and true servants of God will be raised up, men who will "turn from transgression," and welcome the delivering might of the Arm of the Lord. Then at last the ungodliness of Jacob will be **turned away** for ever.

The permanence of this delivering work is stated in the last verse of the chapter, in which the Lord addresses the prophet as the representative of the nation. In that day they will possess two things:— "My Spirit" and "My words." When the sons of poor, failing Jacob shall be dominated by the Spirit of the Lord, so that they walk in obedience to the words of the Lord, their full blessing will have come.

And the same thing in principle stands true for us today, while we wait for the coming of our Lord. We have the Holy Spirit, not only "upon" us but actually indwelling us, and we have not merely certain words put in the prophet's mouth, but the completed word of the Lord, bringing us the full revelation of His purpose for us and of His mind and will for our earthly pathway. We may note also that through Haggai the prophet, God encouraged the remnant who had returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel in a similar way. In verse 5 of chapter 2 we

have, "the word that I covenanted with you," and "My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." May similar encouragement be ours today. No matter what disastrous things have transpired in the history of Christendom, the Spirit of God and the word of God still remain.

Chapter 60 opens with a note of jubilation and triumph. The Redeemer having come to Zion, according to this prophetic strain, and God's covenant, connected with His Spirit and His words, being established, what else could we expect? Two things will then mark the people of Israel. They will "arise," since they have been sleeping in the dust of spiritual death among the nations. Further they will at last, "shine," as a testimony for God, and their light be seen among the nations. This hitherto has never been the case. And, why not? Because the law of Moses, under which they have always lived, has only proved that they have no light **in themselves**. They will only shine when the light of God, concentrated as it is in their once-rejected Messiah, shines **through them**.

At His first advent Jesus came as the dawning of a new day, bringing light to those sitting in darkness, as we see in Luke 1: 78, 79. But the Jew rejected the light and as far as they were concerned they put it out. Consequently, as we saw in chapter 49, He was given, for "a light to the Gentiles" to be "My salvation unto the end of the earth." His second advent will be in "the day of Thy power" when, "Thy people shall be willing," according to Psalm 110. Then at last they will come into the full blaze of that light

and reflect it, as the moon reflects the light of the sun.

This thought, that of reflected light, is clearly in the verses that open chapter 60. The earth will be filled with darkness of a very gross sort at the time when Christ comes again. This He Himself indicated when He said, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18: 8). It will be rare and but little in evidence. During His absence there is no light save that connected with faith. When He comes, the glory of the Lord will be manifested, and it will be seen upon Israel, and so reflected on them and in them that the Gentiles shall come to the light that shines through them, and "kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Again we have to say that in principle this applies to us who are of the church while we wait for Him. To Christians of Jewish extraction it is said that they had been brought out of darkness, "into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2: 9); and to those who were brought in from among the Gentiles it was said, "ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. 5: 8). To them the word was added, "walk as children of light;" that is, their light was to shine out as a testimony to all around. Spiritual light is to shine forth from the saints of today, who form the church, while we wait for the shining forth of the glory in a fashion that all can see.

In an earlier chapter we have read what God's purpose as to the people of Israel was: "This people have I formed for Myself: they shall

show forth My praise (43: 21). They have never yet done so in any proper sense, but in this coming day they will, and therefore they will become a centre of attraction upon earth. First of all the attraction will be felt by those who are truly of the Israel of God. Those who can be called, "thy sons" will come to Zion from afar, and those who are "thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." This will be a regathering of the true Israel in the land of God's choice that will altogether eclipse the migration of Jews to Palestine that we see still proceeding today. God will be behind the movement and the revelation of His glory in the once-rejected Servant, but now the mighty delivering Arm, will be the attractive force.

The effect of the revelation of the glory upon redeemed Israel is further shown in verse 5. True, it will not be essentially a matter of faith as it is with us today, for, says the prophet, "then thou shalt see." The thing will be manifest before every eye, and the result will be threefold. They will "flow together;" so the drift will be in the direction of **unity**, and the old divisions that have marred the nation will disappear. Then they will **fear**, and experience how true it is that, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9: 10). As a result of this they will "**be enlarged.**"

We venture to think that this enlargement will take place not only in material things but also in mind and heart. It will take place in

a material way, as the rest of verse 5 indicates, but the enlargement is clearly stated to be of the heart. The verse mentions the "abundance of the sea;" and frequently that figure is used to indicate the masses of mankind. The statement does not mean that Israel will be well supplied with fish, but rather that though evil men, far away from God, are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, in the coming age the spared nations will be like a placid sea, yielding its abundant treasures and converting them more especially toward Israel. This is further emphasized by the words that close the verse, which according to the marginal reading would be, "the wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

And all this blessing, both material and spiritual, will be poured upon Israel when the Arm of the Lord is revealed in power and glory, and those who "turn from transgression in Jacob;" that is, the true Israel, born again and in the presence of their Redeemer, stand in the virtue of His work. That work He wrought when He was despised and rejected of their forefathers and being led as a lamb to the slaughter, He was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities.

As Christians we are today blessed with "all spiritual blessings," and that, "in heavenly places in Christ." When Israel is blessed in this way on earth, we shall be in the fulness of blessing in heaven.

CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD

J. HOUSTON.

THE Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost gave bold and clear witness to Christ's resurrection. After citing relevant scriptures from the Old Testament, to prove to the Jews that the death and resurrection of Christ had been foretold, he summed up his witness with the words, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

The Apostle Paul in his ministry proceeded in exactly the same way. In the synagogue at Antioch, recorded in Acts 13, he showed to the Jews that they unwittingly fulfilled the prophecies, that they read in their synagogues, by condemning Jesus, and demanding that He should be slain. He also proved to them that God had fulfilled His own word by raising Christ from the dead.

Luke wrote his Gospel with the assurance that he was giving, "a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us; even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word" (Luke 1: 1, 2). The same writer in the opening chapter of the Acts, affirmed that Christ "shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days." Thus the inspired witnesses give their record without any uncertainty or the shadow of a doubt.

We have a further witness of great importance, given by the Apostle

Paul in writing to the Corinthians. He declared that the Gospel that he preached, and that they had received, announced as fundamental facts, "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4). It would be difficult to conceive anything more clear, or certain, than the witness to Christ's resurrection. It has pleased God to give it as **an immovable rock**, on which we can rest with the fullest assurance of faith.

Peter, Paul and John each view the resurrection of Christ in connection with the doctrines God had given them to teach. Peter was the Apostle to the Jews: Paul on the other hand was Apostle to the Gentiles. Through their ministry God was dealing with both, and at the beginning there was a transitional period, which came to an end. John's ministry lay outside of this and **had to do with the Son of God**, and eternal life, which was in Him. There is of course neither beginning nor end to the glorious Person of the Son, or of eternal life, which is in Him.

When Peter wrote his first Epistle to the dispersed Jewish Christians, he linked Christ's resurrection with the **inheritance**. God had begotten these scattered believers unto a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved **in heaven** for them. They had been disinherited **from Jerusalem**, the

cherished centre of their national life and hope, and scattered abroad as strangers and pilgrims. This put them on the ground of **faith**, as Hebrews 11: 13 indicates. Christ **risen** and in **heaven** was the ground of their faith in God, not Messiah on **earth** with Jerusalem as centre.

The Apostle indeed is most insistent in directing their thoughts to heaven and away from earth. He affirms that, "Christ . . . is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (3: 22). In fact it is plainly characteristic of his teaching. Canaan had been their inheritance, but it had been corrupted and defiled; consequently it faded away — the result of their disobedience under the law. Now they were called unto "obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;" that is, they were to obey as Christ obeyed; an obedience that had its origin **in love**, and its power of action **in faith**. They themselves had been sprinkled with the blood of Christ, in contrast to the blood of animals, as had been the case under the law. As apostle to the circumcision he wrote thus, fulfilling his commission from the Lord to feed and shepherd His sheep. (see, John 21: 15-17).

When Paul addressed the Gentiles, as in Ephesians 2, he tells them plainly that they had been without Christ, without hope, without God in the world. They were not only aliens, and strangers from the covenants of promise, but also "**dead in trespasses and sins.**" Christ had been into death; but He died **for** sins, whereas they were dead **in** sins, and as such might have been

left there for ever. The mighty power of God has raised Christ from the dead, and the same power had wrought for, and in, them. God, who is rich in mercy, had quickened them together with Christ, raised them and made them to sit together in heavenly places in Christ.

Now this doctrine of being **raised together with Christ** is essentially Pauline, and gives us an aspect of Christ's resurrection not mentioned by the other Apostles. It shows us how far down grace goes to save us, and how high it goes to raise and bless us. It stoops to death and rises to heavenly places in Christ. What a position is ours in the risen and glorified Saviour!

John does not say anything about the inheritance, in contrast to the national hopes of the Jews, nor about our being raised **with Christ** and seated in the heavenlies in Him. He considers Christ manifested as a Divine Person on earth, in whom was eternal life. He says, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5: 11). As to the incarnation, he tells us that "The Word was made flesh;" and as to the ascension that, "He was come from God, and went to God" (John 13: 3). This is how he records Christ's coming into the world, and His departure from it. In other words, it is God's eternal Son, without **beginning**, without **end**. The historical side of the Lord's advent to, and departure from, this world, as narrated in the synoptic Gospels, does not come into his ministry.

Undoubtedly his statement about

the Word becoming flesh was an allusion to His birth; and, in like manner, the words of our Lord, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God," (John 20: 17) indicated His coming place at the right hand of God. But John is not occupied with the historic facts. He sees the eternal Son, as having come from

God and having gone to God.

For us who believe in Him, what is most blessed is that we have eternal life in Him, and that He owns us now as His most blessed associates, His brethren, in the nearest and dearest relationship. His Father, our Father; His God, our God.

"THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE"

A. J. POLLOCK.

ON Mount Sinai in the most awesome and impressive circumstances, Moses received from the hand of God Himself the two tables of stone on which were inscribed the ten commandments. In these were embodied the terms of the covenant, that God made with the children of Israel, setting forth their responsibility to Himself and to their fellow-men. To all these commandments was attached a penalty, but to one only was attached a promise. So we read, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exod. 20: 12).

We find this Old Testament commandment quoted in the New Testament, but put into a Christian setting. When the Apostle Paul wrote to the saints at Ephesus, we find amongst his exhortations the words, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (6: 1); and he enforced his words by referring to this commandment, pointing out that it is the first commandment with promise. Correspondingly to

Christian fathers he said, "provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

How beautiful and gracious is this scripture, indicating godly homes, where the will of the Lord is the governing factor with the parents. When this is the case, the demands they make on their children, and the instructions they give them, will be "in the Lord," and such as the children should respond to and obey with loyalty and cheerfulness. It should be very encouraging to children, whose parents are Christians, to realize that they are not forgotten for the Lord has His eye upon the Christian household. Does this not show His deep interest in the children of His beloved people? Our Lord in the glory is just the same as He was on earth, when He said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18: 16).

Being born into a Christian household is a privilege, the more to be

esteemed as we find ourselves in a world becoming more and more lawless, and less and less influenced by anything Christian. We may truly say that the well-being of a nation lies in the proportion of Christian mothers it possesses. The mind of a child is plastic, and takes impressions for good or evil at a very early age. A good deal that was learned at a mother's knee may be forgotten, but the impression lasts and cannot be altogether thrown off. Many a young man has broken loose from the restraints of a Christian home, who in the end found early impressions too insistent to be disregarded, and who lived to thank God for the inestimable blessing of the prayers and training of his parents.

When Moses received the law at Sinai, it was given to men in the flesh, and became an intolerable burden, since to love God with all the soul, strength and mind, and one's neighbour as oneself, was beyond their powers. But when the heart is put right with God and a new nature possessed, we discover "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1: 25). And again we read, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5: 3). A right-minded child would be astonished if commanded to love his mother. His reply would be, "That is what I do all the time." No bondage in that!

Take a parable from nature. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7: 16). If a thorn-bush is commanded to produce grapes, its reply would be,

I cannot possibly do that, for my nature is a thorn nature, and my efforts would only produce larger and more prickly thorns. To bear grapes I need a vine nature. So too, if standing before a thistle we order it to grow figs, it could only reply, You are putting on me an intolerable burden, for without a fig nature figs cannot be borne.

As Christians we have to learn the meaning of the Lord's words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5). This fact has to be remembered by Christian parents, and it can also come home to a Christian child at a very early age. We remember a very well-known Christian lady saying, "I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour when I was no higher than my father's dinner-table."

When our Lord entered Jerusalem in fulfilment of the prophecy, "Behold thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9: 9), the chief priests and scribes complained that even the children cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David;" and the Lord Jesus said, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. 21: 15, 16). Such scriptures leave us in no doubt as to God's grace working in the hearts of the very young.

If the Christian household is conducted on the principle laid down in this "first commandment

with promise," as endorsed by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, the children may be led to the knowledge of Jesus as their own precious Saviour, and their

Lord, whom they desire to please in their lives. Then both parents and children will discover for themselves how great and rich is the promise that is connected with the command.

A NEEDED WORD

W. KELLY.

(Extracted from Lectures on the Minor Prophets)

IT becomes not the Christian to be narrow. Nevertheless who can avoid seeing the tendency to be so on this or that? Be assured that it is not only weakness but a danger wherever it may be. I grant, however, that even narrowness in and for God's truth is far better than that lax uncertainty and spurious liberalism in divine things, which is growingly a snare in this evil day.

Take the contrary of this in the Apostle and his preaching. The very man to whom all are most indebted for the gospel of the grace of God, set forth as none else did that particular phase of it, which is called the gospel of the glory of Christ. At the same time he preached the kingdom of God as decidedly as possible. He never was afraid of the ignorant outcry that this is low ground. The fact is that hasty and little minds say so, unable to take in more than one idea, and apt to be intoxicated with that one; but the Apostle exhibits that excellent largeness and elasticity, which gives its place to every message which God has revealed, which pretends not to choose in Scripture, but thankfully takes and uses the testimony of God as it is given. It seems to me that we really lower the revival of truth grace has

wrought by allowing the idea that this truth or that is the only truth for the day. The speciality of our blessing is that we have got into a large place, contemptible as it looks to unbelief — that no truth comes amiss, and that all truth is for this day. I hold this to be an important point for us, avoiding the pettiness of fancying or seeking a factitious value for whatever happens to be dawning with especial force on our own minds.

It is a snare the more to be dreaded because it has ever led to the making of sects through an active mind laying hold of (or rather taken captive by) some favourite notion or even truth. I consider it then an essentially sectarian bias; and that the true and distinctive blessing of what God has given us now in these days is not so much laying hold of this or that truth higher than others accept, though this be true, but the heart open to truth in all its extent, and this bound up with Christ personally, as the only possible means of deliverance, if by grace we walk there in the power of the Spirit, from every kind of pettiness. It will be found too, that it is immensely important practically for holiness, because we are so weak that we are likely to

take just what we like and what at the time suits our own character, habits, position, circumstances, and capacity; whereas what we want is to detect, judge, and thus be saved from self; not that which spares flesh, but what gives us to mortify our members on the earth, as well as what in divine love suits the varying wants of souls around us, and above all His glory, who has given us not only a particular part of His mind, but the whole of it.

Thus, as it has been well said, the

peculiarity really of the right position is its universality. That is, it is not merely a special portion or phase of truth, no matter how blessed, but the truth in all its fullness as the divinely given safeguard from particular views, and the communication of the exceeding largeness of God's grace and truth and ways for us in the world. "All things are yours." Anything that tends by distinctive marks to make a party by bringing forward one's self or one's views as practically a centre is self-condemned.

FOUR TYPES IN ISRAEL'S JOURNEY

F. B. HOLE.

NOT only do we discover four types of the death of Christ as we open Genesis and read the earliest records of the fallen human race, but again four types are seen as we follow the history of Israel, from the time of their departure from Egypt to their entrance into the land of promise. Indications of the power and significance of His death are seen more clearly in a prophetic way.

The first type is found of course in Exodus 12, when on that night much to be remembered, the Passover was instituted, and the first-born were sheltered from the death-stroke that fell upon the Egyptians. What was instituted that night was ordered so that, "ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." (Exod. 11: 7). The fact that it was needful for the Lord to put a difference plainly infers that by nature no difference existed.

Here then we see typified the "no difference" doctrine of Romans 3: 22, 23.

The difference was established by the blood of the slain lamb; but notice, that blood not only shed but also **applied** to the outside of the house for the eye of the destroying angel, while the inmates fed on the body of the lamb, roast with fire, with bitter herbs and with the absence of all leaven. Thus, the no difference statement of Romans 3 is at once followed by an unfolding of the propitiatory efficacy of the blood of Christ, to be realized by those who believe.

So also we have the Apostle Paul writing, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8). The type therefore gives some indication not only of the **objective** virtue of the

blood of Christ, before the eye of God, meeting His claims so that the sinner is sheltered from judgment, but also of its **subjective** effects in the one who is sheltered — the meaning of His death inwardly digested with the bitterness of repentance, as well as faith, and the leaven of malice and wickedness put away.

These things being indicated in Exodus 12, Exodus 13 begins with the assertion of God's claim upon the firstborn, who had been sheltered from death. They were now to be "sanctified;" that is, set apart for God, as belonging to Him. Of each firstborn God said, "It is Mine." But for many a year Pharaoh had been saying of them and of all Israel — "They are mine; slaves to do my pleasure." Among men, when two parties claim the same object, conflict is bound to ensue.

So it was here. Hitherto it has seemed to be Pharaoh versus Moses and Israel, but now it is revealed to be Pharaoh versus Jehovah; and Exodus 14 relates the Red Sea episode when the people had to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." That salvation furnishes us with the second type of the death of Christ, and we may say, of His *resurrection also*.

The decisive step in this story took place while Israel stood still. The angel of God, signaled by the visible pillar of cloud, having indicated the way, planted Himself between the Egyptians and Israel, so that to strike Israel they would have to face God. Then came the march through the Sea. To live,

man must be immersed in air: immerse him in water and he quickly dies. But the waters of the Sea rising up like walls on either side of them, completed their security. No direct attack from the rear was possible because of the pillar of cloud, and none from the flanks because of the walls of water. By an act of God the waters of death were turned into a means of salvation and life, as the Angel of God with Israel passed through to the further shore. They were equally death and destruction to Pharaoh and his hosts. Consequently every harrassing fear vanished from the hearts of the Israelites. They were brought into peace and they rejoiced in the hope of their inheritance in the land of promise, as chapter 15 shows.

There is no difficulty then in seeing here a type of the death and resurrection of Christ bringing us into peace and the hope of glory, as stated in Romans 4: 24—5: 2. A type also of that deliverance from the world and from the power of Satan, who dominates the world, as stated in such scriptures as Galatians 1: 4, and Hebrews 2: 14, 15.

As however we read Exodus 15, we cannot help but be struck by the sad descent from the triumphant song of the early verses to the murmuring of the people, recorded before we reach the end. This people, redeemed by power from the hand of Pharaoh, revealed their perversity right through their wilderness journey. When we reach Numbers 21, we find a third type of the death of Christ, which has special reference to this.

To Nicodemus our Lord said,

“ That which is born of the flesh is flesh ” (John 3: 6), and Israel’s journey served to display its incorrigible character. In their terrible complaints, recorded in Numbers 21: 1, things came to a climax, and the people were bitten by the fiery serpents. Their poison burnt like fire in the bodies of those bitten, and so we have an apt type of what the New Testament calls, “ sin in the flesh. ” And further we are told that, “ sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death. ” This is prefigured in the fact that, “ much people of Israel died. ”

The remedy that God ordained was the brazen serpent, made by Moses, and lifted up on a pole — a type of the crucified Christ, as so plainly claimed in John 3: 14. The brazen serpent was made in the likeness of a serpent which had the fiery bite, just as Christ came, “ in the likeness of sinful flesh ” (Rom. 8: 3), so that in His sacrifice “ sin in the flesh ” might be condemned.

Another feature of the Gospel is emphasized in this type — the necessity of faith. There was no obvious connection, such as human reason could appreciate, between looking at a brazen object on a pole and the cure of poison working in one’s veins. Those who looked did so because they believed the word of God in the lips of Moses, bidding them so to do. We venture to think that those who did **not** look, and died, were the highly intellectual who could not demean themselves so as to act on instructions that seemed so completely irrelevant to their need. The child bidden by his mother to look, would do so in his simplicity; and so would those

who were prepared in this matter to become as little children. So it is in the Gospel today.

How appropriately then does this type appear, as the wilderness journey of Israel was nearing its end. Sin being lawlessness, disobedience had been fully manifested as dwelling in their flesh, and there is prefigured the death of Christ as the condemnation of sin in the flesh. Had it not been condemned in His cross there would not have been for us that deliverance from its enslaving power, which the Gospel announces; connected also with the gift of the Holy Spirit, typified in the springing well. We may note too that it was after this that God defeated Balaam’s machinations, and made him bless Israel instead of cursing them; and also declare that God “ hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel. ” Sin being judged, the saint is beyond condemnation, and may be viewed in the light of the purpose of God.

For the fourth type we pass on to the **Book of Joshua**, to consider Israel crossing the Jordan, to plant their feet on the land of promise. If chapters 3 and 4 of Joshua be read, we notice that here the ark of the covenant is prominent. There was no ark at the crossing of the Red Sea: there it was rather the Angel of the Lord, who had acted as Destroyer at the Passover, acting as a Deliverer through the waters of death. At Jordan the waters roll back before the ark, directly they were touched by the feet of the priests who bore it.

On this occasion Jordan was

running in flood, yet the waters failed before the ark, and the bed of the river was dry until all the people passed over. But the people were identified with the ark, since, where it had stood, twelve stones were placed, representing the tribes, just as twelve stones, taken from the spot where the ark had stood, were erected as a memorial in the promised land. In after days a God-fearing Israelite might stand at the spot and say: There, immersed in the waters our twelve tribes lie, while at the same time we stand, as risen from the waters, in the land that was promised to us from God.

Here therefore we have a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, with which the believer is so truly identified that he can be spoken of as not only "dead with Christ" (Col. 2: 20), but also "risen with Christ" (Col. 3: 1). We consequently are to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Nor is this all, for we are so truly identified with Christ in His risen life and glory, that as the Epistle to the Ephesians declares, God has, "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 6).

At the end of Joshua 4, the people are found in the land that God had given them, but immediately we read chapter 5, we find that there were kings of the Amorites holding the land, and that they had to be dispossessed. Israel was consequently committed to a time of conflict. This also is typical, for the Ephesian epistle, which shows the believer seated in Christ in heavenly places,

ends with a chapter on conflict, indicating the need of spiritual armour for it. In our case it is not that we have to fight to get possession, but that, being in possession, we are in conflict to retain it. Hence in Ephesians 6, the "armour" is mostly defensive, against "the world-rulers of this darkness" (R.V.), whose aim is to dislodge us, and having done all we are to "stand."

To sum up: it is remarkable how comprehensively these four types prefigure the wonderful results of the death and resurrection of Christ. Their significance doubtless would not have been plain, until He had come and accomplished His mighty work, but we now read them in the light of the New Testament, and discern something of their meaning.

They set forth firstly, shelter from judgment in virtue of the bloodshedding of the Lamb of God. Secondly, salvation by His death and resurrection from the power of Satan and his world, so that we are brought to God. Thirdly, the condemnation of sin in the flesh, so that in the energy of the Spirit, given to us, we may be delivered from its thrall. Fourthly, our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, so that entering in spirit into our heavenly possessions, we may live our earthly lives with our minds and affections set on things above where Christ is.

Many of us may say we have heard these things often. Yes, but how have they affected us? What kind of life are we living?

“UNITE MY HEART”

F. W. GRANT.

(Extracts from notes on Psalm 86: 10-12, in “The Numerical Bible”).

Now we have the path itself with its trials and experiences, in which these principles are practically realized. First of all, the sufficiency for it, which is in God alone: this is . . . the necessary foundation on which alone a life with God can be based. And our utter dependence on Him is expressed in the next verse, in which with the full purpose of heart to walk in His truth, the Psalmist confesses his need, not only of instruction as to the way, the one way which is Jehovah's, but also of his own deliverance from the infirmity which nevertheless yields so to distraction: “Unite my heart,” he says, “to fear Thy Name.” This is indeed what is everywhere the great lack among the people of God.

How much of our lives is, not spent in positive evil, but frittered away and lost in countless petty diversions, which spoil effectually the positiveness of their testimony for God! How few can say with the Apostle, “This **one** thing I do”! We are on the road — not, at least, intentionally off it — but we stop to chase butterflies among the flowers, and make no serious progress. How Satan must wonder when he sees us turn away from the “kingdoms of the world and the glory of them,” when realized as his temptation, and yet yield ourselves with scarce a thought to endless trifles lighter than the thistle-down . . . Would we examine our lives carefully in such an interest as this, how should we realize the multitude of needless anxieties, of self-imagined duties,

of permitted relaxations, of “innocent” trifles, which incessantly divert us from that in which alone there is profit. How few, perhaps, would care to face such an examination of the day by day unwritten history of their lives!

“We must not be legal:” with such an excuse how we pass over the “little things,” which come in everywhere unchallenged by reason of their littleness. “We must not make religion too severe:” and so we take off our armour on the battle-field. “We must not have a morbid conscience:” and so we forget to **exercise** ourselves, that we may have one void of offence toward God and man. Concentration of purpose is what most of all the devil dreads for us as Christians, and the air is full of whispered plausibilities and lullabies to deprive us of this. Thus Christ Himself as “all” for us is looked at as somewhat not to be too seriously taken; the glorious sunshine is to be helped to be brighter by men's taper-lights; or carefully shaded from eyes too infirm to enjoy it in its brightness, or too continuously.

How perfect a lesson there is for us here in the Lord's words as to the vine-branch and abiding in Him (John 15). The branch abides in the vine without intermission: a moment's intermission would be fatal to it. And as, “the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye,” says He, “except ye abide in Me.”

But then for **what** are we to abide in Him? The whole purpose of the vine is **fruit**; and this is what rules in the ways of the husbandman with it. He prunes unsparingly, that he may have fruit: one might think to look at him, that he was making but a wreck of the whole plant. What harm in all this wood and leaf that he is paring away? In itself none; and yet in relation to its fruit-bearing very much. Not the parasites that destroy it from without can do it much more harm than just these fruitless stems and this exuberant foliage. The precious sap is drawn off by them, by which the fruit is to be filled out and perfected; and, if they are spared, not simply will there be less fruit, but (worse than all) **the whole character of that which is produced is deteriorated**. And so with the toleration

of much that is merely evil in its power to draw off and scatter the energies, which should be yielding fruit for Him, and are not. It is the "one thing I do," that as a principle characterizes the whole man, and marks him out as Christ's, glorifies Christ in him.

It means seriously, "Christ is all." It proclaims Him the sunshine of life, not shadow; and sunshine is what the fruit needs. It says that for progress every moment of life is valuable, saves the life from dilettantism and superficiality, makes Christ Lord, not casual Adviser. No wonder that in the servant's Psalm we should find, as nowhere else in them, this prayer, "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name."

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 60: 6 — 62: 3)

THE abundance of things, in the form of earthly blessings, that will be poured into Israel, is given in much detail from verse 6 of chapter 60. In that verse Sheba is mentioned, the land from which came the Queen, who visited Solomon with much gold and spices. When she arrived, as related in 1 Kings 10, she shewed forth the praises of Solomon. In the day contemplated in our chapter, "they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord."

This will come to pass in the way that is intimated in verse 7. Not

only will the altar of God be once more established, but the house of the Lord be in their midst. A century or two after Isaiah, the prophet Haggai predicted that, "the glory of this latter house" (2: 9), or, "the latter glory of this house" (New Trans.), should be greater than the former in the days of Solomon; and so it will be. It is designated here as "the house of my glory," and even as such the Lord Himself will glorify it. In the glorified house of His glory His praises will be seen and heard.

We pass from the house to the

people in verses 8 and 9. Today the Jews are returning to their ancestral home in their hundreds and thousands without faith in Christ. When God regathers His people it will be a quick and effectual work. They will "fly,"— a speedy work. It will be "to their windows"—like a bird returning to its home. And this they will do as "doves"— a bird noted for its meek and quiet spirit. The unconverted Jew of today may still be just as Paul described his own nation in 1 Thessalonians 2: 15, but the born-again Israelites, who will fly to their millennial home in the coming day, will be a repentant and meek people. The ships too of Gentile nations will carry them and their riches, acknowledging the name of Jehovah as "the Holy One of Israel." Inasmuch as He has been glorified, He can now glorify Israel.

In result, the nations, instead of being antagonistic, will be the helpers of their fame and prosperity, as we see in verses 10-12. As things stand today, nothing would seem more unlikely than what is here predicted; but we must remember that not only will there be a work of God in Israel, but among the nations also. In Revelation 7, we have not only a vision of the "sealed" among the tribes of Israel, but of a great company of the elect, drawn out of all nations; and in Revelation 21 we read of, "the nations of them which are saved." Those who rebel among the nations will perish.

In result, Jerusalem will be acknowledged as, "the city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." It will have become what God intended it to be—"an eternal

excellency" and "a joy." But again the basis on which this will be accomplished is made very plain. All will see that it is not something produced by Israel but rather by the One who is their Saviour and Redeemer. Jacob, the schemer, and his posterity have nothing in which to boast. The **Mighty One** of Jacob alone has done it on the basis of redemption.

We read of the Redeemer coming to Zion in verse 20 of the previous chapter, and noticed how the Apostle referred to this in Romans 11. We now see that the Redeemer is Jehovah. And in the New Testament it is equally clear that the Redeemer is Jesus. He who is the Arm of Jehovah IS Jehovah.

In our chapter this is stated in verse 16, and it is the fact that explains what otherwise would be a mystery; namely, the wealth and the glory, that will be poured into and upon Israel from the Gentile nations, as we see detailed in the verses that precede and that follow. We read that, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish." Why should such severe judgment fall? Because the Divine plan for the coming millennial age is that Israel shall be the central nation, surrounding His glorious temple, as a nation of priests, and that the other nations should be grouped around them, and expressing through them their submission and devotion to the King of kings. Should a nation in that day defy the Divine plan, they will perish. It will be the age of Divine **government**. We live at present in the age of **grace**.

In the latter part of Revelation 21, we have described the new and heavenly Jerusalem, which is "the Lamb's wife" — a symbolic description of the church in its heavenly position during the millennial age, and if we compare with it the details of our chapter concerning the earthly Jerusalem, we notice certain similarities, and yet striking contrasts. The presence of the Lord is the glory of both cities. The gates of both are open continually to receive the wealth and honour of the nations. Both have an abundance of "gold," and find their everlasting "light" in the Lord.

But the contrasts are more numerous. The gates of the earthly will not be shut day or night: of the heavenly not shut by day — but the day is an eternal one, for there is **no night** there. The glory of the earthly will be the temple, described in verse 13 as "the place of My feet." Jehovah will have His **feet** on the earth; but in the heavenly there is **no temple**, for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." It is the place of His **presence** rather than the place of His feet. The earthly will know a glory brighter than the sun; but the heavenly will have no need of the sun for the Lamb is the light thereof. Gold will be brought plentifully into the earthly; but in the heavenly it forms the street, and they walk on it. We think we may say that the difference is accounted for by the introduction, in Revelation, of **THE LAMB**.

But we can indeed rejoice in the description given us by Isaiah of millennial blessedness and glory, when righteousness and peace will

mark the scene and violence will have disappeared; when the real walls of Jerusalem shall be salvation, and out of its gates shall issue praise. This will only come to pass when, as verse 21 says, "Thy people also shall be all righteous." That will only come to pass when the new birth, of which Ezekiel 36 speaks, takes place. Then God will "sprinkle clean water" upon them, and give them "a new heart," and put within them "a new spirit." Then, "born of water and of the Spirit," as the Lord Jesus put it to Nicodemus, they will see and enter into the kingdom of God.

When the children of Israel are thus born again and righteous before their God, through the grace of their Redeemer, they will be multiplied as the last verse of our chapter tells us. At last God is able to make of them "a strong nation." When the time arrives God will do it **speedily**. It will not be a long drawn-out process, a kind of evolution, such as men love, but a swift action, of a sort that manifestly is a work of God.

This attractive description of millennial blessedness is continued in chapter 61, but before it is resumed, the first three verses, forming a paragraph by themselves, instruct us further how all will be brought to pass. Here we have the passage that our Lord found in the synagogue at Nazareth, as recorded in Luke 4, and which He read, stopping in the middle of verse 2, because there the prediction of His first advent ends. The fact is, of course, that for Israel, as for us, everything depends on His two

advents.

The words that were read by our Lord all indicate grace, without any allusion to the law of Moses. There is a veiled allusion to the three Persons of the Godhead. In our Bibles GOD is printed thus in capitals because it is really the great name, Jehovah. So the opening words mention the Spirit of Jehovah, the Lord Jehovah Himself, and the "Me," who is the Anointed One, or the Christ, who is sent to be the Proclaimer and the Minister of the grace. It is perfectly clear from Exodus 19 that the words of the law were not "glad tidings." There was, "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." The tragedy was that when a voice of exceeding grace was heard in the synagogue at Nazareth the people neither trembled nor rejoiced, but rose up with anger to kill the One who proclaimed "the acceptable year of the Lord."

Hence the necessity of those words which our Lord did not read. The second advent of Christ in power and glory, and in judgment, is foreseen to be a necessity by the prophet here. The glorious state of things predicted will never be established till Christ comes again. He laid the foundations for it in the redemption accomplished at His first advent. He will bring it to pass in power, and with vengeance, at His second advent.

Vengeance is truly a terrible word when it comes from the mouth of God, and if we turn to verse 4 of chapter 63 we shall find it referred to again. It means retribution ex-

acted for wrongs committed, and all the wrongs that men have committed are primarily against God. A day is coming when God Himself will bring retribution on the heads of sinful men; judging "the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained," as Paul told the Athenians, recorded in Acts 17. When that comes to pass, it will "comfort all that mourn," because their mourning will be not for their own personal troubles, but rather for the evil and chaos that will fill the earth, the sinfulness of men having then reached its climax. When men have filled the cup of their iniquity to the brim, God will strike by the advent of Christ. And to those who mourn, though few in number, what a comfort that will be!

Verse 3 shows us what comfort it will bring such. Their previous state is described by the words, "ashes," "mourning," "the spirit of heaviness." All will be changed for them. They will have "beauty," "the oil of joy," and "the garment of praise." They will be planted as "trees of righteousness," the trees of lawlessness and evil having been cut down, and in all this, and in them, the Lord will be glorified.

From verse 4 the description of Israel's blessings is resumed. Not only will the land be renovated, the desolate cities be built up afresh, and strangers who formerly despised them be their servants, but the crown of all be their spiritual blessing. They will be the "Priests of Jehovah" and "Ministers of God" in the coming age, and as under the law the priests were

supported by the offerings of the common people, so it will be for them, and that in abundant measure, for they are going to "eat the riches of the Gentiles." In that day even the Gentiles will have abundance, and out of their riches will flow abundance to the priestly nation.

This is indeed a remarkable prophecy as to the end God is going to reach in His dealings with His earthly people. Verse 7 speaks of shame and confusion, and these things have been their portion under the strong hand of their God, in holy government because of their manifold sins, but now all is to be reversed. Other passages have shown us how their whole condition spiritually will have been reversed, under "the everlasting covenant," of which verse 8 speaks. Based on the everlasting covenant will be the everlasting joy, predicted in verse 7. All will have to acknowledge that now, as a born-again people, they are "the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

In the two verses that close this chapter the prophet himself speaks, as voicing the glad response that will spring from the redeemed and restored Israel of the millennial day. At last Jehovah their God will be known and gloried in with joyfulness. At Sinai and under the law, their ancestors feared and trembled before Him, since all depended on what they could do. Now they are joyfully alive to what God has done for them and with them. Notice how at this point the prophetic strain drops down to the personal and individual. It is not, "clothed **us**," but, "clothed **me**."

Not, "covered **us**," but, "covered **me**." The language is figurative, but the meaning is clear. The individual Israelite of that glad day will be clothed with salvation, as the fruit of standing before his God in a robe of righteousness.

Though there is so wide a difference between the character of Israel's earthly blessing and that of the church's heavenly portion, the basis on which both rest is evidently the same. For them salvation is to be founded on righteousness, and so it is for us today, as is made so plain in Romans 1: 16, 17. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation because in it the righteousness of God is revealed, not acting against us but on our behalf by the sacrificial death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is revealed, "on the principle of faith to faith" (New Trans.). It is brought to us, not on the principle of **works**, which we have to perform, but of **faith** as opposed to works. And it is revealed, not to our **sight**, but to **faith**, where faith exists.

The believer today stands before God in righteousness divinely wrought, and his faith apprehends this, though there may be nothing of an outward sort visible to sight, save the new kind of life he lives as the fruit of his conversion. But in this connection too there is contrast, for outward and visible things will be clearly manifested, as the robe of righteousness and garments of salvation envelop the sons and daughters of Israel in that day. There will not only be the transformation in the land and cities, mentioned in verse 4, but the right-

eousness will blossom forth in a way that will be visible to the eyes of all the nations to the praise of the Lord, who has brought it to pass.

So whether it be for the saint of today, called by the Gospel to a heavenly portion, or whether for the renewed Israelites of the future — salvation stands securely based upon righteousness. And because righteousness will be established praise also will “spring forth before all the nations.” It will be so obviously the work of God that the glory of it and the praise will be His.

In the first verse of chapter 62, we have the prophet speaking in the name of the Lord; or, perhaps we might say, it was the Spirit of Christ which was in him, speaking through him, in keeping with what we read in 1 Peter 1: 11. If the result of God’s work in Israel, and on behalf of Zion and Jerusalem, will bring such good to them and such praises to God, then there must be no rest until all is accomplished. Before the eyes of all the nations Israel will stand in a righteous salvation, which God Himself has wrought, and hence they will display His glory, and not their own. The figures used in verse 3, are very expressive of this. Previously, how different the situation! The Apostle Paul had to write concerning them, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you” (Rom. 2: 24). Now they will be, “a crown of glory,” and “a royal diadem,” in God’s hand.

We, who today are called for a portion not only spiritual but also heavenly, may well rejoice as we

contemplate what God will yet do for and with His earthly people; and at the same time we may yet more rejoice as we think of what is purposed for us. If we scan the first two chapters of Ephesians, what remarkable expressions we find. The blessing purposed for us will be, “to the praise of the glory of His grace,” inasmuch as it is bestowed, “according to the riches of His grace.” And further we discover that “in the ages to come” God is going to display “the exceeding [or, **surpassing**] riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

When Israel is blessed, as Isaiah foretells, it will be a work of grace and bring much glory to God. But when the church shines forth in the heavenly glory of Christ, her Head, there will be a yet brighter display of grace. Those embraced in the church have been gathered out of the nations through the centuries; not a few of them human beings of the most degraded type.

Holy angels have witnessed the whole tragedy of human sin. When a saint is shining in the glory of Christ, that, they recognize, was once a naked, vicious, savage cannibal what will they say? They will surely confess that here is a display of **SURPASSING** grace.

And we, the saints of today, have the privilege of taking our part in God’s present work by the Gospel. Do we realize this? If we do, we shall not fail to take our place, under the Lord’s direction—whether to go, or to give, to speak or to pray, — while waiting for the glorious consummation.

"THE LORD . . . HATH APPEARED TO SIMON"

J. T. MAWSON

OUR attention is often arrested by the very remarkable contrasts brought together in the Scriptures, things that according to the reckoning of men could have no affinity, are found to run together, and enhance the greatness and beauty of each.

An instance of this is seen in connection with the Lord and His disciples on the glorious resurrection day. His death had scattered them, for it had been told in the prophetic word, that at the smiting of the Shepherd the sheep would be scattered. But the power of God had brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep, and the news of this stupendous fact had spread amongst the sorely distressed and broken-hearted flock.

How busy were those Galilean women that day, "the King's business required haste," and in the Gospel of the King, it is recorded that "they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy and **did run** to bring His disciples word" (Matt. 28: 8).

On the evening of that day they were gathered together, the last of them drawn to that blessed tryst from distant Emmaus by the Lord's personal service to them; and being thus gathered, two things commanded their thoughts and filled them with wonder: (1) The Lord is risen indeed, and (2) He hath appeared to Simon. Nothing could be of greater moment to them than the first, for it was the manifestation of their Lord's victorious power, and

was the confirmation of all things which He had spoken to them. And though they did not understand at the time, what the results of this glorious resurrection were, yet it must have opened a new world to their souls, and shown them that what, in their eyes, had been weakness and defeat had become the veritable triumph of God.

But how could they meet the risen Lord? Had they not forsaken Him in the midst of His exceeding sorrow, and might He not in consequence discard them for others more faithful and worthy? They might have thought so, and gone to hide themselves from Him for very shame, but He had, "appeared to Simon."

They do not say, He hath appeared to the Magdalene; they knew that her eyes had been the first to look upon Him, but there was nothing remarkable about His appearing to her, for she—devoted heart—had stood bereaved without the empty tomb, weeping out her sorrow, because she knew not where her beloved Lord lay. The world was a wilderness night where no comfort shone because the Lord was gone. It was no surprise to them, or to us, that since He was Risen, He should appear to Mary.

But to Simon!—who had abandoned his Master, and had proved the veriest coward in the presence of the scorning of a servant maid; who had denied his Lord with oaths and curses—that He should appear to Simon filled them with wonder.

So the two marvels are linked together by them, and in the Holy Spirit's record to us.

His mighty power had brought Him from the grave,

His tender, gracious love had carried Him even to Simon.

It was this Lord who stood in the midst of them: the powers of darkness had been smitten before Him, and the failures of His followers had not changed Him. He was all-sufficient for every foe without, and for every failure within. No wonder then that it is recorded that the joy of seeing Him was so overwhelming, that they could scarcely believe. But their doubts were speedily removed, they saw the Lord, and it is also our privilege to see Him—their Lord and ours—who had risen indeed, and appeared unto Simon.

We need Him as much as they did, for the malignity of the devil is not one whit less now than then, and we have to mourn failure and sin as terrible as Simon's, for the Church has not kept His word, and has often denied His name. But Christ remains unchanged, and every purpose of God, with every hope of His people, hangs alone upon Him.

How blessed then to know that this same Lord is in the midst of His saints today!

Days of stress and trial they are, in which the devil is seeking to stamp out all testimony for God, both as to the true word of the Gospel, and in the lives and unity of His own.

But He abides. If His pilgrim people are treading a wilderness journey in the which they are conscious of fierce opposition, of their individual needs, and much failure, He says to them, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," so that they may boldly say, "The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13: 5, 6).

Or, if His servants go forth to spread His Gospel according to His own command, He says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 20); so that while they feel their weakness, they have no cause for discouragement.

Or, if His saints gather together because they love His name, desiring only to please Him, He says, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20).

Having Him, we have an infinite and eternal sufficiency; what need for aught beside? Having Him, we can well dispense with wealth, power, eloquence, wisdom of men, and all the things that attract and charm the unregenerate mind and heart; for in Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is the power and wisdom of God. He is full of grace. He is our Shepherd and Bishop our Master and Lord. We must cleave to Him alone. He is our rallying point and our support.

To rely upon our fellow Christians, or to turn to men, whom we deem to be spiritual, for help and support, as some would have us do,

would be as futile as it would have been for John to have leaned upon Simon in the hour of trial, but we may all—as John did—lean “on Jesus’ bosom” (John 13: 23), and He faileth not.

If we fail, there is restoring grace

with Him, and He knows how to apply the balm to hearts broken by a sense of sin, even as when He appeared to Simon. Well may we then lift up our hearts, and take courage, having hearts made glad by the sense of what He is.

REDEMPTION

J. HOUSTON

THE best type of redemption, that we have in the Old Testament, is connected with the Feast of the Passover, the institution of which is recorded in Exodus 12. In that which God wrought for His people in Egypt we have all the essential points that characterize God’s great salvation. We desire to look at some of them, and so gain some instruction that will help us to a clear understanding and intelligent appreciation of this great theme.

1. The Beginning of Months.

God would have His people to know that the beginning of all things now, since the fall of man has come in, is redemption. The history of His people Israel did not properly begin until the Passover was instituted. What is recorded of them previous to this was in relation to God’s providential ways with them, as was the case also in the whole patriarchal period. For it must be borne in mind that, though access to God was through sacrifice, as was shown in the case of Abel and other individuals, God never dwelt with a people, whom He owned as **His people**, save on the ground of redemption.

It was after He brought them to

Himself, as “on eagle’s wings,” redeemed from the bondage of Egypt that He spoke of their being His “peculiar treasure,” and that, “above all people,” so that if they obeyed His voice, they might be, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Then it was that He condescended to dwell amongst them, having His tabernacle set up, a priesthood established, and the people acknowledged as being His. This we see in chapter 19, and again at the end of chapter 29. But with the Passover the proper history of Israel as a nation began.

2. **The Paschal Lamb.** Scripture has not left us in any doubt, to whom the paschal lamb points. “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 6: 7). Peter also refers to it, when he writes of, “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1: 19, 20).

The blood of the paschal lamb gave security, when it was sprinkled on the door of the houses, where His people were sheltered. God was true to the word that He spoke, “When I see the blood, I

will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

It was a dread night, when all the firstborn of Egypt were slain. It was, in fact, the judgment of the world; for Egypt is a type of the world. The firstborn were the **representatives** of all in Egypt who came under God's judgment, and not simply **individuals** judged **alone**. It was God judging His enemies, who are also the enemies of His people. The former perish, while the latter are saved. Thus it will be in the last days, for God will judge the world in **righteousness**, and save His people in **grace**. Prophecy is quite clear as to these two important events, which will take place when God at last intervenes in the affairs of this world.

While the blood of the paschal lamb was **outside** the homes of God's sheltered people, the lamb itself was appropriated **inside**, as food on which they feasted. God saw the blood; they ate the lamb together with the bitter herbs. The blood, in type, met the claims of God against sin, and was the foundation of His people's redemption, for, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). The lamb roasted with fire, speaks to us of the judgment and death which fell upon our Divinely-appointed Substitute when, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). He, who died for us, is now the food of our redeemed souls. What was death to Him, under God's judgment as the Sin-Bearer, is life to us. So

that we have, "Life through the death of Jesus," as the hymn puts it.

3. **Unleavened Bread.** Leaven in Scripture typifies evil, and so none was allowed at the Passover feast. "Ye shall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread" (verse 20). This injunction was plain and binding on all who ate the paschal lamb. To us it has a spiritual meaning. Since Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, we are to keep the feast, "not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 6: 8).

When evil is allowed to come amongst the saints and even to intrude to the Lord's Supper, all is spoiled. This happened at Corinth, and how sad were the consequences. Remembering the Lord in His **death**, all that evil for which He died, must be wholly excluded, and sincerity and truth is to mark us. Sincerity means purity and transparency, and gives us the right **state** of soul. Truth gives us the right **ground** on which to stand before God. We need both the right spiritual state and the right scriptural ground, when we approach God. God's word is, "Be ye holy; for I am Holy" (1 Pet. 1: 16). And our Lord said, "They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4: 24).

4. **Readiness to Depart.** The children of Israel, in eating the Passover, were to be in a state of readiness to depart from Egypt. The word was, "Thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your

shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste" (verse 11). Their bondage in Egypt had come to an end. Their emancipation was at hand. They were to be ready for their exodus.

So it is with us. Our links with the world are broken. Our partaking of the Lord's Supper is linked with the hope of His coming, to take us out of the world to be forever with Him. We remember Him only, "till He come" (1 Cor. 11: 26). We look back on His sufferings, and we look forward to His glory. We do not seek to **improve** the world, as some tell us we should do. We are **severed** from it, and stand in readiness to **leave** it. Our souls have been redeemed, and our bodies will be redeemed at His coming again.

5. **Sanctification.** God will have His redeemed people set apart for Himself, which is the meaning of sanctification. Hence the firstborn were to be sanctified, as recorded at the beginning of Exodus 13. Here again the firstborn were representative of **all** the people. So today, **all** God's saints are included in the sanctification taught in the New Testament. We read of Jesus, "that He might sanctify **the people** [that is **all** of them] with His own blood, suffered without the gate;" and so we are to "go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13: 12, 13). In Exodus it was not a case of going outside the camp, but it certainly was of going outside Egypt.

Egypt was no place for the redeemed people of God. They had been purchased by blood and belonged to Him. Being God's pos-

session, they were claimed by Him. He said of the purchased possession, "It is Mine" (Exod. 13: 2). Everything was His by creatorial right, but those thus redeemed were His possession in a very special way.

6. **Deliverance.** This, we may say, is the climax of God's intervention on behalf of His people. It was the exercise of His power to make good His claim to His purchased possession. The blood of the lamb sheltered His people from judgment. Deliverance brought them out from their cruel bondage to serve God ultimately in His sanctuary. "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation" (Exod. 15: 13). The Red Sea, through which they passed to the further shore, was a figure of death and resurrection. What was salvation to them was destruction to the Egyptian foes. It was "by faith" that the children of Israel "passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (Heb. 11: 29).

In conclusion, it is well for us to remember that Israel, who were redeemed physically from Egypt, will have a spiritual deliverance in the last days. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, referred to the prophecies announcing this, when he spoke of God's oath, which He swore to Abraham, "that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1: 74, 75).

A GREAT CONTRAST

F. B. HOLE

OF all the men, whose lives are recorded in Old Testament Scripture, Solomon stands out supreme in his intellectual endowments. If we read 1 Kings 4: 29-34, and then glance at the first verse of 1 Kings 10, we shall see that his extraordinary mental powers were given him by God, and that he was not only a literary and poetic genius with great knowledge of all natural history subjects, but that he also had great understanding "concerning the name of the Lord;" and it was the fame spread abroad as to this latter feature, that drew the Queen of Sheba to his presence. He was evidently the wonder of his age.

When we turn to the New Testament, and confine our thoughts to those who were merely men, no individual stands out more strikingly than Saul of Tarsus. Like Solomon, he came of pure Hebrew stock, as he states in Philippians 3: 4-6, and in religious matters he held a foremost place, for he wrote, that he "profited in the Jew's religion above many my equals [i.e. contemporaries] in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1: 14). In him again we find a man of outstanding intellectual powers.

When, however, we consider the spirit that marked them, the course they pursued, and the end to which they came, we find the greatest possible contrast. In our consideration we must of course remember the great difference that existed between the epochs in which they lived. Solomon had to walk in the light of God as He had been

made known in the law system, ministered through Moses; Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul, was brought into the light of God revealed in Christ—in the **grace** of His atoning sufferings and of His risen glory.

We are struck in the first place by the fact that Solomon possessed and enjoyed **all** the good things of this life in superabundant measure, whereas Paul enjoyed **none** of them. We may gain some idea of Solomon's abundance by reading Ecclesiastes 2: 4-10. We turn to Philippians 3: 8, and find Paul saying, "I have suffered the loss of all things." And if we would know what he gained as regards this world, we read 2 Corinthians 11: 23-28. Having done so, the contrast is great in the highest degree.

But now consider the spirit that animated them. Ecclesiastes 2: 10, shows that Solomon threw himself wholeheartedly into "having a good time," as men speak. He pursued everything that came within his reach. His motto must have been, "**Everything I do**," in the pursuit of pleasure and satisfaction. And what was the principle on which Paul lived? We find it again in Philippians 3, "This **one thing I do**." And what was the one thing? The things behind him, the things he had lost, he forgot, as he reached forth to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Again the contrast could not be more complete.

The result of this was that Solomon became exceedingly selfish.

This too comes out clearly in Ecclesiastes 2. Read the passage again, and note how he puts it, "I made me. . . I builded me. . . I planted me. . . I got me. . . I gathered me. . . So I was **great.**" His life became one of self-gratification, so much so that he might have said, "For me to live is —SELF." And the Apostle Paul? Well, in Philippians again we have his word, "For to me to live is—CHRIST" (1: 21). No greater contrast can be found than that between a life lived for **self**, and one lived for **Christ**.

So with Solomon for a season all went well. He prospered in the most amazing fashion, and his fame was noised abroad in all directions; and in that same chapter in Ecclesiastes he was able to write, "Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart **rejoiced in all my labour.**" In his immense worldly success he found his joy.

But when Paul wrote his epistle to the saints at Philippi he was a prisoner in Rome; he was in very unpleasing circumstances, yet he was filled with joy. Here are some of his words, "I therein do **rejoice**, yea, and will **rejoice**. . . I **joy**, and **rejoice** with you all. . . finally, my brethren, **rejoice** in the Lord. . . rejoice in the Lord **always**; and again I say, **rejoice.**" Is he rejoicing in prosperous surroundings? Not at all, for his surroundings were anything but prosperous. His rejoicing was altogether in the Lord, and this is the rejoicing that lasts. Solomon rejoiced in his own successful achieve-

ments: Paul rejoiced in the Lord. Another complete contrast.

Lastly, we notice that when Solomon wrote of his rejoicing he used the past tense: not, "my heart rejoices," but, "my heart rejoiced." We glance at the very next verse, and we find him saying, "**All was vanity and vexation** of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." His disillusionment was complete.

And what of Paul? We turn once more to the Philippian epistle, and in its closing chapter we find him writing, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. . . I **have all**, and **abound.**" So while the man who had, as men would say, everything that heart could wish, ended with vanity and emptiness the man who **lost** all the good things of life, yet found his sufficiency in God, was **full** "according to His **riches** in glory by Christ Jesus." The contrast in their finish is not less striking than that which marked their course.

Now these things have a very clear and challenging voice to us today. The writer desires to accept the challenge for himself, and to pass it on to his readers. We none of us have the immense wealth and boundless opportunities of a Solomon, but we live in an age far more filled with alluring and fascinating objects and devices. The man of small means can today spend much time listening to the voices of men who speak, or to music played, hundreds of miles away. He can watch scenes that are enacted in the far distance. He can mount his car and career along the roads to his desired destination; or perhaps, sit in an aeroplane and

cut through the air at 500 miles an hour. These things are very fascinating, but we have to remember that all these extraordinary human inventions are going at the finish to prove but "vanity and vexation of spirit."

Many of our fellow-Christians are suffering many privations behind the "Curtains," whether "Iron," or "Bamboo." If what we hear of them be true, their joy and effectiveness in the things of God is greater than anything that we English-speaking Christians know. They have but little access to the fascinating things we have alluded to, and so they are not tempted to waste valuable time over them. Though not in a Roman prison, like Paul, they do suffer imprisonment of another kind under the strong and domineering hand of Communism, but, we are told, they often exhibit much joy and courage, and their numbers have greatly increased.

For at least two centuries we, who are English-speaking Chris-

tians, have enjoyed much in the way of spiritual privilege and blessing, but because of this very thing we have to beware lest we become inflated and imagine we are "rich and increased with goods," of a spiritual sort, as did the Laodiceans, of whom we read in Revelation 3. If we estimate things aright, we shall, on the contrary, realize that we are far too much on the lines of Solomon, and too little on the lines of the Apostle Paul; far too much engrossed with the passing possessions and pleasures of time, that end in vanity, and far too little with the abiding realities of eternal life, though these are only known by faith in the power of the Spirit of God.

Let us never forget that solemn word spoken by our Lord—"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Matt. 19: 30). When the day of Christ arrives, and we who are so privileged, stand before His judgment seat, and hear the decision as to our lives and service in this world; what will His verdict be?

FIFTY YEARS AGO

IN our issue for March/April, we reprinted under the heading, "A Century ago," the article by the late C. H. Mackintosh, that commenced the first issue of "Things New and Old," which he edited for many years. We now learn that his Notes on the Five Books of Moses were translated about the turn of the century by a brother in Russia. As the Russian Government of that day would not allow the translation to be printed it was passed from hand to hand in manuscript.

A large number copied it for themselves, and in those days these writings were to be found in most out-of-the-way places in the Caucasus mountains.

How wonderfully the printed or even the written page carries the message long after the writer has passed away! What is to be deduced from this?

One practical deduction can be safely made. Let us diligently circulate the word in print. The harvest is sure!

JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE: SOME STRIKING FEATURES

A. J. POLLOCK

THE Apostle John was the last of the inspired penmen of the Holy Scriptures. He lived long enough to witness serious departure from the truth amongst professing Christians. Sorrowfully he wrote, "Even now are there many anti-christs; whereby we know that it is the last time."

In this epistle attention is earnestly called to what is fundamental and basic, to that which is essential and of primary importance, that which, thank God, can never fail. His theme is **light, love** and **life**. "God is **light**, and in Him is no darkness at all," therefore those who seek to walk with Him must be holy and walk according to the light.

Again, "God is **love**," a fact twice repeated. Here is a sublime height of divine knowledge, never attained by any heathen or secular seeker after God, but reached by a simple fisherman, whose heart was illuminated by the grace of God, and who was inspired by the Spirit of God to put this revelation on record for us.

Then further, he bears witness and shows to us, "that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;" and he declares, "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." All this is indeed a glorious presentation to us of God in Christ, and it has reached us in order that heavenly joy may fill our hearts.

In this epistle the saints are ad-

dressed as the children of God, though in our Authorized Version the word is sometimes translated as "son;" just as also the distinction between "children" and "little children" is not carefully observed. The former term indicates the whole family of God: the latter those in the family who are spiritually the youngest and least mature. The passages where the words, "little children," occur, which should really be, "children," are chapter 2: 1, 12, 28; chapter 3: 7, 18; chapter 4: 4; and chapter 5: 21. The contexts of these passages help us to see the point. In the first of them for instance, it is simple to realize that exhortation not to sin is one that embraces not one class only, but the whole family of God.

In reading this epistle we are struck also by the large number of verbs ending in "eth." Here are a few samples, taken from the first two chapters—cleanseth, shineth, hateth, loveth, walketh, knoweth, goeth, abideth, passeth, doeth, denieth, teacheth; and there are many more. There is no other book in the Bible, characterized by such a profusion of verbs in this particular form; which usually expresses a characteristic and continuous state, though occasionally it may indicate a solitary fact, which is characteristic.

As an illustration of this latter meaning, take the first verb quoted above. The blood of Jesus Christ "**cleanseth** from all sin." This is a fact. It is a solitary fact, for there

is nothing else that can cleanse from sin. It is a characteristic fact, since it is the inherent property, or virtue of the blood of Christ.

On the other hand there is he that "**believeth** that Jesus is the Christ," and "that **confesseth** that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." It would be a very sad thing if we thought that this believing and confessing was something that happened once, which sufficed to cover an after-life of indifference and silence as far as confession of Him was concerned. Here is rather a continuous state characterized by a lively faith in Christ and a lifetime of confession, either orally or, above all, by the testimony of a consistent Christian life.

This belief has altered our whole outlook, our life, our relation to our Lord, hence our confession of Him, which leads to a life of obedience, since, "he that **keepeth** His commandments **dwelleth** in Him, and He in him," (3: 24); for we are committed to a continuous life and state of obedience. Then we know that "He **abideth** in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." The keeping, the dwelling, the abiding, all indicate states which are continuous.

But then this leads to love on our side, firstly to God and then to all His children, since, "every one that **loveth** Him that begat **loveth** him also that is begotten of Him." The Apostle makes much of this, and he always uses the stronger of the two words used in the New Testament, that are translated "love." This love is the nature of God, and has become the

characteristic feature of those who are born of Him.

As to the second coming of our Lord, John mentions it with a practical end in view, at the beginning of his third chapter. We are now the children of God, but what we are going to be is not yet manifested; it will be when He is manifested, and then we shall be like Him. We have this hope in Him, and consequently it affects us. He who has this hope in Him, "**puri-
fieth** himself, even as He is pure." Here again is a continuous process, leading to a settled state. It is well for each of us to pay diligent heed to such a challenge as this.

The Apostle John also sounded a solemn warning. Departure from the truth is always connected with unsound doctrines as to the Person and work of our beloved Lord. There was a section in the early church who held and taught that our Lord was not a real Man, but only an apparition in the likeness of a man. This was antichristian teaching, but there was evidently still power in the early church, sufficient to cause such teachers to depart from the Christian assembly. They went out, as stated in verse 19 of chapter 2, and thus made it clear that they had no part amongst true Christians.

These people were called Gnostics, a name derived from the Greek word for knowledge. They professed to be "the knowing ones," whereas their teaching was antichristian and blasphemous. It was this that led the Apostle to instruct the saints to "try the spirits, whether they are of God." Its warn-

ing to us is that we beware of theological novelties, and that we rely on what has been made known from the outset. The word is, "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." (2: 24).

For us also there is the happy assurance that we—even the "little children"—have the anointing, which is the indwelling of the Spirit of God. And to this the Apostle adds the assurance that, "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." There are spirits that are in the world, and the world hears them, but so it is not to be with us. "He that knoweth God heareth us;" the "us" being the inspired apostles, who had known

the truth from the beginning, of whom John was the last survivor. Herein lies happy and blessed guidance for us in a difficult day, late in the church's history.

The epistle has a truly magnificent finish. We are established in what we know, as revealed in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. And He who is true is the One in whom we are, and in whom we stand. And He is **THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE.**

Anything that would divert us from HIM, or take the place in our hearts that belongs solely to HIM, is an idol. May we and all the beloved children of God be preserved from the assaults of our wily foe, through modern "knowing ones," who abound today. Our Lord said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8: 32).

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 62: 4—64: 3)

IF verse 3 of our chapter predicts how the Israel of God in the coming age will be a crown of glory and a diadem in the hand of God, verse 4 declares the place of blessing that shall be theirs, in contrast with all that has characterized them hitherto. Several times already in reading this prophet we have seen that both they and their land have been forsaken by God because of their sins. To this day no interposition of God on their behalf, comparable to what He did, when He delivered them from Egypt under Moses, has

taken place. The delivering act of God is yet to come.

When it does take place by the appearing of Christ, it will be a repentant and born-again people who are delivered. As such they will be called, "Married." The figure used in verse 5; that of a young man marrying a virgin people and their land, may remind us of the striking words of Psalm 110, where the people who refused Jesus in the day of His poverty, will be willing in the day of His power, and the

youth of Israel will rally to Him as the dew falls in the summer morning. Only then will Jehovah their God rejoice over them.

But though that is so, the forsaken Jerusalem is not forgotten by the Lord. This is expressed by the setting of watchmen on the walls, who are never to hold their peace until deliverance comes. It is worthy of note that Ezekiel was the prophet set as "a watchman unto the house of Israel" (3: 17), and he it was who in vision saw the glory of the Lord depart from the temple and the city. During Israel's night the watchmen are not to hold their peace. They are, so to speak, continually to be reminding the Lord that His glory is involved in the establishment of Israel in their land, and Jerusalem becoming a praise to His name in the earth.

When we lift our thoughts from the earth and Israel's predicted place of blessing therein, to God's purpose for the heavens and for the church, we may surely speak in similar fashion. When in response to our Lord's assurance of His advent, we cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" we are thinking, we trust, not only of the fulness of our own blessing in the heavens, but of God achieving in the church all He purposed before the foundation of the world. There will be, "the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1: 14). As on the earth, so in the heavens, His glory will shine forth.

Yet after all the watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem are needed to

keep God's purpose before the minds of men, rather than before the mind of God, since He never fails. God Himself has sworn that He will do it, and He swears by Himself, as Hebrews 6: 13, reminds us. He connects His oath in verse 8 with "His right hand and by the Arm of His strength." So here again the Arm of the Lord is introduced, since it is by Him that the thing will be done; and the Arm is characterized by strength, for Christ is the power of God, as well as the wisdom of God, as we are told in 1 Corinthians 1: 24.

Corn and wine are frequently mentioned together in Scripture as indicating the sustenance that man needs, both solid and liquid, only here we see that all will not only be secured to Israel but that it shall be enjoyed by them in the presence of their God; as it is put here "in the courts of My holiness."

The three verses which close the chapter give us a prophetic forecast of how this will be accomplished. In Isaiah, "the daughter of Zion," is an expression that occurs a number of times. The first occurrence is in verse 8 of chapter 1, and it seems to be identified with the "very small remnant," mentioned in verse 9. We believe that is the force of it here. The God-fearing remnant will be found scattered to the ends of the world. They will be called and a standard lifted up to which they will gather; and then their way to the holy city and through its gates will be opened up before them, and every stone of stumbling will be removed.

And how will all this be accom-

plished? By the advent of their Salvation, who is evidently a Person, in the light of the words that follow. By His reward and His work the Arm of the Lord will prove Himself to be God's "Salvation unto the end of the earth" (49: 6).

And what will be the result as regards those who are gathered as "the daughter of Zion"? They will at last be exactly what Israel was originally intended to be—"The holy people;" that is, a people separated to God, in accord with His mind and nature. This delightful condition will only be reached since they will be, "the redeemed of the Lord."

This redemption will be a vital and spiritual reality, and not just a national thing, without regard to the spiritual state of individuals, as when they were brought out of Egypt under Moses. It will be brought about by the grace of our God, and not on the ground of law-keeping. This is indicated very clearly in Romans II, where Paul states that though at present shut up in unbelief, they will ultimately "obtain mercy." The coming salvation of the godly in Israel will be as wholly an act of Divine mercy as is the salvation of degraded Gentile sinners today. The mercy of God will reach both the people and their city.

But there is another side to this matter, which confronts us as we begin to read chapter 63. Israel's redemption will involve drastic judgment falling on all those who are foes of them and of God, just as judgment fell on the Egyptians,

when Israel was typically redeemed in the bygone age. And He, who is to become Israel's Redeemer in power, is the One who will overthrow them. In verse 1 of our chapter, however, Edom is specially singled out as the one on whom the judgment is to fall. Now Edom is Esau.

In the Proverbs we read that, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city," (16: 19), and this has been exemplified in the history of Esau and Jacob. The feud today is as strong as ever. It underlies the situation of great danger that surrounds Palestine today. It will be decisively settled at the second coming of Christ. Some excuse might possibly be found for Edom objecting to the reoccupation of the land by unconverted Jews, but evidently their objection will be just as strong against any regathering of a converted people. He who will regather Israel will destroy them.

The figure of treading "the winepress" is employed in verse 3, and the same figure is used in the closing verses of Revelation 14. It evidently indicates judgment of a wholesale and unsparing kind. There is also of course judgment which discriminates between the righteous and the wicked, but then the figure of a harvest is used, as we see in Matthew 13: 40-43, as it also is in earlier verses of Revelation 14, showing that judgment of both kinds will be executed in the coming day.

The whole of Obadiah's short prophecy is directed against Esau, and he makes it plain that just

when, "upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions," the house of Esau "shall be for stubble," which gives us the same thought of unsparing judgment under a different figure.

In our chapter this judgment is presented as the personal act of the One who is called, "Mine own Arm," taking place when salvation was accomplished on behalf of God and His people. At that solemn moment "the day of vengeance" will be in His heart, that day spoken of in chapter 61 verse 2, which our Saviour did not read in the synagogue at Nazareth. That **day** of vengeance will introduce the **year** of redemption for God's people. Judgment being God's "strange work" (28: 21), it will be a "short work" (Rom. 9: 28). Hence vengeance is only for a day compared with the year of redemption. All this, be it noted, has to do with the government of God on the earth, and not with saints who today are being called out for a heavenly portion. As far as we are concerned Edom is just one of the peoples amongst whom the Gospel is to be preached, though, alas! so few from amongst them respond to it.

Having predicted the coming day of vengeance, the mind of the prophet turned back in verse 7 to contemplate the extraordinary goodness of the Lord in His dealings with Israel from ancient days. It had been a story of loving kindness and of mercies according to His own heart. He had adopted them as His people, accredited them with truthfulness and saved them from their

oppressors. Moreover He entered into their afflictions, granted His presence, redeemed them from Egypt and carried and cared for them till they reached the land of promise. In Exodus 33, we read how God promised His **presence** to Moses and the people, and in the last chapter of that book it is recorded how the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Also we read of the Angel of the Lord who went before them, who here is called "the Angel of His **presence**." In Malachi 3: 1, the expression, "Messenger of the covenant," is really, "Angel of the covenant," and is clearly a prediction of the coming of the Lord Jesus; so here also we may see a reference to Him.

On God's part therefore nothing had been lacking in His dealings with Israel; so what had been their response to all this goodness? Verse 10 gives the sad answer, "But they rebelled, and grieved His holy Spirit." As a result of this His holy government had to come into action, and He became their adversary. Here we have in few words what Stephen amplified and brought up to date, as recorded in Acts 7. Here the prophet has to record that they **vexed** God's holy Spirit. Many centuries after Stephen says to them, "Ye do always **resist** the Holy Ghost." To grieve Him is serious indeed, but to resist Him is fatal.

As Isaiah saw it in his day, what was God's answer to this vexing? God remembered His original doings with Moses, and therefore there was hope in the prophet's heart, and still a basis on which he could appeal to the Lord. Again,

in verse 12, the Arm of the Lord is discerned as He who acted at the Red Sea, and the people recognized that God had triumphed gloriously. Hence, on this the last time that the "Arm" is mentioned by Isaiah, the adjective "**glorious**" is attached to His name. Glorious He is indeed.

Verses 12-14 therefore summarize the kindly dealings of God with His people, when He brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, and finally brought them into the land. There was the acting of "His glorious Arm," and consequently He made for Himself "a glorious name," as well as "an everlasting name." Nevertheless Israel was still under the law, and hence the hand of God lay heavily on them in judgment.

Isaiah was conscious however that he could appeal to God on another ground than the law. So, having mentioned Moses in verse 11, in the closing verses of the chapter, he makes a further appeal to God on the ground of their connection with Abraham, with whom was made the original covenant of promise. If we read Genesis 15, we see that the covenant embraced not only Abraham personally but his seed also, that was to include a great multitude. This covenant put his descendants through Isaac into a place of special relationship before God, and had no conditions attached to it.

Now Abraham, though "the friend of God," was but a man and had long since departed, and so was ignorant of them. Israel too—the name given by God to Jacob—

might not acknowledge them. Yet Jehovah, who had included them in His covenant, was the abiding One, and from the outset He had been as a Father to them, for in another prophet we have Him saying, "I am a Father to Israel" (Jer. 31: 9). Hence the appeal to Him here on that basis.

Two things strike us as remarkable here. First, in verse 17 the hardness of heart manifested in the people is traced back to an act of God. "Why hast **Thou made us** to err. . ." Was this justified? Clearly it was, for just that was the original message given to Isaiah, in verses 9 and 10 of chapter 6. What had happened to them was in principle the same as had happened to Pharaoh. Long before they had been warned, "Harden not your heart as. . . in the wilderness" (Psa. 95: 8), but to this no response had been given, and the time came in God's holy government when He sealed home this hardness of heart upon them; and as the result we have Isaiah's cry to God, Thou hast "hardened our heart to Thy fear."

Has such an action on the part of God any application to us today? Evidently it has, or we should not have found the warnings of Hebrews 3 and 4, based upon those words we have quoted from Psalm 95. In that Epistle, Jewish believers are taken up on the ground of their profession, and warned by the example of the Jewish people. Not all who **profess** the faith **possess** the vital thing. Hence the warning, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief."

There is also the terrible working of the government of God predicted for the end of our Gospel age, when as to those who refused the truth, "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2: 11). This most drastic action of the government of God will well befit the most drastic refusal of His truth, that the world will ever witness.

In the second place it is remarkable how the prophet complains in verse 18, not only of the brief occupation of the land of promise but also of the treading down of the sanctuary by the adversary. At the time of Isaiah's prophecy, as recorded in the opening of the book, this had not actually taken place, though there had previously been defeats, as in the days of Rehoboam. It appears that Isaiah was given to see the end to which the people were drifting, and to appeal to God in the light of it. That the sanctuary should be defaced by the adversary was the crowning blow. If that was lost, all was lost. In the light of this we can understand the touching appeal that is made, beginning and ending with what is called, "the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory."

Now what will have to take place if this appeal of the prophet is to be answered? Evidently that which he yearned for, as expressed in the first verse of the next chapter. God Himself must intervene in a very personal way. He must rend the heavens and come down. Nothing short of this would suffice. Yes, but how should this be done?

The words that follow make very plain what Isaiah had in his mind.

He desired that God would personally intervene in power and in judgment. He knew that God had come down at the start of their national history, when there were thunders, lightnings, fire, and "the whole mount quaked greatly," even if it did not actually flow down at His presence. Now, if there were another such display of the Divine presence, surely the effect would be great.

It was, of course, something of this kind that would break up the Roman power, and work a visible deliverance for Israel, that the people, even the godly ones, connected with the coming of their Messiah, as we see so plainly manifested by the disciples, both before Jesus died, and even after His resurrection. Something of that sort will take place at the second coming of Christ, as Zechariah 14: 4, testifies. And for that coming we wait.

But we today are in the happy position of knowing that this desire for the presence of God has been answered first in another way. Earlier Isaiah had foretold the coming of the One, whose name should be, Immanuel, and in the opening of Matthew's Gospel we are told the meaning of that name—**God with us**. The heavens were rent upon Him just as He came forth in public service. He came amongst us, "full of grace and truth;" not doing, "terrible things," but rather suffering Himself the terrible things, when He died as the Sacrifice for sin.

Compared with these prophetic desires, and even forecasts, into what "marvellous light" we have been brought!

“GREAT THINGS FOR THYSELF”

F. B. HOLE.

IN the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, the state of things in Judah and Jerusalem was rapidly deteriorating. Jeremiah was the prophet, raised up of God and commissioned to proclaim the word of the Lord, and courageously expose the state of things that was leading to the final disaster. Baruch was the scribe that was employed to write in a book the solemn words that Jeremiah had to utter. This we learn when Jeremiah 45 is read.

The masses of the people were indifferent, if not hostile, to all that Jeremiah had to say: but not so Baruch. He not only wrote down the prophecies of judgment, but he felt the weight and sorrow of them, as we see in verse 3 of that short chapter. Woe had been pronounced upon the people, but he felt it for himself, saying, “Woe is me now!” Moreover he accepted it from God. He might well have spoken of Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonian monarch, as bringing the misery upon them; but no, for what he cried was, “**The Lord** hath added grief to my sorrow.” He at least believed the things he had written, and he knew that the final crash was still to come, and near at hand.

Let us each challenge our hearts as to how we should have reacted to such a situation. If endowed with some energy and initiative, would not our tendency have been to say, that times of national disaster present great opportunities to the courageous individual for advancement and great profit? It would seem that the temptation

to think in this way was present with Baruch; and hence the word to him, “Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.” Self-aggrandisement was definitely to be ruled out. He was simply told that his life would be given to him as a “prey” or “spoil” wherever he might be carried. God would preserve his life and that was the only profit he was to expect.

This little episode has been recorded in the Scriptures for our instruction. Let us seek to profit by it. From the moment that Solomon began to seek great things for himself and pile up riches, decline set in with the nation and its kings. Self-seeking in a day of prosperity is ruinous and even more so in a day of declension and disaster. This was true of Israel who were under the law. It is equally true, if not more so, for the people of God today, since we are not under the law but under grace.

But, alas! self-seeking has been a very prominent evil in the sad history of Christendom. It began very early, for the Apostle Paul in his imprisonment had to write, “All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Phil. 2: 21). A few centuries passed, and the awful evils of the clericalism, which reached its culmination in the Papacy, came to pass, in which self-seeking was pursued without a trace of shame.

Still further the centuries have rolled on, and we find ourselves, as we believe, in the closing days of Christendom, and of the character

of those days we get a glimpse in the Lord's words to the Laodicean church, recorded in Revelation 3. The outstanding feature of that church is its **self-satisfaction**, which is the natural outcome of a **self-seeking** course, crowned with success. There is indeed a striking affinity between the "success" of Solomon and of the Laodiceans. In Ecclesiastes 2 we read how Solomon became "rich and increased with goods," until he had "need of nothing." Laodicea was in just that state, though the "goods" in which they gloried, were of a different sort to those of Solomon. At the finish, Solomon found his to be only "vanity and vexation of spirit;" and the end of the Laodiceans is to be spued utterly out of the mouth of the Lord.

The seeking of great things for self is, of all the tendencies of fallen human nature, the deepest dyed. The world-system has been evolved according to the principles of fallen men. It has come under the searching analysis of the Spirit of God, and the verdict is, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father" (1 John 2: 16). And what are these three component parts of the world but different forms of self-seeking?

In the cross of Christ the world has been judged, as we read in John 12: 31. In that same cross "sin in the flesh" has been condemned, as stated in Romans 8: 3; that is, our fallen nature is condemned, and thereby "self" is judged and set aside. At no time is it to dominate the thoughts and desires of the Christian.

Hence the word to us is, "**Seek** those things which are above, where

Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3: 1). This is as important for us, whose lot is cast in the twentieth century, as it was for the saints of the first century. Obeying this injunction we shall be delivered from seeking great things for ourselves.

And, what is more, we shall be seeking the great things of God. A devoted servant of God, who a century and a half ago was a pioneer in missionary work, had as a motto something like this, "Attempt great things **for God**: expect great things **from God**." Carey, the Northamptonshire cobbler, spake thus, and he laboured on, in spite of opposition and sometimes ridicule, particularly at the translation of the Scriptures into native tongues. No spectacular results were visible during his lifetime, but great things **from God** have sprung from what he attempted **for God**.

So let us remind ourselves that as with Baruch, so with us, only in a far deeper and more wonderful sense, our life has been given to us as our "spoil". It was prophetically declared of our risen Lord that, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Isa. 53: 12) and we are brought into the eternal life which is His, for we have it in Him.

The eternal life which is ours is not centred in self but in Him. As Christians, let us leave the world to seek for itself the great things after which it lusts. We have the life which is life indeed and seeks only the things of God's kingdom and of Christ. So let us obey Paul's instruction to Timothy to "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6: 12), to which we have been called by the grace of God.

THE SEEKING SAVIOUR

J. HOUSTON

IN Luke 15: 1-7, the Lord Jesus gives us a beautiful parable, presenting Himself as the seeking Saviour in search of the lost sinner, who is well described as a lost sheep. It is characteristic of a sheep to go astray, and become lost in its solitude and wandering. Hence it was written, by way of application to us that, "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53: 6). Here is the Gospel in its simplest and purest form. He is the seeking Saviour and we the lost sinners. In perfect love He came into the world to seek and to save us.

It was natural that sinners should draw near to the Lord Jesus in order to hear His words of love and grace, even as the Lord had drawn near to them. So we read, at the beginning of the parable, the arresting words, "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him." The Pharisees and Scribes saw this and were highly displeased, for it went in direct opposition to their attitude. They hated such, and would have no contact with them. In that frame of mind it ill suited them to see His attitude. So they murmured saying, "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them".

This gave the appropriate occasion for the Lord to show that not only did He **receive** sinners, but that He **sought** them very diligently, in order to save them. He was the Son of Man, who came, "to seek and to save that which

was lost," and while in the world He always acted in perfect accord with His mission. He loved sinners; He sought them; He saved them. Blessed be His Name!

To illustrate this, He gave forth the parable as to the shepherd who, losing one sheep out of the hundred, went after it until he found it. The Pharisees would have done this. In fact, the Lord referred to them when He said, "What man of **you**, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it." The Pharisees had a keen sense of material values, and so a lost sheep meant a substantial loss to them, while a lost sinner meant practically nothing, though he possessed an immortal soul. In fact, they would esteem the loss of a sinner as being but the riddance of what was objectionable. A deplorable state of soul, this! And if this spirit of the Pharisee were not **in us all**, there would be no need of reference to it. But very few of us, if any, get altogether rid of it since it is inherent, deeply embedded in our sinful nature, the infallible product of pride.

God will have mercy on sinful man; but He will not receive sacrifice from him as a substitute. The proud Pharisee will give the sacrifice, but will not receive the mercy of God, bestowed freely on sinners who repent. In this way he would make God to be his Debtor, rather than that he should be a debtor to God for His mercy. It is laid down as a truth for all

time that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The Pharisee would like to assume, in amazing pride and ignorance, the more blessed place. Well might the Lord dismiss them with these words, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9: 13).

Turning away from the Pharisees with their pride and murmuring, we see the blessed Lord, as the seeking Saviour, going after the lost sheep. When He finds it, He places it upon His shoulders rejoicing. So that, we have the Pharisees murmuring, on the one hand, because He showed mercy to the lost; and the blessed Lord, on the other hand, greatly rejoicing because He had found the precious object of His search. What a contrast! Oh, that we knew more in our hearts of the love of God to man, told out in the seeking Saviour! Oh, that we knew more in true experience of His joy, in finding and saving the lost, who are ready to perish!

It is of interest to note that when the lost sheep is found, the Shepherd carries the sheep on His **shoulders**, and not on one shoulder merely. A contrast with this is found in Isaiah 9: 6, where we read, "the government [of the world] shall be upon His **shoulder**." It simply means that more power is needed to bring right home a sheep once lost, than is needed to govern the world. Marvellous fact!

Timid souls, who are sometimes doubtful and apprehensive, wonder

if they will safely reach the end of their journey, as they seem to struggle on. They forget that they do not go to heaven on their own feet; but rather they simply rest on the Shepherd's shoulders. None can pluck them out of His all-powerful hand. Moreover, God the Father is interested in the safety of the sheep, and none can pluck them out of His hand. The Father and the Son are One, in purpose and in power, to ensure the safe conduct of the sheep. What Divine security!

If any of our readers entertain doubts as to this, let them read the things of which Paul was persuaded, as he stated at the end of Romans 8. If they are persuaded, as Paul was persuaded, all their doubts will be cleared away, and they will have the fullest assurance of their perfect safety, on their way to heaven, in the care of Divine Persons, the Father and the Son.

If the homeward journey is thus secure, the welcome at home, on safe arrival, is equally secure. "When He cometh home, He calleth together His friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost." He invites those who had an interest in His saving work, and in the joy it gave Him, when one sinner was saved and brought securely home, that they might participate in His joy. The joy is His — He sought; He found; He saved; He rejoiced. All is of Him, for His own joy and glory. Well might others rejoice with Him. It will be so in heaven — a place of joy as well as of security.

How significant the words, "When He cometh home." HOME! The very thought of it fills us with joy. The Father's house, where we shall be with the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, for all eternity. Then we shall go no more out; shed no more tears; be where death can never come, neither sorrow, nor suffering, nor pain. The

former things will have passed away. All things will be new, and all things of God.

What a home! What rest divine! What a scene of eternal bliss, for ever with the Lord, who sought us and saved us for His own joy and glory!

FINDING PASTURE

T. D. BELL

IN those very familiar words of John 10, the Lord presented Himself as "the door of the sheep" (verse 7), to each hearing His voice. All such are brought by Him into the one flock, of which He is the one Shepherd. It is of the sheep of this flock that the Lord speaks, they, "shall go in and out, and find pasture."

What a picture, true of this present day of grace, this presents; a vast field without enclosures, and every believer viewed as moving in it, in relation to the one Shepherd.

The place where the good Shepherd leads, it need hardly be said, is not in the fields of man's world and day. These can only be a wilderness to every true sheep of the flock. That vast sphere of God's purposed blessing, its breadth, and length, and depth, and height; that surely is the region where the flock moves, led by the Shepherd, all enclosures removed. So we are free to move through all, and find pasture for our souls in the ministry of Christ.

both writer and readers as to whether we range, in present experience, through the full scope of both Old and New Testaments, where all this is set before us?

The incident of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, recorded in Luke 24, shows the Lord, in His Shepherd care, leading two sheep from the Jewish fold into the new things. In that conversation by the way they learned how the Old Testament scriptures witnessed to "things concerning Himself," as He threw upon them the light of His Person and His finished work. How comprehensive it was! Beginning at Moses and through all the prophets He expounded these things, and thus opened to them the door out of the Jewish fold; as later, amidst the assembled disciples, He gave first the promise, and then by the Spirit the entrance, leading them out into the new order He was establishing.

What, we may ask, is the source of that energy, which would set each of us in movement through the whole field now set before the one

The question may be raised with

flock? Surely it is the Spirit's work in us, first of all producing the desire and appetite for Christ and His things, then moving us in experience as under the Shepherd's eye. This gives energy to know Him better, satisfying our spiritual desires, and leading us in His care through the whole field.

The two disciples, whose hearts burned within them, would ever after read the Old Testament scriptures in the full light that was thrown upon them, as they were led with the other disciples into the full range of the truth, centred in Christ. The Christian today, each of us, can range throughout the Old Testament in the light of the risen Christ and the opened heavens. In that light they reveal to us the One we love, and in whom we find the pasture for our souls.

Is it the one offering we would understand, and find spiritual nourishment in the truth of it? The Gospels present Christ making it fully. The Epistles give their wondrous testimony to its efficacy for us, and how God views it. The early chapters of Leviticus reveal in type its details, part by part—the burnt offering, Godward; then the meat and peace offerings, and the sin offering. Thus we may learn in detail all its characters, and find spiritual food that ministers Christ to our hearts.

Is it our relationship now by grace in Christ to God? The Gospels and Epistles present it in doctrine and practice, and they throw this light upon Old Testament history. There we see it acted in typical movements. Egypt, Wil-

derness, Canaan—privilege or responsibility, whether of priest or Levite, soldier or common people; yes, even the leper comes in too! We are all in it. As the light of the New Testament shines back upon it, we learn what may regulate our lives, bringing Christ to bear upon heart and conscience.

How men are fearful today; and well they may be! But Moses and all the prophets have much to say as to this. All eyes may be turning to Palestine, but Moses speaks in Genesis 14 of that detached and dignified king and priest, Melchizedek, coming out to Abram, returning from war and blessing him. How to our hearts every feature of this shines with a radiance that can only come from the risen Christ in glory.

Hebrews 7 makes it all clear to us. There is only One, who could combine in His Person both righteousness and peace. He, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, the Son of God, is a Priest continually. Will the wars that are yet to come completely destroy the earth? men are asking in fear. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," so He will come out to judge, to rule and to bless. Genesis 14: 18-20, forecasts for us the manner of that coming.

Finding pasture! Search and see, for it is everywhere in the Scriptures. Many parts may be unfrequented by us—the records of David's mighty men, for instance. That snowy day, even, of Beniah's exploit recorded in 2 Samuel 23: 20. As we picture that scene do we not find our souls bowed in the Lord's presence, and His voice

again in our ears, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12: 50), and we see One taking that path through this wintry scene, and turning not aside until, in the place called Calvary all the enemy's power was met and vanquished. From the pit, where the lion was vanquished, only the man came forth. Christ has come forth and gone on high. We may well sing,

There is but that one in the waste,
Which His footsteps have marked
as His own;
And we follow in diligent haste
To the seat where He's put on
His crown.

Yes, the things concerning Himself, the food of the one flock, are found everywhere in Scripture; even

in those sad portions speaking of our failures, departures, and of answering discipline, like the book of Judges! In the midst of all that, a deed is wrought, and, "out of the eater came forth meat and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judges 14: 11).

Like sheep on hill pastures finding food amidst outcropping rocks, so we, amidst present failures and discipline, pass on, eating the honey and the sweetness. The good Shepherd has given His life for the sheep, and all the blessings come to us through His death and resurrection.

Let us all pray for grace to move throughout this vast field and, under the risen Shepherd's gracious eye, to "go in and out, and find pasture."

THE SEVEN-FOLD ATTITUDE OF BELIEVERS

R. THOMPSON

TO have every movement regulated by the Holy Spirit according to the will of God, and in communion with Christ, who is in glory, would constitute a happy man after the Divine standard. It would be in keeping with what we read in the opening of Psalm 1, where the "blessed," or "happy" man is declared to be the one who is separated from evil and delighting in the law of Jehovah continually. Also in Psalm 84, verses 4 and 5, others are described as happy who dwell in the house of Jehovah with praise, and receive seasonable strength from Him for the wilderness path with all its testings.

It is the desire of the Lord, who loves us, and has purchased us with His own blood, that we should be ever near Him; having no shade of distance between us and Him through unwatchfulness on our part. This reminds us of the attitude of the Apostle John in the Upper Room, as recorded in John 13. He was found **leaning** on the bosom of the Lord Jesus. Now there is a divine and holy way of approach to this place of love and communion with Christ.

Firstly, there is the **bath**, for when in verse 10 Jesus said, "he that is washed," the word He used

really signified, "bathed," and this indicated regeneration.

Secondly, there is **the bason**, mentioned in verse 5, which the Lord took in order to wash the disciples feet, declaring the necessary cleansing from wilderness defilement, by the water of the word.

Thirdly, there was as a result **the bosom**, on which John leaned—the enjoyment of the love of Christ.

With this we may connect the attitude of **lying down** in the green pastures, of which Psalm 23: 2 speaks, under the figure of a sheep. This indicates a condition of satisfaction and contentment, through being led and sustained in a personal way by the Lord as our Shepherd. Every need having been met, the heart reclines in the joy of this provision, experiencing the company of the Shepherd, who leads beside the waters of quietness. This is the place of tranquility and peace with Him.

To be **sitting** at His feet is to be in the place of instruction, with the Son of God as the Revealer of heavenly things. Moses before his death could foretell this, saying to the children of Israel, "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand; and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words" (Deut. 33: 3). Here we have the character of Jehovah, as Lover, Keeper, Teacher and Shepherd.

If we turn to Luke 8, we read how "Legion," once held by Satan in hard bondage and fear, was wonderfully delivered by Jesus who

came to undo the works of the devil. Now, in freedom and peace, he is found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

Again in Luke 10, we discover that Mary of Bethany found her place of instruction, sitting at His feet. She chose that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. So whether we be young or old in the faith, there is room for each of us at the feet of Jesus.

Another attitude of the believer is to be **standing**, fully equipped for the spiritual conflict. The enemy and his mode of attack are stated in Ephesians 6: 11, and the complete armour of God, which we are to use at all times, is stated. It is the conscious possession of our inheritance in Christ which is at stake; and we have a relentless foe, seeking to keep us from it. Three times the words, "Be able," are found in this chapter—"Be able to stand," "Be able to withstand," "Be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." This is the assurance of victory to those who obey the Word of God.

So, having taken to ourselves the whole armour, we are to stand in battle array, facing the enemy. The position is taken up in the fulness of God's sufficiency for us, and we stand with our loins girt about with truth. Other pieces of spiritual armour are also taken up, and we are made to be overcomers through the strength of the Lord and the power of His might.

The attitude of **walking** would apply largely to our conduct and manner of life, as before God and before men. The power for this is found in the Holy Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the

lust of the flesh " (Gal. 5: 16). Our walk, as thus governed by Him, would be to the praise of God, enhancing the vocation wherewith we are called; and walking in love, as Christ also hath loved us, according to Ephesians 5: 2.

Also there is the **running** with endurance; and the life of the believer is likened to a race. There is an incorruptible crown to be won, as we reach forward to the calling of God on high in Christ Jesus, as we see in Philippians 3: 14. As we thus run, striving for the mastery, with every weight and besetting sin laid aside, we look off to Jesus, the Originator and Completer of faith. He has completed the whole course, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. To consider Him, in all His pathway of testing, is to find the antidote against being weary and faint in our minds, as is made very

clear if we read the opening verses of Hebrews 12.

Finally, we have the **mounting up** with wings as eagles, in Isaiah 40: 31. This should speak to us of God's victory on our behalf, which is wrought out in us. We thus may be enabled by the power of the Spirit of God to rise above the things of the earth, and be gloriously engaged with Christ and heavenly things, and with His service while we wait for Him. The chapter — Isaiah 40 — begins with **comfort** and ends with **strength**.

In 1 Thessalonians 4, the chapter of special comfort to the believers, we are assured that at the coming of the Lord for His saints, we shall not only **mount up** but we shall be **caught up**, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore let us comfort one another with these words.

A QUESTION ANSWERED

J. A. TRENCH

When "water" is used figuratively in Scripture, what is its meaning?

WATER is the symbol of the word of God applied to the soul in power, by the Spirit of God. Compare the expression "born of water," with James 1: 18, where we read, "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth;" and with 1 Peter 1: 23, which runs, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Then turn to Ephesians 5: 20, where we find the water definitely identified with the word in the expression, "The washing of water by the word."

Water purifies; hence by the use of the symbol more is conveyed than if it had been simply said, "born of the word." It includes the effect produced, as well as the instrumentality used of God in this, the beginning of all His ways with us in grace.

In the types water has as large a place as the blood. Both flowed from the pierced side of the Lord Jesus in death, as recorded in John 19: 34. In the historic order the blood comes first, as the basis of everything for God's glory and our

blessing. In the order of application to us, the water comes first: "This is He that came by water and blood. . . and it is the Spirit that beareth witness" (1 John 5: 6).

The Spirit it is who applies the word to the conscience, by which mighty operation of sovereign grace we are born absolutely anew. The effect in us is the conviction of sins; and when faith rests on the testimony of the Spirit to the value of the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin, the Spirit can take up His dwelling-place in us, to be the power of the enjoyment of all that we have been brought into by the water and the blood: and the Christian position is then complete.

But fastening our attention on the water, it is important to see that there is a double application of what it represents, as seen in such a verse as, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13: 10).

There is first, as we have seen, being "born of water and of the Spirit," this answers in the first washing mentioned in this verse, and as it is the communication of a new life and nature, cannot be repeated: we are, "clean every whit." Nor is this by any change in the character of the flesh in us: "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and there can be no purification of it. The word applied by the Spirit to our souls, carries with it the sentence of death upon all that is of the flesh. God could do nothing with it but end it in judgment, as mentioned in Genesis 6: 13; a judgment He carried out for faith in the death of His Son, as

stated in Romans 8: 3. Thus the water was found where the blood was, in His death. It is on the one hand, the end of the flesh in total condemnation, and on the other, the introduction of a life in which we can live to God and enjoy Him for ever.

But we have to pass with this life through a defiling world, where all that meets the senses tends to hinder communion with Him who is our life. Hence the need of the second application of the word, symbolized by the Lord's touching service to His disciples, as recorded in John 13. He girded Himself with the towel, and pouring water into a basin, He began to wash their feet, and wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. It was, as Jesus tells Peter, that we might have "part with Him" when He is gone, that is, as having departed out of the world to the Father (see, verse 1).

We have to go through the world out of which He has had to depart, and therein lies all our need: liable to contact defilement at every step, or at least that which would bring moral distance between our souls and Him. He knows how to apply His word to bring back the soul to the enjoyment of His presence, in His ever faithful and unfailing love, that there may not be even a shade of reserve between us and Him. That first action of His word, by which we were clean every whit in the divine nature, could never be repeated; this is needed continually. Nor does He leave us to apply it to ourselves—"if I wash thee not"—though He may use any of us, who have learned in the school of His grace, in this privileged service to

others, as verse 14 indicates.

It is of interest, as helping to bring out the distinction all the more clearly, that the Lord employs two different words in this 10th verse, according to their clearly defined usage in the Greek version of the Old Testament. He that is "washed" or "bathed," as applicable to the whole person, is the word, *louo*, used of the washing of the priests on the day of their consecration, in Exodus 29: 4. "Needeth not, save to wash his feet," is the word *nipto*, used for the washing of their hands and their feet in the laver at the tabernacle door every time they went into the sanctuary, as recorded in Exodus 30: 18-21.

These two words are never inter-

changed. But, in noting this, we must remember the difference between preparation for priestly entering into the holy places, as in the Old Testament, and this wonderful service of the Lord for us, that we may have the constant enjoyment of His presence, as having gone to the Father.

May our hearts be more deeply affected by the love that would not leave a spot on our feet; and may we yield ourselves up to the searching action of His word upon us, when it is needed that He should apply it, rather than be content to walk at a distance from Him, clinging to something that maintains that distance, to His dishonour and our own incalculable loss.

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 64: 4—65: 12)

IT is striking how verse 4 follows what we have dwelt upon in the first three verses. Isaiah desired a mighty display of the power of God, such as had been manifested at the outset of Israel's history: yet he was conscious that God had in reserve things beyond all human knowledge, and prepared for those who waited for Him to act.

To this verse the Apostle Paul referred in 1 Corinthians 2: 9, showing that though in ordinary matters men arrive at knowledge by the hearing of the ear—**tradition**—or by the eye—**observation**—or by what we may call **intuition**, these things can only reach us by **revelation** from

God by His Spirit. Isaiah knew that there were things to be revealed. Paul tells us that they have been revealed, so that we may know them.

In keeping with this, the Apostle Peter has told us in his first Epistle that when the Spirit of Christ testified through the prophets, they "inquired and searched diligently," concerning what they had written, and they discovered that they were predicting things, only to be made known to such as ourselves who are brought into the light of what Christ has accomplished. So again we have to remind ourselves how great are the privileges that are ours. God

has indeed "come down," but in grace and not, for the time being, in judgment.

The prophet foresaw that when the prepared things were made known they would only be received if a certain moral state were found. There must be not only the waiting for Him but also a rejoicing in righteousness and working the same, as well as a remembrance of God in all His ways. Thus the godly remnant of Israel are described here. It will be so in a future day, and so it is today, since it is only by the Spirit that we perceive and receive the wonderful things now revealed. When, having been received, the Spirit of God is in control, we enter into the enjoyment of the things that God has prepared for those who love Him.

Now at that moment the necessary state did not exist amongst the people, hence we have the words, "Behold, Thou art wroth; for we have sinned." This confession is placed in brackets, in Darby's New Translation, so that the following words spring out of the beginning of the verse. In **righteousness** and **remembrance** is to be "continuance, and we shall be saved." Isaiah had previously presented to us, "a **just** God and a Saviour" (45: 21); thus the people whom He saves must be brought into conformity with Himself.

Verses 6 and 7, continue the confession of sin that was interjected in verse 5. Notice the four figures that are used to express their sorrowful state. First, unclean, as a leper is unclean, in the sight of the law. Second, their "righteousnesses,"

that is, their many doings which they considered to be acts of righteousness, were but "filthy rags" in the sight of God. Third, as a consequence of this, they were all fading, dying things, like autumn leaves. Fourth, their sins were like a wind that blew them all away.

Are things different today? Has the spread of a civilization based upon Christian ideals altered things? It has not, and things are just the same. The leprosy of sin is just as virulent; the outward righteousnesses of mankind are just as spurious; death is just as busy; the wind of God's judgment on sin will soon sweep all away.

Further the prophet had to complain that no one was rightly moved by this state of things, so as to call upon the name of God; no one was found to take hold of God in supplication and prayer. The fact was that God had hid His face from them in His holy government. It was a sad state of affairs when no one was stirred to take the place of an intercessor.

And without a doubt we may say the same as we look on the state of Christendom today. Bright spots there are, thank God!—spots where the Spirit of God is manifestly at work. But in spite of this, the picture over-all is a dark one. Evil abounds under the profession of Christ's name, and even where the Spirit of God is working, whole-hearted servants of God are all too few. Who stirs himself up to take hold on God as to it? Who prays to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest?—as the Lord Himself

directed in Matthew 9: 38. May God Himself stir us up, instead of hiding His face from us, if we fail to stir ourselves up in this matter.

Now, in our chapter, comes the touching appeal to Jehovah. The very first words of Isaiah's prophecy were, "The Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me." Very well then, Jehovah had taken the place of Father to Israel, and upon that the faith of the prophet counted, and on it he based his appeal. Moreover Jehovah was not only Father to them but He was as a Potter also. Israel was but the clay in His hand.

That this was so, and that God acknowledged it to be so, was made manifest a little later in the days of Jeremiah. In chapter 18 of his book we read how he was instructed to go down to the potter's house and receive a lesson there. He saw the clay vessel "marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." The Lord proceeded to tell Israel that they were in His hand as clay is in the hand of the potter, so He could do with them as seemed good in His sight. Confining our thoughts to Israel, we know that God will make another vessel, which is what the Lord Jesus was showing Nicodemus, as narrated in John 3. That which is born of the flesh—even Abrahamic flesh—is flesh. Only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Only a born-again Israel will enter the Kingdom.

In Isaiah's day the point as to "another vessel," made known to Jeremiah, had hardly been reached;

hence here we have further pleadings with God on behalf of the marred vessel as we see in the four verses that close the chapter. "We are all Thy people," says the prophet, though about that time, or very soon after, Hosea's son had to be called "Lo-ammi: for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (1: 9). These closing verses of appeal seem like a last cry to God, before the sentence of repudiation was given to Hosea.

The iniquity marking the people is confessed, but mercy is sought. The desolations mentioned in verses 10 and 11 strike us as being stated prophetically, for though the king of Assyria ravaged the cities of Judah in the days of Hezekiah, he was not allowed to take Jerusalem nor burn the temple. Jeremiah it was, who actually saw these things fulfilled. Even in Hezekiah's day however, it was certain that these terrible desolations would come to pass, as we saw when reading the end of chapter 39 of this book. When they were accomplished Israel was set aside for the time being, and the times of the Gentiles began.

The two verses that commence chapter 65, are in exact harmony with this. They are quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 10: 20, 21, after he had shown that even Moses had upbraided the people and predicted that God would turn from them to others. Then he prefaced his quotation from our chapter by saying that, "Esaias is very bold. . ."

Yes, Isaiah does speak with great boldness for he speaks as the very voice of Jehovah rather than speaking about Him. He does not say,

“ He is sought. . . He is found. . . He said. . . ” but rather, “ I am sought. . . I am found. . . I said. . . ” How comes it, we may enquire, that people who never asked after God should be seeking Him? The answer seems obvious. It must take place as the result of God seeking after them. This is exactly what has taken place in this Gospel age. Israel being set aside, God goes out in sovereign mercy to Gentiles, as Paul goes on to explain in Romans II. Has the wonder of this mercy penetrated our hearts in any substantial measure?

God’s dealings with Israel, in setting them aside for this long period, is justified by what we read in verse 2. The people had been rebellious, following “ their own thoughts,” instead of God’s thoughts, as expressed in His holy law, and these thoughts of theirs led their feet into a way that was not good. God had condescended to entreat them “ all the day,” and that “ day ” had been a long one, extending over centuries of time. To these entreaties they had not responded.

The following verses lay specific evils to their charge, but before we consider them let us pause a moment to consider whether we have been guilty of pursuing our own thoughts instead of God’s in that which has been revealed to us. His mind for us as individual Christians, and also as members of the body of Christ—the church—is plainly stated in the Epistles of the New Testament. Now it is sadly easy to slip away from these and walk after our own thoughts; and more particularly so in regard to

church matters; easy to say, “ That was doubtless right enough for the first-century Christians, but hardly practicable for us today.” But it is God’s thoughts and ways that are perfect, whilst our own thoughts lead us into “ a way that was not good.”

The evil ways of Israel were largely connected with idolatrous practices, as verses 3-7 show. The opening words of Deuteronomy 12 are, “ These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land,” and there follow prohibitions against the high places and groves, or gardens, and altars which the heathen nations had made. So God’s way for them was that they should bring all their offerings to His place in Jerusalem; offering as He had commanded. But they preferred to worship according to their own thoughts with the result that is described in these verses. Their sacrifices were wrong; their altars were wrong; the food they ate was wrong; and to crown all this they affected a sanctimonious piety, which led them to say to others, “ Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.”

This plainly indicates that the evil of Phariseism began early in Israel’s history. The spirit of it is plainly visible when we read the prophecy of Malachi. It reached its fullest and worst expression in the time of our Lord, furnishing the main element which led to His crucifixion. We may remember how He charged them with, “ Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men ” (Matt. 15: 9). So this quite agrees with what we have just seen stated by Isaiah.

They preferred to walk after their own thoughts, rather than by the word of God. The same evil principle has persisted through the years, and it is all too evident today within the circle of Christian profession. Though their positions, both doctrinally and ecclesiastically, may widely differ, there are found those who demand separation — “Stand by thyself, come not near to me,” —based on a claim of superior sanctity or spirituality as the case may be. Such separatists are as offensive to God as, “smoke in My nose, a fire that burneth all the day.”

Now this state of things in Israel demanded a recompense of judgment from the hand of God. It would seem that this spurious sanctity on top of their rebellious disobedience was their crowning sin. It brought upon them the seventy years of captivity in Babylon; and, when those years had passed and a remnant came back to the land, the same hypocrisy sprang up in their midst again, rendered worse, if anything, by the very mercy that had been shown to them. They crucified their Messiah saying “His blood be on us, and on our children.” Thus it has been through their long centuries of trouble, and will yet be in the far worse sorrows of the great tribulation.

The lesson for us is that God desires obedience to His thoughts, expressed in His word, If that be our aim, we shall soon realize how little we apprehend them, and even more feebly carry them out, and this will produce in us a spirit of humility—the complete opposite to that of a spurious sanctity such as is revealed here.

Another note is struck when we reach verse 8. Under the figure of sparing a cluster of grapes, because it is of value for wine producing, God declares that He will spare a remnant of the people, though judgment must fall on the mass. This He will do, “that I may not destroy them all.” This remnant is spoken of as, “My servants,” and in the next verse as, “a seed out of Jacob,” and also as, “Mine elect,” who will inherit the land.

We may remember how our Lord Himself was predicted as “Seed” of the woman, in Genesis 3, and again as the “Seed” of Abraham, concerning which the Apostle wrote “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3: 16). When considering Isaiah 53, we also saw that the risen Christ is to “see His seed,” as the fruit of the travail of His soul; and the same thought meets us at the close of the other great prediction of the sufferings of Christ in atonement —“A seed shall serve Him” (Psa. 22: 30). He, who is preeminently the “Seed,” is to have a **seed** of His own order in His risen life. This thought underlies the verses we are considering.

Two further things may be pointed out before we leave these verses. First, it was to this godly seed that the Lord Jesus referred at the beginning of His well-known, “Sermon on the Mount.” The prophet speaks of, “an **inheritor** of My mountains,” and says, “Mine elect shall **inherit** it.” The third beatitude is, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall **inherit** the earth” (Matt 5: 5). Now this

enlarges the promise, so that it applies beyond the confines of Jacob and Judah. It is the meek of all peoples who will inherit the earth, when Heaven's kingdom is at last universally established.

The second thing we have to remember is that this remnant according to the election of grace, called out from the mass of the Jews, exists today, though by the very fact of its calling it is severed from Judaism and its earthly hopes. That it exists is made plain by the Apostle Paul in the opening verses of Romans II, and he cites his own case as the proof of it. We have to read Ephesians 2, particularly the latter part of it, to learn the new position of heavenly favour and blessing into which they are brought in association with those called from among the Gentiles by the Gospel that is being preached today.

In our chapter earthly blessing is before us, as verse 10 makes very plain. The valley of Achor, was a place of judgment, as narrated in Joshua 7: 24-26. That place of judgment is to become, "a door of hope," according to Hosea 2: 15. Our verse reveals it as a place of rest for flocks and for men. Is there not a parable in this? Where judgment has been executed, there hope is to be found, and rest is the final result.

We leave this beautiful picture when we read verses 11 and 12. God cannot forget the existing state of departure and sin that marked the people in Isaiah's day. They had forsaken Jehovah; they had forsaken His holy mountain, whereon stood His temple. And to what had they

turned? The rest of the verse reveals it, though the translation is rather obscure. In Darby's New Translation we find "Gad" substituted for "that troop," and "Meni" for "that number," with footnotes giving an explanation to the effect that the former word indicates, "Fortune, or the planet Jupiter," and the latter word, "Number, or Fate, or the planet Venus."

The people had turned aside to worship the heavenly bodies, and connected their false worship with the gambling instincts, which are so strong in fallen humanity. If things went well it was Fortune. If badly, it was Fate. In the minds of the people these were deities to whom they made offerings of food and drink. As so often "table" is a figure indicating solid food, as on the table of shewbread, and wine furnished the drink. This throws some light on the Apostle's words in 1 Corinthians 10: 21, where he mentions, "the cup of devils," and, "the table of devils." The devils of this verse were of course demons; and demon power lay behind the "Gad" and the "Meni," mentioned here.

When, in verse 12, God says He will "number" them to the sword, there is an allusion to the name "Meni," which means number. The people are plainly told that judgment and death lay before them. They were rejecting the law of God. We are living in an age when men are rejecting the grace of God; and to do this is more serious than to reject law, as we are told in Hebrews 10: 20. When the Gospel is preached, let this be made very plain.

“COME ON” — “GET OUT”

F. B. HOLE

IN Genesis 11 we are given a glimpse of the descendants of Noah a century or two after the flood. The antediluvian age had been one of individualism, since as yet government had not been established. Liberty flourished, ending in license which developed into violence and corruption. Now government of an elementary sort had been established by God, as recorded in Genesis 9: 5, 6.

This being so, every man's hand was no longer against his fellow, and a new age set in marked not by individualism but by co-operation. Men discovered that what they could not achieve as solitary individuals could be accomplished if they clubbed together. Hence in verses 3 and 4 of Genesis 11, we find twice repeated an expression—"Go to," which in Darby's New Translation is rendered, "Come on." The Hebrew word means, "To give help," so that, if we today wished to stir up others to act together, "Come on," is just what we should say.

But basically the spirit of the postdiluvian age was the same as that of the antediluvian; only instead of each seeking the self-exaltation, of himself, so that "I" was the great word, all together were to seek the exaltation of the great "US." It was "Let US build US a city and a tower. . .and let US make US a name." What the Apostle John calls, "the pride of life" (1 John 2: 16), was the dominating factor.

At this point God acted in a two-

fold way. As Creator He knew the intellectual and inventive powers He had conferred upon man, and that acting independently of Himself, with the lust of self-exaltation, "now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Hence He confounded their methods of speech, which largely confused and hindered their confederation.

But the second thing He did came somewhat later, though it is recorded directly we commence to read chapter 12. To Abram He said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." This entailed separation of a very complete kind, inasmuch as idolatry had invaded the family out of which he was called, as Joshua 24: 3, 4, states. By the time he was called, the world-system had taken shape under the deluding power of Satan, and when men of the world were still saying, "Come on," that they might accomplish their schemes, God said to him, "Get out."

Now this has ever been God's way. He separates His people from the world, that they may be for Himself. May we adduce a few more examples.

Take first the case of Abram's nephew, Lot. Here was a man who came out with Abram: a true saint at the bottom, for in the New Testament he is called "just [or, righteous] Lot;" though without that measure of faith that characterized his uncle. Hence, presently he drifted into the wicked city of

Sodom, where their evil ways vexed his righteous soul from day to day. How different from Abram, yet when the hour came for the destruction of the city the angel's word was, "Hast thou here any besides? . . . bring them OUT of this place." So Lot had to say to them, "Up, get you OUT of this place" (Gen. 19: 12, 14). They heeded him not, yet **out** he himself came, though like Job he might have to say, "I am escaped with the skin of my teeth" (Job 19: 20).

The descendants of Abraham went down into Egypt, which for the moment was a place of security and plenty under the benign rule of Joseph. Presently it became to them the house of bondage. If in Abram's day we see the world-system as the seat of man's progress in combination, yet under the idols of Satan's creation; and in Lot's day we see it as the seat of vile corruption; in the day of Moses we see Egypt as the world in its enslaving power, oppressing the people of God. Hence to Moses the word of God was, "I am come down to deliver *them OUT of the hand of the Egyptians*, and to bring them OUT of that land" (Exod. 3: 8). At that epoch Egypt was a splendid and attractive place, apart from the taskmasters, but it was no place for the people, if they were to worship God.

As we all know, though redeemed from Egypt, the people completely failed, falling persistently into idolatry under their kings until the captivity in Babylon took place. The predicted period having passed, under Cyrus a return to rebuild the temple was permitted, and we read,

"These are the children of the province that went up OUT of the captivity" (Ezra 2: 1). Once more God called His people **out**, though only a few responded amongst the many. Once again tragic failure ensued, as we see in Malachi, so much so that when the Lord Jesus, as the promised Messiah, came He was rejected and crucified.

This brought things to a climax, as the Lord Himself indicated in those wonderful words, recorded in John 12: 23-33. Referring to His being "lifted up," as the crucified One, He declared, "Now is the judgment of this world." This being the case, it should not surprise us that in this age of grace, which follows on His exaltation on high and the Spirit poured forth, the calling **out** of the world, of those who believe the Gospel should be strongly emphasized.

As regards Jewish believers, the Lord Himself announced it in advance. As the true Shepherd He entered the Jewish fold in the prescribed way, and amongst the sheep therein enfolded were some whom He called, "His own sheep." And what was His purpose in uttering His voice to them? Was it to stir them up to improve conditions in the "fold" and beautify it? NO. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them OUT." (John 10: 3).

But the Gospel has not been confined to Jews; it has gone forth to Gentiles also. This was quite a new departure in God's ways, and what was His purpose in it? In the early council at Jerusalem the Apostle James called attention to what had been declared by Simon

Peter; namely that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take OUT of them a people for His name" (Acts 15: 14). So **that** is what God is doing today.

And have we Christians been true to this call of God? Alas, no. Very early in the Church's history believers forgot the nature of their calling and got entangled with the world as we see in the case of the Corinthians. They forgot, or perhaps they hardly yet realized, that there is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness; between light and darkness; between Christ and Belial; between the believer and an infidel; between the temple of God and idols. The Apostle Paul instructed them that the saints of today are "the temple of the living God,"

and so the call to them was, "Come OUT from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6: 17-). The world-system of today is no better than it was when the Apostle wrote these words, though there is a thin veneer of Christianity in English-speaking lands. We are certainly IN the world, as we pass on our pilgrim way; but we are not OF it, since we have been born OF God, and hence "the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not" (1 John 3: 1).

From start to finish of the Bible God makes it plain that the saints, whom He owns, are to be separate from the world. This is a tremendous and far reaching **fact**. Let us each ask ourselves, How am I answering to it today?

OUTWARD BOUND

W. H. WESTCOTT

An article on Romans 15: 18-24, written just half a century ago.

IN translating the Epistle to the Romans for the benefit of natives converted to God from heathenism, its beauty and largeness have been more impressed upon me than ever.

Not to speak now of the early chapters with all their importance for our souls' establishment in grace, there are some excellent considerations at the end, which show the spirit and faith of the great vessel, whom God chose to be His servant to minister Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. I refer to the Apostle Paul, and to his communications by the Spirit in the fifteenth chapter.

It is a peculiar feature of the present dispensation that God has set

aside all national or hereditary religion as exemplified in His chosen nation of Israel (and no other nation is ever spoken of in Scripture as His chosen), in favour of the testimony which embraces all the Gentiles, that is, every nation and tribe under the sun.

Accordingly the Apostle, in fellowship with the heart and with the purpose of God, took first the whole region from Jerusalem to Illyricum as his parish, and fully preached the gospel of Christ. To our lilliputian minds it seems almost incredible (see the map of Paul's travels and the area involved); but in all his labours the power of the Spirit of God was

with him. Hence souls were everywhere brought to the knowledge of God revealed in Christ Jesus the Lord, assemblies were planted and watered, the mystery of the gospel was communicated.

The measure of saints' intelligence and faith everywhere varied, and we might suppose that this great vessel would now surrender the evangelistic side of his work to younger men, and devote himself to pastoral and teaching labours in the meetings already formed. Such might have been the human expedient, but it was not the Divine mode, in regard to **his** service. As long as there remained any part in that district in which Christ had not been named, he felt that there was not only a justification for his working in it, but a call to take the Gospel there; yet at the time of writing he felt that the ways of God took him onward. "Having no more place in these parts" was, for him, the loosening of the tether that bound him to them.

Now Rome and Italy were next in order as his thoughts went westward. But since at Rome was a large and prosperous assembly at the time, he did not regard that place as a terminus by any means; on the contrary, his thoughts went on to regions beyond them. He would spend time with them truly, and would impart some spiritual gift that they might be established; but a deep yearning possessed him to launch out into the deep. Spain lay beyond; Spain in the grip of the enemy of the Lord whom he served; Spain, where might be found other trophies of the saving grace of God and other members of that body, of the truth as to which he was constituted

minister.

But do notice the words, "**For which cause** also I have been much hindered from coming to you" (verse 22). For what cause? Because there still remained, up to the time just previous to the writing of the epistle, some towns where they had not heard of Christ. But once these were evangelised, Paul had no hesitation about leaving the assemblies with their local helpers in the care of the Lord and of His ever present Spirit, nor about plunging afresh into heathendom.

Does it not encourage and widen our hearts to read "It is written, To whom He was not spoken of, **they shall see**; and they that have not heard **shall understand**?" If we wish to be certain of converts to God, men who will both see and understand Him of whom the gospel speaks, we may look for them confidently among men who have not heard before, and to whom He was not spoken before. It seems to me that the normal movement of a saint's heart must be forward. A steamer is built for forward movement. It is capable of navigating to the rear, for there may be some poor fellow who falls overboard, to be picked up; or there may be occasional short-sightedness that nearly produces collision—and it is better to go astern a bit than to send one's fellow-navigators to the bottom; or it may be necessary to go backwards to get out of dock, or to get clear of other craft in harbour. But all this is abnormal, and the owners of the steamer would be very dissatisfied with their investment if she were not usually going full steam ahead on their business.

I understand this to have been

the spirit of the Apostle. He could put into Ephesus, and stay there a long time at the Lord's will; he could linger over Galatians, who seemed like subjects for the lifebelt or the lifeboat rather than sturdy mariners for God; but his evident business from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and again from Illyricum to Spain, was "full steam ahead" to regions where **Christ was not named**. This was the port of destination. Here is one of the notes in his log-book: "We are come as far as to you also in the gospel of Christ. . . having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you, **according to our rule** abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you" (2 Cor. 10: 14-16). If he went to Rome as he planned, it is thus he speaks; "I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way **thitherward** by you" (Rom. 15: 24). **Thitherward! Thitherward! THITHERWARD!**

We are not apostles now; in fact, we are very poor witnesses to our Lord at best, and the state of the assembly calls for constant care and prayer; but I judge we shall very greatly help saints by cultivating the Apostle's spirit of active testimony to the Lord. Nine hundred and ninety in every thousand may be fixtures in their own localities by business ties and other lawful claims; but let our hearts go out **thitherward, thitherward**. Whither? To where Christ is not named.

I am convinced that largeness of heart in such lawful directions would preserve from much introspection, and from much striving about words to no profit. A sound, active frame, healthful and vigorous, throws off microbes, where a frame enfeebled by inactivity absorbs and assimilates them.

May the Lord enlarge our hearts.

SUFFICIENT GRACE

J. S. BLACKBURN

A Valediction to Missionaries

IN writing to the Corinthians Paul speaks of "The Messenger of Satan," that brought affliction upon himself. The opposition of the devil is a fact to be reckoned with in every aspect of Christian life and service. It is this fact which makes life and service a warfare. Three references to it in 2 Corinthians have often been noticed because, in the Authorised Version, they happen to be alliterative. I sometimes think of parts of the mission field as a kind of laboratory of Christian truth, a sphere where, unaffected by the diffused influence on the masses of

centuries of Christian knowledge, there is seen in its essence the stark contrast and contest between light and darkness, life and death, the power of God and of Satan. All these three actions of the devil are seen there and constitute the real struggle, the deadly hand-to-hand cut and thrust, the anguish of the wound and the joy and thrill of victory.

First, the enemy is the god of this world and as such he **blinds** "the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. 4: 4). What power can suffice to bring light to blind eyes?

Nothing less than the power which first caused light to shine out of the primeval darkness. It is God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who hath shined in our hearts. And it proves to be so. Though the missionaries have the priceless treasure of this light in earthen vessels, troubled on every side, perplexed but not in despair, cast down but not destroyed, yet they see this miracle being repeated, as the light of the gospel causes the scales to fall from eyes, blinded by sin, and men are turned from the power of Satan to God.

Second, the enemy is a serpent and as such he **beguiles** as we see in 2 Corinthians II: 3. The imagery is that of a betrothal. The saints are espoused as a chaste virgin to one Husband. The point of the enemy's more subtle attack is to enfeeble the faithfulness that can only be sustained by hearts enraptured with Christ. To this end he brings to the believer, the things which **rival** his Eternal Lover.

This applies of course, to the worker himself, but I am thinking also of those among whom he labours. How much we hear this refrain from the missionaries "We are afraid lest by all the arts of heathendom, as Satan beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so their minds should be corrupted from simple fidelity to Christ". The worker can only be zealous with a godly zeal, by intercession and care, if by any means God will grant them recall.

In the third place, the enemy is our adversary and as such he **buffets** the worker. This we get in 2 Corinthians 12: 7. In Paul's case it was by his thorn in the flesh. We

need not pause to consider what this was, except that it was some **bodily affliction**.

Thus we learn that a large element in the difficulty of spreading the light, is the liability of believers to backslide, and in the afflictions of the saints, is the fact that we have an enemy, an actively hostile power ceaselessly engaged in the conflict. It is, of course, decidedly unfashionable to admit this. C. S. Lewis imagines the moderns saying "Do you mean to say you are bringing him back, horns and tail and all that?" and we might well answer with him, that we do not know about the horns and tail, but we do know that every Christian must reckon with the wiles and the roaring of the devil.

The deep emotion which breathes through these words, reaching us across two millennia brings them very near to our own experience. Fourteen years had passed by, but Paul tells the story as though it were yesterday. His resource was prayer — not apparently prayer every day for years, but so wonderfully like the Lord in His agony in Gethsemane, a prayer three times repeated that it might depart from him. He asks once—a clear, definite, single request that it might depart from him. He waits for an answer. How long he waits we have no idea. He asks again: and a third time, the same clear, definite, single request that it might depart from him. The answer he receives is as clear and definite as the request and the matter is closed. Paul, thorn and all, gets on with his work: not as a Stoic with steeled heart, but strengthened by the grace of Christ. That answer is available to every suffering saint: and how often the

Lord has by these words of Scripture, answered the prayers of His servants. Our prayer is that the Lord Himself will give these words to our friends who set out again for the field—and indeed to all of us.

“ My Grace ”

Grace is an outstanding New Testament word. It is used in so many different connections as to make true the hymn:—

“ Grace is a mine of wealth
Laid open to the poor.
Grace is a sovereign spring of
health
Tis life for evermore.”

A fundamental element in the Bible meaning of the word is a **free gift given as a favour**. It is as though the Lord said here “ What I can give is sufficient for you ”.

God is Love for Himself first of all. The Father’s love was first of all directed within the Godhead, but God’s grace was not and could not be toward Himself or directed between the Persons of the Godhead. God’s grace is essentially the ocean fulness of His love, wisdom and power flowing out to **man** as an unmerited gift. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is within the knowledge of every Christian. “ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich ”. (2 Cor. 8: 9). The riches, the exhaustless resources flowed out of Him: they flowed into us. The outlet, the place where He met us, was the time and place of His poverty. On the cross He took our place: came where we were and by this His riches have enriched us. His grace is the plenitude of His power

and wisdom and love flowing out to us.

“ Is sufficient ”.

The Lord’s words state that His grace is exactly equal to our need. We know that in Himself His grace is a limitless sea. He is **full** of grace and truth. But when we receive of His fulness, as Paul testified, it is exactly equal to our need, no less, no more. It is at the same time, as John testified grace upon grace. On through John’s manhood, on into his extreme old age, his experience of the Word made flesh, the Only Begotten Son of the Father, was that from Him he received wave after wave, grace upon grace, in never-failing supply. This “ deep, sweet, fountain ” never runs dry, but is always exactly right to meet our present need.

“ For thee ”.

These words were spoken to a man of like passions with ourselves. They were spoken to a man whose life was the full tide of missionary effort, who knew the full round of journeyings oft, perils by the heathen, perils in the wild places: of weariness and painfulness, and watchings often: and superimposed on all this the daily care of all the churches. They were spoken individually to himself—“ My grace is sufficient for **thee**.” “ Sufficient for thee ” means sufficient for a **man** with a thorn in the flesh, sufficient to strengthen his heart (it was indeed established with grace and not with meats) and make him glad in spite of the continued suffering of the thorn. He was not steeled against it. He received such inward consolation in the comfort of Christ that his weakness became strength. “ Sufficient for

thee " means also sufficient to enable this man to sustain, with his thorn in the flesh, terrific missionary labour. "Sufficient for thee"—words which, for the faith that rises to them, are a rising tide engulfing bodily infirmity and the mental anguish belonging thereto: but also rising to be sufficient to support the most tremendous labours, the most appalling enterprise, to storm the citadel of Rome itself and pass on to Spain and to the regions beyond.

Is it conceivable that these words of individual assurance, confidence and faith would have found a place in the sacred canon unless each disciple of Christ, each suffering servant, each missionary confronting appalling labours, were authorised to take them to himself or herself? Rather is it not true to experience

that in daily meditation on the Word, the Lord personally speaks words to us when we need them and so His grace becomes sufficient for us also.

We do not know when Paul received his first comfort from these words, but it must have been early in his missionary course. Fourteen years later, with that fight, that course, that faith mostly behind him, it had lost none of its sweetness or power for him. It is fitting therefore that in commending our friends, new to the work, or veterans in this warfare, to the Grace of God for the work lying before them, we should give them this special word " My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

WHY THIS WEAKNESS?

THE last words that the Lord Jesus spoke on earth are recorded in Acts 1: 7, 8. They begin, " It is not for you to know the times or the seasons. . .but ye shall receive **power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me."

The apostles were of course witnesses in a special sense, but in some sense every saint is constituted a witness, and in the gift of the Spirit the **power** is given. Yet today, if we look facts in the face and are honest with ourselves, we have to confess to **weakness**. Why is this?

We venture to offer two reasons:—

(1) In the things of God we have no power in ourselves, and all power

resides in the Spirit of God, who indwells us. The Lord's words, quoted above, make this quite clear. Now it is all too easy to **grieve** Him and also to **quench** Him. If Ephesians 4: 30 be read, and the context be carefully noted, we see that everything corrupt and unholy, particularly in matters of speech, is a grief to him, for He is **holy**. This matter of grieving the Holy Spirit of God is something that comes very closely home to us each as individuals. If we grieve Him, He withdraws, not His presence, but His power, to our grief. Is it possible that some of us have so habitually grieved Him that we are largely unconscious of our weakness?

In 1 Thessalonians 5: 19, we read,

“Quench not the Spirit.” In the very next verse we have the exhortation, “Despise not prophesyings.” Before the truth revealed in Christ had been committed to writing in the inspired New Testament, it was conveyed to the earliest Christian assemblies by the inspired utterances of the apostles and prophets. It was possible for the action of the Spirit to be quenched—the prophetic fire, so to speak, to be put out by the cold water of refusal or neglect being poured upon it. In our day the same thing may be done by the refusal or neglect of the Holy Scriptures, inspired by the Spirit of God.

If the Spirit of God be grieved by the individual or quenched in a more collective way, what can there be but weakness?

(2) But if the Spirit be not grieved or quenched in the way we have been considering, we must remember that His power is only manifested as we wait in dependence on the Lord, who shed Him forth at the beginning, as stated in Acts 2: 33. He is not given to us to make us independent of our Lord, as though we now had all sufficiency in ourselves, but rather, linking us with our Lord, now exalted in the heavens, to increase our sense of dependence upon Him.

In the days before redemption was accomplished, and Christ, risen from the dead, was ascended into the heaven, and consequently the Spirit was given, it was evident that all strength for a saint was found in God. This was made plain by the prophet, when he said, “He giveth power to the faint...they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their

strength” (Isa. 40: 29-31). And again the Psalmist said, “Wait on the Lord...He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord (Psa. 27: 14). These words are equally true today. What marked the apostles and others during the ten days between the ascension and the gift of the Spirit? “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication” (Acts 1: 14). They were **waiting on the Lord**. And what marked those gifted servants of the Lord at Antioch, before there was that great putting forth of the power of the Spirit, in the dispatch of Barnabas and Saul as evangelists to the Gentiles? The answer is found in Acts 13: 1-3. They were ministering to the Lord with both fasting and prayer. In their praises and their prayers they were **waiting upon the Lord**.

In contrast with this, what weakness exists today! What lack of power in testimony to the world, both in public and in private! What little ability to keep free from the entanglements of the world ourselves, and so be able to deliver any of our fellow-believers, who may be entangled! How few who are “spiritual,” so as to be able to deliver the brother who may be entangled in a “fault,” according to Galatians 6: 1! We have the indwelling Spirit of God, but we must remember that He acts and puts forth His power in concert with the directions of our exalted Lord on high. Hence prayerful waiting on the Lord is a prime necessity for us.

So let us with humility and self-judgment face the facts we have briefly considered. No power have we, if we grieve the Spirit by our

individual unholiness, nor if we in more collective fashion quench Him by setting aside the Scriptures that He inspired, or by imposing some kind of human control upon His free action.

And again, lack of power, if we go our own way and fail to have our strength renewed by waiting on

the Lord in prayer and supplication, both in private and in public. If we are truly to "wait on the Lord," prayer is absolutely essential.

In the rush of modern life, quiet times of private prayer are not easily gained. What about the lack of this? And, what about poor attendances at meetings for prayer?

ONENESS OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

J. HOUSTON

THE Lord Jesus, in His prayer to the Father concerning His own, said "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are." (John 17: 11), To be one, as the Father and the Son are, is perfect unity—unity of a divine order. And this is how it is brought about: He, the Son, is in us, and the Father in Him, as He Himself said, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (verse 23). These were His own precious and most wonderful words.

The oneness of the Father and the Son, and our participation in it, is, in itself, a most interesting and profitable study. We would however for the moment confine ourselves to this oneness, as They expressed it in all They said and did, as revealed in the Scriptures.

The best type we have of the Father and the Son is in Genesis 22. There, speaking of Abraham and Isaac, the words are twice repeated, "they went both of them together" (verses 6 and 8). This is not mere

repetition; it is rather emphasis, placed upon their united action. Abraham, the father, did not take Issac, the son, as he might have taken an animal sacrifice. Father and son "went both together." There was unity in will and action. Leaving the type, and looking at the antitype, we see that the Father gave the Son up to death, and that the Son laid down His life voluntarily; for He had power, as He said, both to lay down His life and also to take it again. (John 10: 17, 18). In this They were "together" in the most wonderful union and communion.

Another striking type is found in Genesis 37. Joseph, the son of his father's love, goes out from Hebron—the name of the place having in it the meaning of "fellowship." His father sent him from thence to go to his brethren. Is it not suggestive of the fact that in the antitype Father and Son were always in fellowship, in the most exalted sense of the word. The Father sent the Son, and the Son came from the Father as His Sent One, yet both always in perfect union and communion.

A prophet might be sent from

God, as John the Baptist was, and yet know nothing of this perfect unity, that always existed and must evermore exist, between Father and Son. What is peculiar to Them is entirely Their own. What happens in time can never alter or affect in the least Their oneness, for the Father loved the Son, "before the foundation of the world" (John 17: 24). And, further, the glory, which the Son asked from the Father after He had glorified Him on the earth, was the glory that He had, as Son with the Father, "before the world was" (17: 5).

Coming to the New Testament, we follow our subject, not as indicated by typical teaching, but as set forth in doctrine. In fact, we have the very words of the Lord Jesus, spoken here on earth. Referring to His work on the sabbath, the Lord said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5: 17). If They **went** together, according to the type of Abraham and Isaac here They **work** together. The Son was not acting alone in doing His act of mercy, or against the law by breaking the sabbath, as the Jews so evidently thought. He was in perfect communion with the Father, as They worked together. Father and Son were **working**, not **resting**. They could not rest in the world where sin had brought in suffering, sorrow and death. They worked, not simply for the alleviation of suffering, but for the complete removal of sin, the root principle of all suffering.

This work of mercy is going on now as proclaimed in the Gospel, with a view to God's rest, when He will dwell with His people and be their God. Then He shall "wipe

away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21: 4). This is God's rest, Father and Son, with the redeemed.

We also find Father and Son as one, interested in keeping the objects of eternal counsel. The Father gives these "men," as they are called, into the safe keeping of the Son. The Son, on the other hand, gives them into the safe keeping of the Father, when He says, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me."

Under the figure of sheep the Son spoke of His own in John 10, saying, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are **one**." Here again the oneness of Father and Son is insisted upon, and that in reference to the safe keeping of the redeemed. They are one in purpose and power, in keeping Their mutual possession.

Again, the Son said to the Father, "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them" (John 17: 10). There is mutual possession. What infinite grace that we should be part of this mutual possession! How securely we are preserved, since what belongs to One belongs to Both. Oh, what astounding love and grace!

We have already said that what happens in time cannot alter what was in eternity, consequently man's

sin did not affect this oneness. The time came when all forsook the Son and left Him alone, and the word was fulfilled, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psa.:. 69: 20). Still He could say, "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16: 32). In spite of the appalling hatred of man, revealed at the Cross, Father and Son are together as one.

In the Son's dread hour of deepest suffering the truth reminded. He did indeed cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" It was **God** who forsook Him, inasmuch as it was **God**, who had made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, and thus accomplish atonement. In no circumstance, trial, suffering, life or death, could the Son be separated from the Father, They are one, essentially and absolutely, in time and in eternity.

When we honour the Son, we honour the Father who sent Him. When we love the Son, the Father

loves us, as He said, "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16: 27). Man's attitude towards the Son will determine how he stands in relation to the Father. Had the Jews known this, they would have treated Him very differently. He came forth from the Father, and He revealed the Father as He knew Him. It is the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has revealed Him.

For us it remains, each one, that we can have the sweetest communion with the Father and the Son, since what the Apostles saw and heard has been made known unto us, and the Spirit of God has been given to us. Hence the Lord's words may be fulfilled to us each, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14: 21).

BIBLE STUDY—ISAIAH

F. B. HOLE

(Chapters 65: 13—66: 24)

THOUGH God has to pronounce judgment upon the evildoers, which must be executed in due time, He delights in the mercy and blessing that He bestows upon His true servants. This He makes manifest in the passage which begins with verse 13. We notice, of course, that earthly blessings and earthly judgments are in view; food, drink, re-

joicing and song, on the one hand; hunger, thirst, shame and sorrow, on the other. A curse and death will come upon them; their very name being considered a curse, while the chosen servants will be called by another name.

This will be fulfilled in days to come, but it is remarkable how we

can see a fulfilment of it even in our day. The very name "Jew" has acquired an unpleasant flavour, which is explained by what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 2: 14-16. On the other hand a remnant, according to the election of grace, is still being called out of that people and incorporated with elect Gentiles as the church of God. Upon such another Name is called, for they are CHRISTian.

As far back as chapter 42, we had Jehovah's declaration, "New things do I declare" (verse 9), and now we discover the wide scope of that declaration. There is to be a complete sweeping away of the old order and the creation of new heavens as well as a new earth. The verses that follow show that the millennial age is referred to and not the eternal state, which is announced in Revelation 21: 1.

At present the heavens are the seat of Satan's power, as Ephesians 6: 12 indicates. They will be in a new condition when those evil powers are cast out, and heavenly saints are installed, as from the New Testament we know they will be. When the Messiah acts as "the Arm of the Lord," and His dominion extends to the ends of the earth, it will be a new earth indeed. In comparison therewith the old order will be so horrible that men will banish it from their minds.

The remaining verses of the chapter give a description of the happy conditions that will characterize the millennial age, beginning with the joy and blessing of Jerusalem, which will be then, as always intended, the centre of earthly blessing. Yet it will not be an age of

absolute perfection as verse 20 shows. For the righteous, life will be greatly prolonged, yet it will be possible for sinners to be discovered and come under a curse. Still those who are the elect will have their days as the days of a tree, and we know how many a tree does not grow old for centuries.

Hence earthly blessings will be enjoyed to the full; houses, vineyards, fruit, and above all they will be in close touch with Jehovah their God. So much so, that not only will He hear them while they are yet speaking to Him, but He will answer their desires even before they express them by calling upon Him. This indicates that a place of remarkable nearness to Him will be theirs.

Moreover mercy will be extended even to the animal creation, which at the outset was placed under man, and so has suffered as the result of his fall. No longer shall strong animals slay and devour the weak. Those most opposed, like the wolf and the lamb, will feed together, and the most voracious, like the lion, will be satisfied with vegetable food. All hurt and destruction shall cease.

To this there will be just one exception. The serpent was used by Satan in deceiving Eve, and the curse upon it ran, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3: 11). Now this sentence is not to be revoked. It seems that in the ranks of the lower creation it will be retained as a sign and reminder of the tragic effects of sin. The serpent will not be able to hurt nor destroy, but its degraded and miserable state

will remain.

Chapter 66 opens on a very lofty note. The earth is but the footstool of Jehovah's feet for the heavens are His throne. Recognizing this, we are conscious that no earthly house built for Him is anything but a small matter. What is a great matter is the right spiritual state and attitude, which should be found in man, who by nature is sinful and estranged from God. To be **poor** and **contrite** in spirit, and to receive the word as being truly the Word of God, and therefore to tremble at it and be governed by it—this invites the Divine regard. To such a man the Lord will look in blessing. We may remember that when the Lord Jesus opened His mouth on the mountain, the first beatitude He uttered was, "Blessed are the **poor** in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5: 3).

But once more the prophet has to turn to the people, in their then existing state, with words of denunciation. They might be killing oxen, sacrificing lambs, offering oblation, burning incense, and yet all was an utter offence before God because their hearts were astray. They were anything but poor in spirit, but rather self-assertive, choosing their own ways and taking pleasure in abominable things. For this reason they came under God's judgment. Instead of calling upon God, and receiving His immediate attention, He had called to them and they paid no attention whatever.

From these the prophet turned, in verse 5, once more to assure those who really did tremble at the word of God. They had been hated and cast out by the men of that day, and

this they claimed to do in the name of the Lord and for His glory. We at once recognize that this is no uncommon thing. Something similar has happened again and again. It was thus when our Lord was on earth and in the days of the apostles. It has been so all too often in the sad history of Christendom, as witness the burning of "heretics" whether in Spain or in Britain. In Spain such an act was called by an expression, which in English means, "an act of **faith**," and since of faith of course, as they thought, to the glory of God.

The answer of the Lord to this kind of thing is not immediate but inevitable. The word is, "He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." He **SHALL**—the thing is **determined** and **certain**, but it is **future**. The voice of the Lord will yet be heard, and when He speaks the thing is done. It will bring joy to the godly while a just recompence in judgment will be the portion of the enemies.

But now a further great prophetic fact comes before us. This mighty intervention of God, delivering His people, and judging His foes, will be accompanied by a wonderful work of grace in the souls of those He will deliver. The earth will be made to bring forth in one day, and a nation will be born at once. The figure used in verse 7 indicates that this deliverance will be a "birth," which takes place in a way quite unexpected. So here we have Isaiah alluding to that great work of the Spirit of God, which is described more fully in Ezekiel 36: 22-33, to which the Lord Jesus referred when He spoke to Nicodemus of being born, "of water and of the Spirit."

Shall a nation be born at once? is the question asked in surprise. And the answer quite clearly is—Yes, it will. Of the old Israel, that the world has known, Moses had to complain at the start of their sad history, “They are a perverse and crooked generation. . . a very forward generation, children in whom is no faith” (Deut. 32: 5, 20). The Israel that will enter into millennial blessedness will be a new Israel, born again and therefore cleansed from their old life and ways. The Apostle Peter, writing to the scattered Jewish Christians of the early days, could say to them, “But ye are a chosen generation” (1 Pet. 2: 9), and he had previously spoken of their having been born again. As regards the new birth, converted Jews of today are advance samples of what will be wrought in the children of Israel, who finally enter the kingdom.

In view of this, all those who love Jerusalem, and at present mourn for her, may well rejoice. Her prosperity and glory will be a joy to behold. The sons of Israel through the long centuries of their unbelief and rejection of their Messiah, have been noted for the ability with which they have managed to “suck” wealth and profit out of the Gentile world. The objectionable features, which have characterized them in doing this, will have disappeared when they are a born-again nation. The saved of the nations will act toward them as a nursing mother, and peace will flow as a river, instead of there being resentment and disturbance on every side. The hand of God will be in all this, for His word is, “so will I comfort you.”

But the prophet leaves us in no

doubt as to what God’s intervention will mean to the world at large. It will be the day when the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness, because God’s judgments are in the earth, as Isaiah told us in chapter 26. Jehovah will come with fire and whirlwind and sword, as we see in verses 15 and 16, and when we turn to such a passage as Revelation 19, we discover that the Person who will thus come in judgment is no other than Jehovah-Jesus.

Verse 17 would indicate, we judge, that judgment will be specially severe against false religion—against those who practise abominable things, of an idolatrous nature, while professing to sanctify and purify themselves by them. Religious evil always incurs judgment of a very severe nature. This we see exemplified in our Lord’s day. His strongest denunciations were directed against the Pharisees and Scribes.

The millennial reign will be preceded by the gathering together before God of the masses of mankind, and before them the Divine glory will be displayed. The gathering of the nations that they may see the glory is described in verses 18 and 19, but the outcome of this is not described here. We turn to Matthew 25: 31-46, and there we discover what will take place. All of them will be judged on the basis of their attitude towards the Son of Man, who is the King, as revealed by their treatment of messengers, who have represented Him, and whom He owns as His “brethren.”

In Isaiah, however, the term used is “your brethren,” for the prophet is more occupied with the re-

gathering of the children of Israel from the most distant places to which they had been scattered. Their coming in this way will be like the bringing of an offering to God in a clean vessel—an offering therefore acceptable to Him and for His pleasure. Brought thus to the house of Jehovah, they will be taken for priests and Levites in the millennial age.

Now this was the original intention of God, as we see if we refer to Exodus 19: 6. Had Israel kept the law that was delivered through Moses at Sinai, they would have been "a kingdom of priests." They broke the law, so this they never were. But the purpose of God is never defeated, and so here we are permitted to know that what failed then is ultimately achieved, as the fruit of the mercy of God. That it will be the fruit of MERCY is made very clear in the closing part of Romans II.

Had it been brought about on a legal basis, some future breach of the law would imperil the whole position; as it stands on the basis of mercy, it is a permanent thing, as stable as the new heavens and new earth of the millennial age. From the overthrow of David's kingly line the world has seen a succession of kingdoms, rising up as the result of some overthrow, and each being overthrown in its turn, as predicted in Ezekiel 21: 27; but here at last is a kingdom that abides.

And it will prove to be a kingdom in which Jehovah at last obtains His rightful place as the Object of worship. What He originally intended in connection with Israel, His

people, will be fully accomplished, His glory will be in their midst; they will surround His house as a kingdom of priests; they will render Him due worship from one sabbath and new moon to another. He will have accomplished His original design.

The contemplation of these things is surely a great encouragement to us. We are not called to find our part in, "My holy mountain Jerusalem," since our calling is a heavenly one, but we may rest assured that God will reach His original purpose with the church, as really and as fully as He will with Israel. Not one item of His good pleasure as to us will fail. And He will do it in such fashion as will command our glad recognition and worship. The saints in their heavenly seats will render a worship that will not need to be governed by sabbaths or new moons.

The last verse of our prophet is one of much solemnity. When Israel is regathered and blessed, and the earth rests in the blessedness indicated at the end of chapter 65, there will yet be a perpetual reminder of the awful result of rebellion and sin. When the Lord Jesus spoke of "the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not," (Mark 9: 43, 44), it would seem that He alluded to this verse, and gave it an application stretching far beyond the millennial age. In "the lake of fire," which is "the second death" (Rev. 20: 14), there will be an eternal witness to the awful effects of sin.

Let us rejoice in the greatness of the salvation that has reached us through our Lord Jesus Christ.