

GREEN PASTURES

APRIL,

1934.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR ALL WHO HAVE
FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Distributor: S. Warren, 9, Peel Rd., Woodford, London, E.18.

Editor: A. Tunley, The Nook, 76, Lincoln Road, Werrington.
Peterborough.

Price 1½d.

A FOREWORD.

In adding to the number of publications devoted to religious things no pretensions are made at attaining to any standard of merit such as the world at large may judge to be good, indeed even judged in the light of the Word by those who are spiritual, it may well be with it, as it was with the rebuilt Temple in the days of Zerrubbabel that the glory of the latter house did not attain to that of the original. This publication may fall far short of its predecessors in proportion as the evil without and within the Church of God increases, but it is launched with the fervent prayers of many that it may be the means of bringing much spiritual blessing to all who read it.

The Scriptures abound with instances of the use of the figure of sheep, to represent the people of God, and just what green pastures are to sheep, so it is hoped this little book will be to God's people. Psalm 23 denotes exactly what this means, but first of all attention should be given to verse one of this portion. It concerns only those who can only say "The Lord is my Shepherd." Those who are not of His flock will find nothing here to suit their appetite; their tastes are different and their shepherd feeds with husks which they gather voraciously but which never satisfy. The sheep of Jehovah are made to say "I shall not want," and the outcome of this happy condition is to lie down in green pastures. Nothing would be more absurd than to try to make a sheep lie down by any other means than by satisfaction, but in the midst of plenty there is no inclination to wander and in safety there is no need for flight. But to lie down in green pastures is not an evidence of indolence but merely provides an opportunity to make full use of what has been gathered. Just

as the sheep lies down and chews the cud so it is hoped the reader of these pages will treat what is found therein. To-day there seems to be more than ever a desire to do everything quickly, and rapid reading is quite the order of the day, but what does it yield? Oftentimes only a little temporary pleasure, a little packing supplied by the archenemy of Christ to prevent His sheep from feeding on something good. Readers are besought in their own interests and for the glory of God to read slowly and carefully what is presented to them as from God in these pages, and to resolutely refuse to skip them through quickly. Natural growth is a comparatively slow process and demands a constant, regular supply of good food. Let no one think then that spiritual growth is any different in its essentials, but may we all give due heed to Paul's words to Timothy "give attendance to reading," and then having read, "Meditate upon these things." Too much time cannot be devoted to reading and meditation, they are the key-notes of growth and service. The Psalmist pictures the still waters near by too. Ready access to the Word of God is another necessary thing for those who meditate; wheat and tares, truth and error, are often much alike at first sight, so beware, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." The result with the Psalmist is found in the third verse, "he restoreth (reviveth) my soul." Surely this is what all true children of God desire. The pilgrim way has to be trodden, and although in all circumstances we are privileged to have the peace of God in our hearts, yet the journey makes demands on our strength which have to be countered. May all readers of these pages get this good to their souls.

In the course of meditation no doubt difficulties will arise, not at all a surprising eventuality, as we gather from Peter's writing that he found some of Paul's letters hard to be understood. Milk is good for babes, strong meat for them of full age. Difficulties make us search and pray and the Holy Ghost gives assistance and understanding. Not all however get their problems solved in this way : the Holy Spirit has given amongst the flock those who are helps and pastors whose service it is to give assistance in time of need. Whilst not in any way desiring to interfere with the individual's intercourse with God or to substitute service for individual exercise, readers are invited to make use of the correspondence section of this periodical, which it is hoped will be found of benefit to all.

With these few remarks and many prayers this publication is sent forth in the service of God and of His people. Imperfections will arise as they always do in man's service but God knows our intentions and will override our fears. To Him be all the praise. A.T.

The Bible is a whole, which presents to us God coming forth from His essential fulness to manifest all that He is, and to bring back into the enjoyment of this fulness with Himself those, who having been made partakers of His nature have become capable of comprehending and loving His counsels and Himself.

Nothing so simple as the truth when it is known ; nothing so difficult, so obscure, when a judgment is to be formed respecting it by the heart of man, who does not possess the truth ; for he judges after his own thoughts, and the truth is not in them. J.N.D.

“Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”
(Matt. 9. 11.)

All around Him and beside Him,
Sinners sat at meat—
Sinful men and sinful women—
Bread of heaven they eat.

There for him who hath no money,
Wine and milk He pours,
From the blessed fields of heaven
God’s exhaustless stores.

So they drank—the weary, thirsty—
That unfailing tide;
And for ever, and for ever
They are satisfied.

He on heavenly food was feeding,
Meat to them unknown;
Blessed will of God who sent Him,
Needing that alone.

Sent to seek the lost and guilty,
Outcasts and despised,
Gems the hand of God would gather
For the crown of Christ.

Only sinful men and women,
Men could see and scorn.

HE beheld them crowned with glory
Of the heavenly morn—

Saw them with their palms of triumph
With their harps of gold,
Yet the same who sat around Him
In the days of old.

Francis Bevan.

GUIDANCE FOR TO-DAY.

In this world there are two classes of person, one which acknowledges God and the other which does not. Amongst the former there is much diversity of opinion on a multitude of subjects of importance and to listen to the words of some and to observe the much more eloquent actions of others, one would think that the God whom they recognise had left them no form of guidance for daily life which could be used to regulate every detail. Those who recognise God and His Son Jesus Christ cannot fail to have some knowledge of the Bible also, which is the means by which we learn anything in detail of either, but let each ask themselves just what the Holy Scriptures are to them. Are they merely a book of a religious nature or do they form a complete and perfect guide for every detail of christian life? In this function they have two rivals, first the voice of men and secondly that of the Church. On most subjects each of these three councillors gives different advice and what is one to do or believe?

To take first, the voice of the Church, understanding by that the opinion or direction given by an association of men generally called by that name, and professedly guided by the Scriptures. One reference only, namely chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the Revelation, need be given to show that the Church itself comes in for correction by God through the Scriptures, showing that as a final guide and authority the Word of God is superior to the Church. Indeed one moment's thought suffices to show that this must be so as the Church would have no existence at all but for the mind of God being made known in His Word. Of course in certain matters an assembly of Christians constituting a church in the Scriptural sense has authority to act in

certain prescribed ways but here its authority is only right when in accord with the instruction of the Word of God as the supreme rule.

To take the case of the second rival, the voice of men; it cannot surely be maintained that human expediency should have any part in the control of the christian. John's Gospel tells us that the flesh is flesh (John 3. 6.) and Paul wrote to the Romans, "they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh" and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 5 and 8.) So it is evident that to take counsel of men governed by natural impulses of what is best and expedient is not likely to lead one in a path approved of God. If the mind of the one whose counsel is sought is subject to the Word of God then the real rule is by the Word of God and man's voice is only the channel by which the word is given.

However we approach the subject then, we are forced to the conclusion that there can be no real authority for the christian above that of the Word of God, and we cannot have any doubt of this if we give heed to the declaration of the Spirit through Paul, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2. Timothy 3. 16.) The Scriptures are the official channel of information from God to men and do not merely *contain* the word of God but *all scripture* is given by inspiration of God. The whole book stands or falls together. The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophetical references which find their fulfilment in the new and likewise the New Testament contains hundreds of references to and quotations from the old. In the use of the Word, our Lord Himself is an example, when tempted in the wilderness and again after His resurrection we find Him making use of the Old Testament although some to-day

would have us cut out whole books. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself"; and again "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24. 27, 44.) Naturally the New Testament is not included by these quotations as the books comprising it were not then written but it is so obviously a fulfilment and counterpart of its predecessor that no difficulty should be encountered in accepting it.

At this juncture it may not be out of place to quote a paragraph from a well-known writer which shows very clearly to whom the Scriptures were given: ".....save three epistles, the writings of the New Testament (and as far as the principle goes, the Old also,) were addressed, not to the clergy (if we are so to call them), but by the clergy to the people. The claim of the clergy to possess them as such is sheer folly; they were specifically addressed to the Christian people by those commissioned of God to do it. This is undeniable. In one, Paul charges it to be read to all the holy brethren, and they very young Christians (I. Thess. 5. 27.) If professing Christians are so ignorant now that they cannot understand it, that is the effect of centuries of the Church's teaching, but is no longer the case where there is lowliness, and where the grace of God is looked to. "The entering in of His word gives light and understanding to the simple." "I am wiser than all my teachers," says David, "for thy law do I love." "They shall be taught of God" is the promise given to us....."

This brings us to an exceedingly important point, namely that the Word of God is to and for the individ-

ual. It is vain to try to shift the responsibility ; God speaks to each individual when in his sins, deals with each individually in salvation and instructs each by himself or herself when they are His own. With the complete Word in our hands we cannot blame anyone but ourselves if we do not find ourselves thoroughly equipped for all circumstances. At the commencement of the pathway each sheep of the flock answers to the call of his own name (John 10. 3.) and the Scriptures are the means of producing the necessary state of soul, "able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus" (2. Tim. 3. 15.) Individual responsibility is again most marked in Jude's epistle verse 3 where the writer expressly states that the faith was delivered to the saints; not to the church, or to the bishops, but to the saints, which is the plain scriptural term for those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we realise this privilege and its attendant responsibilities? No one has more right to the scriptures than I have, they are the Word of God to me. If I am a believer in Christ then all that this Word enjoins on such is my responsibility ; consequences or the thoughts and actions of others are not my care. If God speaks to me I must give heed, or bear the results of disobedience. The blessed results of giving heed are shown us in the prophecy of Isaiah, quoted to the Jews by the Lord Himself "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Isa. 54. 13. On the other hand "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." (Heb. 12. 25.)

Now as to the method by which God teaches. In one of the verses already mentioned above, Luke 24. 45,

we read of special operation of the Lord, in the disciples' hearts, " then opened He their understandings that they might understand the scriptures." Paul's tells us that " the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned " (I. Cor. 2. 14.) The secret of the understanding of the Word of God is in the manner of approach. To apply the wisdom of men is only to discuss and dispute that which according to God's own testimony will endure for ever, but for the humble seeker after truth the Lord's words about the Comforter are fulfilled " He will guide you into all truth.....He shall glorify Me : for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you."

And note carefully the scope of this instruction ; " All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Jn. 16. 13, 15. The nett result of this is that the Holy Spirit is the revealer of all truth to those who desire it. The very one Who is revealed to us as operating in and through the " holy men of old " to cause the Word to be written, is the same Who opens the understandings of those who desire to know God's mind as contained therein. Thus is each believer put in direct communication with the Divine fountain of knowledge to be nurtured from the time the seed is sown in the heart until the fruit of the life is produced. God has not given us His word for nothing, but " that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2. Tim. 3. 17. Whose then is the responsibility if we are not so furnished and whose fault is it that the Church of England is to-day so split up? Surely if all accepted their portion from God and gave heed to what is enjoined it would be immediately apparent

that "there is one body." Sects and distinctions would have to disappear along with all that was not of God amongst God's people, and only that would remain which would be a testimony to the world that the Father had sent the Son (John 17. 21.) To-day the brokeness of the Church of God is the laughing-stock of the world, whereas its unity should have been its strongest testimony. What a responsibility devolves upon every child of God to make himself acquainted with the mind of God and to act thereon and what cause for diligent enquiry and heart searching lest we should be responsible in any measure for this universal dishonour to God. "Humble yourselves therefore in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James 4. 10.) is indeed a safe rule for to-day.

A.T.

THE INFIDEL FATHER, OR THE PIOUS MOTHER ; WHICH ?

In the U.S.A., infidelity found an active champion in the well-known Colonel —, who made an open profession of his disbelief of revealed religion. It happened that a daughter of the Colonel's, to whom he was much attached, became ill. During the progress of the disorder, Dr. —, was one day dining with the Colonel, and after dinner, having adjourned to the Colonel's library, some deistical publications were introduced by the Colonel to the Doctor's notice. While they were occupied in looking at them, a servant came to announce that an alarming change had taken place in his daughter, and that his presence was required in her bedroom. Thither he went, accompanied by Dr. —. As he approached her bedside she took his hand, and said, "Father, I feel that my end is drawing near; tell me, I

entreat you, am I to believe what you have taught me, or what I have learned from my mother?" Her mother was a sincere Christian, and had spared no opportunity of instilling Christian truth into the mind of her child. Her father paused a moment, he fixed his eyes on his dying child, his countenance changed, his frame seemed convulsed to its very centre, while his quivering lips could scarce give utterance to the words, "Believe, my child, what your mother has taught you." The struggle was too great, the conflict between the pride of human reason and the swelling of parental affection in the heart was more than he could bear, and even over his stubborn mind the truth prevailed.

CORRESPONDENCE.

It is proposed to lay this section of our paper open to the answering of readers' questions, and it is hoped that no one who desires to ask anything will hold back for any cause whatever. It is especially desired that those young in the faith may make use of this section, and lest any should have a dread of appearing in print, it is not proposed to publish names and addresses or anything more than a summary of letters received. Replies will probably have to be short to save space, but it is hoped that the blessing of God may rest on this effort to serve His children. Letters should be addressed to the editor.

A.— asks for information on Heb. 6, 1—6 and
2 Pt. 2, 20—22.

There is certainly nothing in either of these scriptures to place the saint's salvation in doubt. Those to whom the writer of the Hebrews alludes, were Jews who had by profession become Christians. There were truths

common to Judaism and Christianity to which he refers, baptisms or washings, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment, repentance and faith towards God. None of these were peculiar to Christianity. The apostle wanted them to advance into Christianity proper. The things he writes of such as tasting the good word of God and the powers of the age to come and even partakers of the Holy Ghost, do not suppose conversion nor the possession of eternal life. Many are acted upon by the word short of being quickened thereby and "partakers of the Holy Ghost," does not suppose He indwells them, but having been in Christian assemblies where the word is ministered in the power of the Spirit, and having seen miracles performed in support of it, they would in an outward way partake. These, after all, if they returned to Judaism would declare Christ an imposter, and make their own, His rejection and crucifixion : for such nothing could be done. The apostle only shows the danger, but carefully adds, "we are persuaded better things of you." No true Christian would so act, kept by the power of God through faith. Peter writes of those who were found among Christians by profession who show by their lives that they are anything but that. He likens them to dogs who had vomited and returned to it and to a sow that had been washed and returned to her wallowing in the mire : outward reformation but no inward change, and these apostatise. In Luke 5, you will find the word partners used in two different senses, one is partners in the common right of fishing in the lake, and the other, partners in the boat and fish caught by it. It is the first that is the same as "partakers of the Holy Ghost" in Heb. 6.

E.R.W.

ONE IN CHRIST.

There is neither Greek nor Jew. Col. 3. 11.

The triumphs of the Gospel are many and various, alike in the individual and in the world. Among them, how striking, how beautiful, how supernatural, is its triumph shown in the fusion of sympathies across all the barriers of race ! Let us think awhile of this, as we see it illustrated in this short sentence of St. Paul's, remembering who wrote the sentence, and who they were to whom he wrote it.

St. Paul was the consummate example of the Jew. By training, by tradition, by every influence which builds up character, he was out and out a Jew. Up to his conversion, the whole development of his life was an intensive development, toward the law, and toward 'the hedge of law,' the traditions ; toward every belief and every practice which was built into 'the middle wall of partition' between a sacred Israel and a profane outer world. The practical issue in his thought and habits must have been remarkable. St. Peter was by no means so fully formed a zealot as St. Paul. Yet St. Peter, years after his conversion, long after his Lord's glorification, was still in such a mental position that never, till he entered the house of Cornelius, had he seen his way to take a meal with a Gentile. (Acts 10. 28.)

Think of the general state of non-sympathy which such a conviction (unknown to the Old Testament) surely indicates. What interchange in even superficial modes of friendship was there likely to be between a Simon, still more between a Saul of Tarsus, and human beings born and brought up in the very heart of Gentilism ?

Now the Colossians were exactly such persons. They were, in the very broad sense of the word, 'Greeks'; a race of Western Asia Minor, speaking Greek as at least the tongue of external intercourse, and pagan by quite immemorial tradition. By no faintest link of nationality, habit, sentiment, worship, had they any contact with Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets. To them, what were the temple, and the law? Nothing; or at most the dimly-rumoured peculiarities of another Asiatic people, who of course had a religion of their own.

Humanly speaking in the order of nature, how unlikely was any close contact of heart between a developed Pharisee and a Colossian! Yet here is the phenomenon before us, an accomplished fact. This Epistle is the message of the Pharisee to the Colossians. And it is a message which does very much more than convey information, and state principles. It does much more even than affirm that 'there is neither Greek nor Jew.' It is itself a living instance of the fact. For the heart of the writer is in complete contact with the hearts of the readers. They perfectly understand one another. Their sympathies are fused into the most delightful unity. The Pharisee gives his whole self out to the Colossians. He not only loves them; he lives for them, he lives as to his spirit, with them. All that they are, all that they think, all that may affect their life and their belief, is supremely important to him. And plainly he is writing as to those whose hearts are reciprocal to his own. They have come to know him with an intimacy more than brotherly. He writes to them as to extensions of himself, responses to himself.

I dare to say that a phenomenon like this was a new thing upon the earth in those days, and a most

wonderful thing, and one reason and one only, is adequate to account for it ; the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, the apostle inevitably closes the sentence which begins, ' there is neither Greek nor Jew,' with the truth which makes it actual, ' Christ is all and in all.' That blessed victory over human isolation, in the name of the Lord Jesus, has been going on ever since, It is in progress everywhere to-day. In India, it literally joins the Pariah Christian arm-in-arm in the street with the Brahman Christian. In Europe, at a gathering of Christian students, in 1895, at the Wartburg, just at the moment when America and Spain were in mortal conflict, it clasped the hands of the American delegate and the Spanish delegate with a genuine brotherhood. It is a power which develops, to noblest results, all pure patriotism. But it transcends the restrictions of land and race with a heavenly force and ease in favour of the unity of souls in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Sacred, wonder-working Gospel. Where man needs to learn how rightly to stand alone, there is no power like the Gospel to enable him to do so, aye, against a world in arms. Putting the soul into absolutely direct contact with God in Christ, nothing between, it not only sets him upon the eternal Rock ; it incorporates him with its living strength. But then, where man needs the largest fusion with his fellow-men, where, strong in God, he is called to be at the service of his brothers the Gospel is the secret of this also. The heart which has admitted Christ to dwell in it, already begins to dilate with His glory. Knowing Him, and in His light knowing itself, it knows other hearts too in a new way, a way at once penetrating and full of love. It is open, it is accessible, it is amalgamable, under the touch of Christ. It gives itself out, in Him, And then there is neither Greek nor Jew ; He is all and in all.

Bp. MOULE.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

“Kept”—such a restful thought,
For the battle is often strong,
And I know, if left to myself,
I could not hold out long.

But “kept” in His mighty arms
I have really naught to fear,
And whenever my courage fails
He whispers words of cheer.

“Kept,” yes, and not for a day,
But “kept” quite safe to the end ;
Oh ! 'tis sweet, though passing strange,
To have so sure a Friend.

So “kept” for the Master's use,
And “kept” by His mighty power ;
“Kept,” too, from the world's false smiles,
“Kept” in temptation's hour.

“Kept” not for the good in me,
But all through His wondrous love;
“Kept” safe in the fold down here,
Then “kept” for aye above.

THE SAME DAY ; THE FIRST DAY.

“ Then the same day at evening being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, ‘ Peace be unto you.’ And when he had so said he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.” John 20. 19-20.

This was no ordinary day to these disciples, this first day of the week. It was unique in many respects, a day which they would never forget, a day which was to be like the beginning of the year, like the first month of the year to the Israelites when the Passover lamb was to be singled out and slain. All these figures of the Old Testament ritual had now had their fulfilment in the Lamb of God who had offered up Himself without spot to God. It was the first day of the week and surely too of a period of the earth’s history which, as they were about to learn was characterised by the greatest of all triumphs known to this world, the victory over death itself, so that it could be said by faith, “ Death is swallowed up of victory.”

Never before had this company been gathered together under such circumstances. Some of them had been away from the Lord before to do His service at His bidding, but the present separation was a tragic one which presented to them a difficulty that the finite mind could not surmount and which was beyond the understanding of their faith in the absence of the Holy Ghost. One was missing from their midst whom they had known in life to be superior to every circumstance, even to death itself. Now this One had been taken from before their very eyes, not even suffering them assist in

His defence and had suffered a malefactor's death ; more-over they were witnesses of His burial. These happenings had left too vivid an impression on their minds and were substantiated by too many witnesses to be doubted. The bare fact was, there was a gap in their circle, their beloved Lord and Leader was taken from them. What could they do ? They had been in the habit of being able to turn to Him in every difficulty and He had been able to clear the way for them. Who should do it now ? Again John the forerunner had been cast into prison and finally beheaded, and now had not the power of the enemy seemed to triumph over the One of whom he spake ? But recently, they had heard the Lord's words concerning their own pathway, "The servant is not greater than his Lord ; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you ; (John 15. 20.) Was this to be their portion with no one to turn to for help ?

Again what of the testimony ? What could they testify ? While their Lord was with them they could be bold in His service and convincing evidence was forthcoming that their mission was true. The Lord was in their midst, then, but all had changed and to the human mind, where the preaching had once had the commendation of wisdom it would now be considered utter foolishness. To preach salvation through One not able to save Himself seemed for the moment to be out of the question. Their own hopes were gone too, hopes of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and already doubts had been so active in their midst as to encourage two of their number to turn away and go to the village of Emmaus. Yet not without hearts full of sadness, for this latest catastrophe shook to the foundations their faith in the Scriptures which they had thought were about to be fully fulfilled.

In the verses quoted above, this strangely sad and perplexing day, this same day, this first day of the week, was drawing to a close and as though to add to their perplexity this day itself had brought its quota of unique events. As soon as the Sabbath had ended, some of the women amongst them went to the sepulchre and returned again saying they had seen angels at the tomb and the latter open and empty. Peter and John also had been there and confirmed the news that the tomb was empty save for the grave clothes and now as Luke relates, though late in the day the two who had gone to Emmaus had returned with the news that they had seen the Lord and that he was unmistakably known to them in the breaking of bread. What a story they could tell too of what happened to them by the way as He opened to them the Scriptures and expounded to them all the things concerning Himself. Could it after all be true that this separation was to be temporary, that this which seemed like defeat was to be transformed into the greatest of victories and that the testimony which had gone forth was to be reinforced with this new evidence of the greatness of the One whom they had followed ? Their hearts were warmed we may well imagine by these persistent stories but little did they imagine that the fullest confirmation was so near, for we read, " As they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst them.... but they were terrified and affrighted." (Luke 24. 36-37.) The very suddenness of His appearance in their midst although doors were barred, banished all fear of what was outside and the first thought seems to have been that a heavenly messenger had come with tidings as reported at the tomb. Immediately however this erroneous idea was dispelled for He showed them His hands and His side. Nothing more was needed to complete the joy and delight of the company as is evidenced

by the simple words, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." John 20. 20.

Thus ended that same day, that first day of the week and thus will end the period of which it is typical. It began with the Lord rising from the tomb. Its course has been marked with the vagaries of the followers of the Lord, its close will be the never-ending joy of the Lord's presence. In the intervening period how many have been the rumours, theories, and doubts, how many have been discouraged and wandered away like the two who left Jerusalem only to be brought back again by the Good Shepherd to strengthen their brethren ! For how many years was the truth of the Lord's coming forgotten and lost from view though so strong at the beginning as on that resurrection day, and in such periods of perplexity how often has the enemy sought to silence testimony by fear of consequences. Yet it was on that same day that the happy event happened. No special warning, but through the grace and watchfulness of the Shepherd all were gathered together in one place with the solitary exception of Thomas who represents to us those of Israel who shall be blessed in another day. The theme of their conversation was the Lord Himself and the hope of His return. Thus were they graciously prepared by Him for the event and when this figure receives its fulfilment evidence will not be lacking that it is the Lord Himself. We have not yet seen Him to know Him but in the glory He was recognised by the Apostle John by the marks of His death. (Rev. 5. 6.) What a privilege now to occupy ourselves with the same thing to show it forth as He has desired. What a comfort too to know that it will not be after another dispensation that He will come. There will be no break as with God's dealings with Israel past and future, but the "same day at evening." The day that opened with His resurrection will close with His return. A.T.

SALVATION.

No one can look round in the world without seeing at once that two forces are at work, good and evil, neither can any intelligent reader of the Word of God fail to notice that both are dealt with there. It may not perhaps, be so readily grasped that the flow of evil continues on from the time that Satan introduced it to the human race, right on through the present, into the future, through the ready co-operation of man and against all the desires and warnings of a merciful God. In reality the struggle between good and evil, between God and Satan, is being carried on in this world, before the eyes of man, who is a responsible creature before God, having a knowledge of good and evil, and having in front of him the Word of God to inform him of the certain end of the struggle, even the ultimate triumph of God. I Cor. 15. 24-28.

Another thing that is very plain from Scripture is that Satan, regarding this world as his own, rules over it and works upon the heart of man to fulfil his desires. So cunningly does this work proceed that it is unrecognised as being thus assisted, yet Paul in writing to the Ephesians leaves no doubt on this point when he says, "You....were dead in trespasses and sins wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." ch. 2. 1-2.

On the other hand, though surrounded by evil, man is without excuse if he continues therein, particularly in this dispensation following the death of the Lord Jesus. Nothing can be plainer in holy writ than God's hatred of sin and that those who practise it are constantly under His displeasure. Psa. 7. 11. Yet God has

gone to extraordinary lengths to make man know that He desires his good, even sending His own beloved Son with the message and confirming it to us in the written Word.

Thus we see two opposing forces, of God on the one hand, of Satan on the other, and man stands on the battleground, in such a position that he cannot be ignorant of the conflict; with the means of enlightenment within reach and without any chance of claiming exemption or neutrality. As long as man remains in this world, so long will he be on the battle field, and during this time only, has he opportunity of making a choice of sides affecting his final destiny. Satan as god of this world, lays claim to all in it, including the human race. Against his power the strength of man is as nothing, just as we see the power of Israel was nothing in face of that of Egypt when they were in bondage under it. Yet in the history of Moses we find the account of one who believed the testimony that God had given years before, and he affords a very good parallel to what is before us. God was precise in telling Abraham the course to be followed by his children, even to the number of years they would be in bondage and that their deliverance would mean the destruction of their captors. Moses accepted the prophecy as the basis, and weighed against each other two courses. It was plain to him that in his lifetime would come this great event, deliverance for Israel; destruction for Egypt. Should he accept the present, the pleasures of the royal palace for a time and a part in the destruction of Egypt, or identify himself with the slaves of Israel and partake of their deliverance ? We know the latter course was the one he took.

Man today has a similar position and choice, and similarly no greater chance of self-deliverance. No

chance, not merely because of weakness, because of the power of evil being out of his reach, but because the issues at stake affect him in a scene and time beyond the present. Israel had to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, Ex. 14. 13., and Jonah when lying in the fish's belly had to acknowledge that "salvation is of the Lord" Jnh 2. 9. So with man today the same holds good. The *choice* is with man, whether for present pleasure and indifference leading to destruction with Satan and his host, or against such a course with final and full deliverance. The *power* for deliverance, however, is only with God, as we read in Col. 1. 13, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

We may also go a step farther than this and say that Satan uses his power to blind all under him as to the future. 2. Cor. 4. 3, 4. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Apart from the Word of God we should know nothing of all these things and even though such a revelation exists Satan does his best to keep us away from it, but thanks be to God, He has preserved it through many a stormy day, until at the present time it is being published at an enormous rate and being sent world-wide.

The above is a brief sketch of that which surrounds the question of salvation and we trust in subsequent articles D.V. to be able to give further aspects of this most important subject. The best of the works of men appear to be all out of shape if put in wrong surroundings, so let us be careful to get the framework right in which to set salvation and then we shall find no need to

touch it up to make it appear what we think it should be. No better summary of our brief study can be given than the words of Jonah already quoted, "Salvation is of the Lord" and surely we who have so learned can say with David, "He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Psa. 68. 20.

A.T.

CORRESPONDENCE.

It is proposed to lay this section of our paper open to the answering of readers' questions, and it is hoped that no one who desires to ask anything will hold back for any cause whatever. It is especially desired that those young in the faith may make use of this section, and lest any should have a dread of appearing in print, it is not proposed to publish names and addresses or anything more than a summary of letters received. Replies will probably have to be short to save space, but it is hoped that the blessing of God may rest on this effort to serve His children. Letters should be addressed to the editor.

CORRECTION.

On page 9, 3rd line from the bottom read, "Church of God" instead of "Church of England." It was not the writer's intention to single out any section of Christendom as being specially the object of criticism: the ruin and departure from the truth is general.

GREEN PASTURES

MAY

1935.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR ALL WHO HAVE
FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Gt. Britain : S. Warren, 9, Peel Rd., Woodford, London, E. 18.,
New Zealand : Bible & Book Depot, 200, Manchester St.,
Christchurch
Editor: A. Tunley, The Nook, 76, Lincoln Road, Werrington.
Peterborough, Eng.

Price 1½d. Post Free 2d.

A FEW LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

The apostle Paul has been called God's pattern Christian. This is, of course, with reference to his words in I. Tim. I, 16, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting," and in the circumstances of his conversion we plainly see him as a pattern in two distinct ways.

Firstly, he was converted by seeing Christ in glory, so that the Gospel for him was ever associated with a glorified Christ. In fact he speaks of it as the Gospel of the Glory. (2. Cor. 4. 4. N.T.) This gave a distinct tone to all his preaching.

Secondly, the words of the Lord, "Why persecutest thou Me," contained the germ of the truth afterwards to be fully revealed to him of the "church which is His body." Paul was persecuting the members on earth of the glorified Head in heaven.

Thus we find that he refers to himself later as "the minister of the Gospel," and "the minister of the Church," (Col. I, 23-25) and if we desire to be faithful to the whole truth we must follow God's pattern man and stand firmly for this dual ministry.

Then we find many other aspects of the apostle's life which we may well imitate.

In his personal life, his devotion to the Lord was intense. He could say, "For me to live is Christ, (Phil. I. 21) and "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the

Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2. 20.) He realised in a most practical way the truth of the teaching of Rom. 6 and 7. He could truly sing:—

From sin, the world and Satan,
I'm ransomed by Thy blood,
And here do walk a stranger,
Alive with Thee to God.

May his example stimulate us to a life more devoted to our absent Lord.

He also gives us a splendid example as a servant of the Lord—not of men. While fully recognising fellowship with his brethren in his service, (Acts 13) at the same time he received his marching orders direct from his Lord. "If I yet pleased men," says he, "I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1. 10.)

He was a true champion of the truth, not even shrinking from opposing Peter when the truth of the Gospel was in question and sparing none when the fundamentals of the truth were at stake. (Gal. 2, II. 5, 12, 2. Cor. II, 13-15.) What a rebuke to the latitudinarianism of our day. May we, like him, heed the exhortation of the prophet Jeremiah, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." (ch. 48, 10.)

In the manner of conducting his service we may well follow the example of the apostle.

Firstly, we see in him the pattern evangelist. "From Jerusalem unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ." His eye was ever on "the regions beyond." No sooner had he evangelised a district and seen a testimony established there than he moved on to reach others who had not yet heard. In this he truly followed his Lord, who said, "Let us go into the next

towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." (Mark 1. 38.) Paul's preaching was no mere excitable evangelistic preaching such as we see so much of to-day. He sought to lead souls to Christ, and lead them on to see God's path for them in gathering with others according to His Word. Where there was already an assembly established, the converts came into fellowship as a matter of course. Where not, he taught them the truth of gathering, and assemblies were formed. And this is the order every true servant of God must follow to-day, who seeks to obey the scriptural injunction, "do the work of an evangelist." His eye must be upon the world with the end before him of preaching the Gospel to every creature, and at the same time he must seek the glory of Christ in seeing assemblies of saints established, on the ground of the "one body." (I. Cor. 12, 12, 13; Eph. 4, 4) to be testimonies for Him.

Then we also see in Paul the model pastor. "Let us go again and visit our brethren," (Acts 15, 36) was his motto. He had the welfare of the flock of God at heart. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." (2. Cor. 11. 28.) This is a most important service, especially in these days of wide-spread error. The saints need to be taught and shepherded, and the true pastor must visit, and re-visit the sheep of the Lord's flock—the twos and threes who are seeking to hold fast to the truth and preach the Gospel to a perishing world, and the isolated saints seeking to be faithful where circumstances have placed them. They need encouragement. He must "reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." This service will surely meet its reward, although it may be little accounted of in man's eyes.

The Lord bless these few meditations to our souls, and may we learn from the great apostle of the Gentiles what is God's path for us, both individually and collectively, The Lord's coming draws nigh and soon will terminate our opportunity for faithful service here. May we "occupy till He come."

W.J.M.

PRESERVATION.

Is it not a cheer and solace to the heart both to know and to realise that the Lord (Jehovah) will keep the feet of His saints (I. Samuel 2. 9); and preserveth the way of His saints (Proverbs 2. 8); and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved for ever (Psalm 37. 28)? Our Lord and Saviour also, in His prayer to His Father, as recorded for us in John 17, gave expression to these words, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me," adding "those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition."

From the Old Testament we may gather that Jacob in his day knew something of preservation, for it is recorded in Genesis 32 that he had seen God face to face and his life was preserved. What was the occasion for his uttering these words? In the first place he was alone—no human arm on which he could lean—and then it was there wrestled a man with him. Scripture says a man, but may we not say this wrestler was more than a man, even Jehovah Himself? Jacob not infrequently had intercourse with angels, as recorded in this same chapter—in dreams God spake to him (chap. 28) and

among other things said, "I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." We have said Jacob was alone—a blessed place to be in, if alone with God. It is there that God and the soul can commune together—Trace through the Word of God the many instances in which God revealed Himself, and His purposes, to His servants, both to Old Testament and New Testament saints, whether by way of encouragement or for reproof. Two special cases might be mentioned—the one in Acts 23, 11, in connection with Paul, the apostle; and the other as recorded in Luke 24, 34, and I. Corinthians 15. 5, in relation to the apostle Peter. Such moments are moments of sanctity and preciousness. Do writer and reader know aught of what it is to be alone with God?

There are a series of beautiful expressions given in Psalm 36—God's mercy and God's faithfulness, God's righteousness and God's judgments, followed by, "O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast." Again if we turn to that well-known and intensely sweet Psalm 121, we get, "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul." "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even from evermore." Has not this truth been a stay to many—whether in times of adversity, or on the eve of a pathway not previously trodden, as in the case of a missionary going forth to regions beyond, or of a child of God for His Name's sake going out in the path of faith? Turning to portions in the New Testament, and therefore having more direct application to the present dispensation of grace, there is much to encourage the believer. The apostle Paul in I. Thess. 5. 23, wrote, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ." Then in direct reference to himself he wrote, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." (2. Timothy 4. 18.) Peter, too, in addressing the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, wrote to them as being kept, or preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation; while Jude writes to the sanctified (or beloved) by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ, finishing his brief epistle with these well known words, "now unto Him that is able to keep (or preserve) you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" etc. In the light of the foregoing may not writer and reader alike use the words of the Preacher and with emphasis say, "I *know* that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him?" (Ecclesiastes 3. 14.)

W.W.F.

LUKE 24. 28.

"He made as though He would have gone further." How perfect that little movement was! What title had He, a stranger as He seemed to be, to obtrude Himself on them? He had only joined them by the way, in the courtesy of one who was travelling the same road. What right had such an one to cross their threshold? If Jesus be but a stranger in our eyes, beloved He will still walk outside. Till we know Him as the Saviour, the lover of our souls, surely He asks for nothing. We may dwell in our own houses and

furnish our own tables, till then. But when He is known by us, as the Son of God who has loved us, and given Himself for us, then He claims a place in our hearts and our own homes; and then He will dwell with us and sup with us, as it were, unbidden; entering in the person of some of His little ones, either to get a cup of water, or to have the feet washed, at moments, perhaps, that we looked not for Him.

J.G.B.

2. CORINTHIANS 6. 3.

Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed. Not living expressly to be seen of men; but living *every moment* in the conscious knowledge that the enemies of Christ are watching for every fault, to magnify it for His dishonour.

THE BELIEVER'S SEVEN-FOLD JUSTIFICATION,

(Continued from Page 40.)

No. 3—JUSTIFICATION BY BLOOD.

We come now to God as the "giving God." He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us Rom. 8. 32, so that we are now spoken of as being "Justified by blood." Rom. 5. 9. Death has been demanded. Christ has died and thus the penalty has been payed. So we see that if we are justified freely by His grace it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth. A propitiation through faith in His *blood*. (Rom. 3. 24, 25). Man could tolerate

a certain kind of grace or take a certain interest in our Lord's holy life as man, but he cannot bear to think of, or to accept the "Blood Theology," although the key-note of God's justification is "Blood." Blood is the procuring cause as this passage proves. The Judge was gracious, and to prove His grace He gave His Son for the criminal. The Judge was also just, therefore He did not spare His Son but delivered Him up for us. God's justice is now displayed to the universe in the blood of Jesus, as it can be seen nowhere else, and thus it is according to the value of the precious blood of Christ that we are now justified. God's justice demanded death: God's grace provided blood: and so in Ps. 22. 3. we hear the obedient One saying under all the load that was laid upon Him, "But Thou art Holy O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." He justifies God while He feels the judgment stroke. His precious blood cleanseth from all sin, sins of omission as well as sins of commission. Many to-day would like to think that something else or something less than His blood can cleanse from the sin of failing to come up to obey His precepts while the blood is required only for the sin of actual commission, but sin of omission is as really sin as that of commission and thank God His Word declares, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," I. John 1. 7. We are justified by His blood as the alone procuring, efficacious, meritorious cause, and to nothing else in the Word of God is justification attributed as a meritorious cause, for, says Acts 13. 39, "By Him *all* who believe are justified from *all* things." That brings us to consider—

No. 4—JUSTIFICATION BY RESURRECTION,

Rom. 4. 25 says, Jesus our Lord "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justifica-

tion." Christ being made sin for us went into our place of condemnation under the wrath of God, but God in justice to Him, raised Him out of that place, thus showing that the legal barrier between Him and any sinner accepting Christ, has been removed. It is not that there is merit of value in the putting away of sin in Christ's resurrection. The blood alone answers that question, but what comes before us in Christ's resurrection is the satisfaction of God's justice in the finished work of Christ. Christ on Calvary added up the penalty demanded, gave Himself as an equivalent, and thus paid in equivalent the amount demanded: but God in raising Christ from among the dead has with His own hand receipted the account, so that, not only have we the account *paid* by our Surety but settled by Him who made the just demand. It was for our offences He was delivered. It was for our justification He was raised. How entangled are the ideas of many Christians regarding the full meaning of justification, is seen in the infrequent use of the resurrection of Christ which is here so intimately linked with justification. "If Christ be not raised ye are yet in your sins," I. Cor. 15. 17; on the other hand If Christ is raised ye are not in your sins. His resurrection tells us that God is for us in consistency, yea, shall we say, in exhibition of His own majestic justice; so in Rom. 10. 6-9. the righteousness of faith speaks thus, "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead)": for the Word tells us that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Jesus as Lord (New Trans.) and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead thou shalt be saved." "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died,

yea rather that is risen again." Rom. 8. 34. If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more *being reconciled* we shall be saved by His life, Rom. 5. 10. Thus there is the most intimate and necessary connection between justification and resurrection. The Judge's Son, Who took the place according to the Judge's grace, of the condemned criminal, has died, but has been raised from among the dead so that as the "Living One," He is the assurance to the condemned one that there is no condemnation for him.

No. 5, leads us to JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE. Rom. 5. 18.

"As by one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation even so by one righteousness the free gift came upon (or rather to) all men unto justification of life." This carries us a step further in the perfect exhibition of the justification of the believer. Not only did Christ come to save. Not only did He shed His blood. Not only did He stand my surety. Not only was He raised from the dead as my head and representative but I am quickened together with Him in this risen life; we are reckoned to have died and now have been raised together with Christ. Eph. 2. The Psalmist says, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant for in Thy sight shall no man *living* be justified." Psalm 143. 2. As living in the first Adam life, I cannot be justified, but as having died out of the Adam state and now raised and quickened with Christ. The 6th of Rom. is the full exhibition of this. We do not get Justification and acceptance now before God by having restored to us that which was lost in Adam but after the penalty has been paid by our surety and He has been raised again, we are, as in Christ taken out of the old "Condemnation-place," and set down in a new, a resurrection

(therefore justified) life, into the very place in which Christ now is, in virtue of what He has done. In other words the old things are entirely blotted out by the work of the Cross. We make an entirely new start as those who have been dead and are alive again living the life of Christ. This is "Justification of life" (not a merely sanctified walk) but life in entirely new circumstances; Christ's resurrection life in which we are now to walk as those who have died to sin. So we are called upon to reckon ourselves *dead* indeed *to* sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6. II, and verse 7 "He that is dead is (lit) justified from sin." It is only as those who have died (died with Christ) and who are alive in a life that knows no condemnation, (Christ's risen life) that we can say we are justified from sin. This is the bearing of Christ's death and resurrection on our justification of life.

Eph. 1. 6. tells us that we are accepted in the Beloved in whom we have redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sins. Here we have got three outstanding things, "Forgiveness, Redemption, Acceptance." True we are not yet redeemed by power, that awaits the Rapture. 1. Thess. 4. But so far as our sins and their forgiveness are concerned we *do* have redemption. And is there One in whom God delights? Well that is the One in whom *we* are accepted: accepted, not in the Adam state perfected, neither in the angelic state communicated, but accepted in Him who is the Beloved Son, in His resurrection state, quickened with Him after all the responsibilities of the Adam state had been justly met—Children in Christ Jesus to God Himself, and as Christ is (not was) but *is*, so are we in this world. If we continue our illustration it will be only to show how surpassing man's power is God's justifica-

tion. Not only has the Judge in His grace given His Son whose blood was shed and who was raised again from the dead, but through that risen Son, life is communicated to the condemned criminal, and *he* takes his place as a son—not by some gratuitous assumption or temporary adoption—but by an innate right, having now a son's life and hence a son's position.

This is JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE.

(To be continued D.V.)

THE HEART OF MAN.

It is from the heart of man, descended to the lowest step in the scale of intelligent beings, resembling alas! the beast in his desires, Satan in his pride, a weak slave in his passions; strong or at least proud in his pretensions . . .

It is from the heart of man, capable of the highest aspirations, with which his pride feeds itself, and of the most degrading lusts, with which however his conscience becomes disgusted;—it is from the heart of man, that God forms the divine harp on which all the harmony of His praises can resound and will resound for ever.

J.N.D.

Be assured that God does more *in* us than we *for* Him; and what we do for Him is only in proportion as it is Himself who works it in us.

WITS' END CORNER.

Psalm CVII. 27-28.

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
Christian, with troubled brow?
Are you thinking of what is before you,
And all you are bearing now?
Does all the world seem against you,
And you in the battle alone?
Remember—at "Wits' End Corner"
Is just where God's power is shown.

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
Blinded with wearying pain,
Feeling you cannot endure it,
You cannot bear the strain,
Bruised through the constant suffering,
Dizzy, and dazed, and numb?
Remember—to "Wits' End Corner,"
Is where Jesus loves to come!

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner"?
Then you're just in the very spot,
To learn the wondrous resources,
Of Him, who faileth not!

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
Your work before you spread,
All lying, begun, unfinished
And pressing on heart and head,
Longing for strength to do it,
Stretching out trembling hands?
Remember—at "Wits' End Corner"
The Burden Bearer stands.

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
Yearning for those you love,
Longing and praying and watching
Pleading their cause above,
Trying to lead them to Jesus.
Wond'ring if you've been true?
He whispers, at "Wits' End Corner"
"I'll win them, as I won you!"

No doubt to a brighter pathway
Your footsteps will soon be moved
But only at "Wits' End Corner"
Is "the God who is able" proved.

THE WORD OF GOD. (Extracted.)

What then is our security and stay amid the rockings and heavings of the vessel of professing Christendom? Is the Christian left amid the fury of the storm without a sheet anchor or harbour of refuge? Not so, thank God. There are two grand realities left for us in Scripture.

First, we are warned by Scripture to *expect* perilous or difficult times; we are distinctly told that the Church so-called *would* become a moral wreck, as bad as, if not worse than heathenism. In the midst of such a state of things as this, the voice of God in Scripture to the Christian sounds distinct and clear (see 2. Tim. iii. 5), "From such turn away." Then, a little further down in the same chapter, the Christian is turned to the Scriptures (see verses 14, 15, 16), to these he is exhorted to adhere, to continue in them. Further, we find in Revelation ii and iii., the history of the Church given us by God Himself; there we have the Lord Jesus Christ

revealed as judging the state of the Church and the individual Christian is called *to hear what Christ says.*

From this it is very evident that the Church cannot have authority over the Christian, for he is called to hear what the Lord Jesus Christ says, when sitting in judgment on the Church, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

The next great sheet anchor for the Christian is in hearing the Apostles *themselves.* "We know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." See I. John IV. 6. It is not denied, that we have in their various epistles what the Apostles said; therefore we are bound to hear the Scriptures, or we are not of God. "We 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." How solemn; this responsibility rests on every individual Christian, and escape from it, he cannot. We are not told to listen to what the fathers or traditions say, as if thus nearer to the source; the fact is we have *the source itself*, for we have what the inspired teachers themselves taught. The Apostle Paul warns the elders of Ephesus in Acts XX., that after his decease both grievous wolves and perverse men would arise; and in very truth this is the *only apostolic succession* that I can trace in the Divine record; he does not commend them in view of this coming storm to the shelter of a *apostle* who was to follow him, but says, "I commend you to God *and to the Word of His grace*, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Ver. 32.) And fully in consonance with this is the testimony of the Apostle John, "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." (I. John ii. 24.) We have got in Scripture that which assuredly is from the beginning; there is much written elsewhere which may or may not be in accordance with Scripture, yet it is not *from the beginning*, so that a Christian *can judge by it*; Scripture alone is that, and to its test and judgment all must be brought.

W.W.T.

THE SAME NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED.

I. Cor. XI, 23.

(Continued from Page 68)

THE FORBEARANCE OF CHRIST. It is very remarkable to notice the gracious way in which the Lord deals with Judas. He was fully aware that he was seeking the opportunity to betray Him, and had full knowledge of his conspiracy with the high priest, for as the heart of Elisha went with Gehazi as he followed after Naaman to receive from him silver and raiment in return for his healing, so the heart of the Lord went with Judas when he bargained to sell His Master for the price of a slave. The Lord might have exposed him before the other disciples, and driven him out from the guest chamber branded as a traitor; instead, in washing the disciples' feet, Judas was included with the others. Later, when supper was resumed, He would give to Him a special token of love, the sop, whilst Judas in return, professed fellowship by dipping his hand in the dish with the Lord. And though the Lord was acquainted with his evil intentions, He would not even tell the other disciples his name when asked the question, Lord, who is it? What a long-suffering

and gracious Saviour is ours. Judas accepted the sop. We have previously learnt that it was the devil who was the instigator of his treachery, (John XIII. 2), but now, after this act we read that "Satan entered into him": verse 27. Instead of being as previously under the power and authority of Christ, with power to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, etc. (Matt. X. 8.), henceforth he is seen as completely under satanic influence. Not only did he sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver, but for that same amount, he sold his own soul. How unutterably sad as one thinks of his opportunities and privileges in being associated with the blessed Lord for those three years, and to think that he had steeled his heart against every gracious act of the Lord toward him, and was now a lost soul, "the son of perdition." Being now past redemption, the Lord, ere He instituted the supper as a memorial of His death, would be relieved of his presence, and so said to him, "What thou doest do quickly," and Judas immediately went out. The divine record is "and it was night." Night in the heart of Judas. He went out from the presence of the One who is "the Light" into a darkness that was for him to be eternal. Good were it for that man if he had never been born.

THE ORDER OF EVENTS. The incidents we have referred to in John XIII, from verse two to thirty apparently take place between verses eighteen and nineteen of Luke XXII. In verse eighteen the Lord is commemorating the passover with His disciples, but at this point He rises from supper, washes the feet of the disciples, and afterwards Judas having received the sop departs upon his evil errand. The passover supper having been thus celebrated, and Judas having retired from the upper chamber, the Lord is now

free to introduce to the eleven, the chief object He had in view in thus gathering them together, which was, the celebration of His death. Attention might here be drawn to Luke XXII. 21, which has been thought by some to indicate that Judas was present at the institution of the Lord's supper. But it is ever to be borne in mind that Luke in his gospel does not follow chronological order. Events and statements are grouped together in accordance with the character of the gospel, irrespective of the order of the time in which they occurred. A comparison with Mark's record will prove this.

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

The Lord's hour had now come, and the cross loomed before His holy mind. There was not one incident that took place upon the night in which He was betrayed that He had not foreseen. And not only foreseen, but in the prophetic scriptures of truth, by the Holy Spirit, had foretold. His holy body was to be given, His precious blood was to be shed. In prophetic language He is heard saying "Sacrifice and offering Thou willest not, but Thou hast prepared for Me, a body." And He was taking this body, specially prepared for Him, to be offered to God as a sacrifice for sin there at the Cross, according to the will of God, "by which will we have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. X. 5-10.) Ere the Lord left the glory, every step of the pathway here was known to Him, consequently He was never taken by surprise. This but magnifies His wondrous grace, that knowing the end from the beginning, acquainted full well with the enmity and hatred of the heart of man, knowing the treatment that would be meted out to Him here, yet in spite of it all, He must needs come down from the glory that He might have the joy of making us His own.

THE THANKSGIVING OF CHRIST. The Lord now takes into His hands the loaf and He gives thanks. With the memorial in

His hands that spoke of the dreaded sufferings that He would experience at the Cross, our precious Saviour could give thanks. To whom? Surely to the Father, whose will He ever delighted to do. As the outcome of the unique sacrifice of Calvary, God would be glorified; the righteous claims of His throne would be perfectly met; His holiness would be vindicated, righteousness established, reconciliation made, sin would eventually be put away, and the eternal purpose in connection with the Church (Eph. III. 5-11) would be brought to fruition. In view of this, in spite of the cost to Himself, our adorable Lord and Saviour could give thanks. It was in view also of the joy that was before Him, for which He endured the Cross. His joy in bringing joy to the heart of God as also joy to the hearts of His redeemed people. He could look beyond the shameful Cross and the suffering of death to the day of manifestation when He should come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe. Knowing full well what the glorious outcome would be of His precious body and blood being given for us, on this the night of His betrayal our Lord gave thanks.

THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST. In the passover supper it was a roast lamb that was partaken of. Here in the Lord's supper, it was one loaf of which the disciples partook. Note the words that the Lord speaks, "This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me." It is Himself that we are to bring into remembrance. The One to whom we owe every blessing that we enjoy here and now, desires that His own should remember

Him in the breaking of bread during His absence. As we think of the cost of our redemption, and what it must have meant for the sinless One to be made sin for us, we might well say as the Psalmist said of Jerusalem, "If I forget Thee, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember Thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." (Ps. CXXXVII. 5-6.) To us, redeemed by His own precious blood, it becomes a feast of thanksgiving, a feast of appropriation, as also a feast of remembrance. At His Table, in His guest chamber, with our Lord in the midst, we are privileged to give thanks as we remember Him in His death, and appropriate to ourselves His body given for us. This much we gather from Luke's gospel, but when we turn to I. Cor. XI, we learn that it is also a feast of announcement, a feast of expectation, and one of discernment. We "announce the death of the Lord." We do so "until He comes, (verse 26) whilst verse 29 teaches that in doing it, we are to discern the Lord's body.

MY BLOOD SHED FOR YOU. Our Lord then takes the cup, and again there is the giving of thanks, after which the cup is passed to His disciples with the words, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for you." This makes the remembrance of Him, to us a feast of joy, for whilst our thoughts instinctively turn to the pouring out of His precious life's blood at the cross, they also turn to the wondrous results that flow out to us as the outcome of His death. Forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, justification, acceptance in the Beloved, relationship with the Father as children and sons, access into the holiest, as also fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, these are privileges for us to enjoy here and now, and with many others are the

outcome of the glorious redemptive work of Christ at Calvary. Truly we may say that the glories of creation are completely eclipsed by the glories of redemption. Joseph in his prison said to the butler, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee." In view of the foregoing, is it not indeed well with us to-day? Good then, if from our hearts we can respond in the words of the prophet, "The desire of our soul is to Thy Name and the remembrance of Thee." (Isa. XXVI. 8.) May our God graciously preserve us from forgetting like the butler, *our* Joseph, the fruitful bough by a well, whose branches have run over the walls of Judaism, and ministered such abundant fruit to us needy Gentiles.

THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN ASPECT. Attention might here be drawn to the way in which Luke's account of the supper, corresponds with the Apostle Paul's account as set forth in I. Cor. XI. The account as given by Matthew and Mark in their gospels, presents the supper in the light of the dispensational character set forth therein. These in regard to the loaf mention the words of the Lord, "This is My body" whereas Luke adds, "which is given for you," thus bringing in a personal touch omitted by the others. Luke alone adds "This do in remembrance of Me." The reason for Matthew and Mark omitting these words is quite in accordance with the character of their gospels. Israel as a nation has not as yet learnt the value either of the Person or the work of Christ. Blindness in part has happened to them until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. But when the Deliverer shall come out of Sion in Person to take up the reins of government and bring in blessing again to the Nation, then they shall look upon Him whom they pierced. Then Israel will dwell in the presence of a reigning

Messiah consequently there will be no necessity for them to commemorate the Lord's death in the way believers are privileged to do, in this the day of His patience.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT. But the different accounts are more pronounced when the cup is referred to. Matthew and Mark both look on anticipatively to the day when the New Covenant with Israel will be established according to Jer. XXXI. 31-34, of which Christ will be the Mediator, His precious blood being the foundation upon which it will be established. So they both read, "This is My blood, that of the New Covenant, that shed for the remission of sins." In the coming day, when Israel is restored to their own land and converted it will be theirs to enjoy all the blessings of this Covenant which will then be made with them by God. It will be theirs then to learn that when they rejected and crucified their Messiah, in the shedding of His precious blood the basis of the New Covenant was laid in virtue of which they then enjoy the remission of their guilt.

THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD. In contrast to the first two gospels, Luke presents to us quite a different thought in relation to the cup. He states, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is poured out for you." Again we have the personal touch in the "you"; but "*This Cup is the New Covenant in My blood,*" and it was of this cup of the Covenant that the disciples then partook, and it is of the same cup that we now partake according to I. Cor. XI., whenever we respond to the desire of our Lord in this direction. We do not have to await the establishing of the covenant with Israel, but here and now it is our privilege to know and enjoy

all the blessings that are connected with the Cup of the New Covenant. "Till He come" let our hearts be in exercise as to the measure in which we thus answer to His desire expressed thus upon the night in which He was betrayed.

(To be continued D.V.)

GOD MANIFEST.

Alas the naughty pride of the flesh which sets man up to judge his Creator and leads him to count everlasting misery in his own way better than the fulness of blessing in God's. It is the same pride of the flesh and independence of mind concerning God's object, which leaves the minds of so many to be exercised upon the question of the Deity of the Son and the Deity of the Spirit. The questions are taken to Scripture, as though God's *object*, or one of them at least, in writing the book, *must* have been to advance proofs of the Divine nature of the Son and of the Spirit. And then some are stumbled because the evidence they can collect, is of so *indirect* a nature. Indirect! to be sure it is indirect; and this indirectness is its strength. In writing the Bible, God had no such thought as to make man judge of Deity. Neither was it even one of His objects to bring out proofs of the Divine nature of the Son and the Spirit. He writes in and from His own circumstances. And the Divine nature of the Son and of the Spirit, is as much assumed in what He has written, as is even the existence of a God. God's object in the Bible was just to unfold the way and glory of Redemption. And they who humbly follow it out as traced in the Scriptures, will find thousands of collateral points taught them; but if they get upon these collateral points

separately from their connexion with the object for which they are revealed, let them take heed: "what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." I do *not* say that direct proofs weighty and abundant cannot be brought forward in proof of the unqualified Deity of the Son and of the Spirit: there can be I know; but what I *do* say is, that if we try to prove truth according to the good pleasure of our own minds, and not according to to the way God teaches it, we are in danger; as not being led by the Spirit therein. Just so is the way in which men look at the Saviour; either they will look exclusively at His being the Son of God, or they will forget this and look at Him as the Son of man: but the whole virtue is lost if we regard Him in any other way than in the double nature—God manifest in the flesh.

Extract from the "Christian Witness" for July, 1838.

All efforts at worshipping God by the unhallowed powers of nature, come under the head of "strange fire."

God is the object of worship; Christ the ground and the material of worship; and the Holy Ghost the power of worship.

Let us remember that there is something more in our precious Lord Jesus Christ than the pardon of our sins, and the salvation of our souls.

What do the burnt-offering, the meat offering and the drink offering set forth? Christ as a sweet savour, Christ the food of God's offering, the joy of His heart.

"HOLDING FAST AND HOLDING FORTH."

Notice has been received from America of a decision to recommence publication of the above periodical under the old title but in a rather different form and to charge a subscription rate of one dollar per year. It is purposed to begin publication in April of next year D.V., and to include letters concerning the Lord's work as well as articles of an expository nature. It is hoped that further details will be available for publication shortly.

THE OLD FAITH OR THE NEW.

Extract.

Striking must it have been for any intelligent visitor to Jerusalem to mark this fundamental difference between the teaching of Judaism and that of Christianity. If he entered the Temple courts in the morning, he might have seen the priest at the altar preparing for the daily burnt-offering. Entering the upper room, when Christians were assembled for worship, he would have found no altar there, and have seen no victim ready for immolation, but would have heard the assembled company giving thanks to God for a sacrifice once for all offered up, the sacrifice of His Son. The priest would be doing his work in silence, as far as he was concerned. The company in the upper room with one heart and one voice would be rendering to God the sacrifice of praise.....

We have read of the one perfect sacrifice (Heb. 9 and 10) offered up once for all, so never to be repeated. No more sacrifice for sins can there be. No repetition of that sacrifice in any form is required. No altar have we on which to immolate a victim. No bloody or unbloody sacrifice for sins are we called to offer to our God. Yet have Christians no sacrifices to offer? Assuredly they have, and those which God will accept. All of them members of the holy priesthood (I Pt. 2. 5.), sacrifice becomes them; but as Peter in that passage takes care to state—spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. In harmony with this we read here in the Hebrews (13-15) of the sacrifice of praise to God to be offered continually. So, whether we learn of Peter or from the writer of this epistle, the teaching is the same. Peter would have been as much shocked, if those amongst whom he specially laboured had altars erected in their place of meeting in Asia Minor, as certainly Paul would have been. An altar or altars in the different provinces of Asia Minor, a Jew would have

declaimed against. One altar had the Jews for sin offering—the altar of burnt offering at Jerusalem. One altar have Christians, only one, even the cross on which the Lord Jesus died. Christian sacrifices, however there are, and of another class of them are we also reminded (v. 16): "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." To care for others, ministering to them in their need, is a feature, and that an acceptable one, of Christian service. The Philippians understood that, when sending to minister to Paul in his prison at Rome. And Paul accepted this service as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God (Phil. 4. 18). To offer these of course neither a priest, nor an altar, nor the death of some fresh victim is required. Such sacrifices as praises to God are the outflow of the heart in worship; and doing good etc., is the activity of the Divine nature displayed in the saint—the practical manifestation of Christian love.

C.E.S.

The holiest we enter in perfect peace with God:
Through whom we found our centre, in Jesus & His blood:
Though great may be our dulness, in thought, and word
and deed,

We glory in the fulness of Him that meets our need.

Much incense is ascending before th' eternal throne;
God graciously is bending to hear each feeble groan:
To all our prayers and praises, *Christ adds His sweet perfume,*

And Love the censer raises, these odours to consume.

O God, we come with singing, because Thy great High Priest

Our names to Thee is bringing, nor e'er forgets the least;
For us He wears the mitre, where "Holiness" shines bright,

For us His robes are whiter than heaven's unsullied light.

RIGHT POSITION AND CONDITION.

Position, may be quite according to God, but the practical godly, grace, in which it is filled and occupied, may be but scanty and poor. And how should this warn us, not to count on the virtue of a merely pure and separated position ! If *it* be trusted in, or held with an unjudged and unwatched heart, even they among the uncircumcised, may rebuke us. Much love and service is often to be found *within*, while little of the power of holiness, and of the mind of heaven, may accompany those who go outside. What I mean is this—that there is often less grace and *moral* power in the purer position, than there is in the defiled connection. There is no lesson I would more press upon my own soul than this—and I think I can say, I value it. Position without power, principles beyond practice, jealousy about orthodoxy and truth, and mysteries with little personal communion with the Lord—all these the soul stands in constant fear of, and in equal judgment and refusal of. The earnestness about many and many a right thing, that was found at Ephesus, the stir and activity even of a religious nature that prevailed at Sardis, and the orthodoxy of Laodicea, were all challenged by the Lord. And we deeply justify His challenge in all this. (Rev. ii., iii.)

The tithing of mint and anise, when “judgment and mercy” were passed by, was exposed by the divine mind in Christ. And in the Spirit, all the true children of God join in that exposure.

We refuse position without power, as we would principles without practice, or truth and mysteries, and knowledge, without Christ Himself, and personal communion with Him. But in the stainless, perfect pages of the Word, we find *all* are *duly* honoured, and nothing is thoroughly according to God, but where each and all,

are in their place and measure thus honoured.

The call of God is to separate us but we need the power of the spirit of God *in us* operating powerfully, to occupy the place according to God, in a loving and devoted mind.

“Salt is good”—the Divine principle is the good thing. But salt may lose its saltiness. The right position, or the Divine principle, may be well understood and avowed. But there may be *little or no power* of life in it.!

To walk humbly with God, in fellowship with Himself, holding fast whatever we have learned of His will in communion with Him, in the Spirit's grace and power, is what will keep us right, and so enable us to hold the Truth and so walk worthy of it, as will please the Lord and commend His word and way to others. In the days of Malachi, there was much professed zeal for the temple of God, and so in the days of the Lord's earthly ministry on earth. But for the Lord of that temple, there was no place found worthy of Him, not even among those who professedly admired the “stones” of that temple. (Matt. 24.1.)

To be occupied with the *outward framework* of God's temple, with no heart for the *Lord* of that temple is not of God.

J.G.B.

THE SAME NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED.

(Continued from Page 83.)

CHRIST'S SONG OF PRAISE Matthew records the fact that ere leaving the upper room they sang an hymn. This is the first time that singing is mentioned in the New Testament. How fitting it is that it should be introduced on such an occasion.

The sufferings of death viewed as past, the precious blood viewed as having made a perfect atonement, as having been shed for the remission of sins, His own can now, like Israel by the Red sea, triumph in an accomplished redemption, and like them sing "I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously." "The Lord is my strength and song He is become my salvation." There can be no singing until redemption and deliverance are experienced. Israel in Egypt sighed and cried in their bondage, but having learnt the power of God for salvation, it was theirs to raise a song of praise. Now for the disciples, the blessed Lord having put into their hands the emblems that testified of the efficacy of His supreme sacrifice, in virtue of which they enjoyed the forgiveness of sins, He would now lead forth their hearts in praise and thanksgiving to God as foretold in Ps. XXII, "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." As for ourselves in this day, with the fuller knowledge that has been given to us by divine revelation of the wondrous purposes of God in connection with those who form part of the Church, it is surely becoming, as we find ourselves gathered together from time to time around our precious Redeemer in the presence of the memorials that announce His death, to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. Heb. XIII, 15. We should indeed be a singing people for we have a singing Saviour as also a God who joys over us with singing. Zep. III, 17. And our Lord began the singing on the same night in which He was betrayed.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST. But ere the upper chamber was left, the blessed Lord would give to his loved followers some precious divine unfoldings that would be for their encouragement and cheer. The supper they had just celebrated indicated His going

down into death on their behalf. Now He would make known to them that He was going up into His Father's house on their behalf. How precious are the words that He speaks. "I go to prepare a place for you." He was leaving them for a short time, but, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there ye may be also." There are many abodes in the Father's house, possibly connected with the various families in heaven to which Eph. III, 10-15 makes reference; but for the redeemed company which He was now to gather around Himself, He must make special preparation. For Adam, the Lord came down and planted a garden in Eden, it was a garden of delights where all creation glories were in full display unsullied by evil, with everything characterised by perfection and all in perfect suitability for Adam's enjoyment. Now, the blessed Lord, having procured a perfect salvation for Adam's race, He tells His disciples that He is going on high to prepare a Paradise there for those in whom His love centres. But this Paradise above will never be marred by sin, Christ Himself is there supreme, and His heart will never be satisfied until He has made good His purpose "That where I am there ye may be also." What a prospect! The Father's House, the Father's home, the Father's love, and above and beyond all the Father's well beloved Son to perfectly fill and satisfy these hearts of ours throughout an eternal day. And to fulfill this purpose His word is "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." Blessed and precious Saviour, these hearts of ours long for that happy moment to come, when responding to Thy call, we enter into the glory of Thy presence, to behold Thee face to face, there to express in a fuller and deeper way than hitherto, our heartfelt appreciation of Thy glorious Person and Thy perfect work.

THE UPPER ROOM. I think it might be said that the upper room is typical of the heavenly sanctuary which will ere long be our abode. It was characterised by the atmosphere of love which was in its fullest measure manifested there towards those who in wondrous grace He had claimed as "His own." There is seen the disciple whom Jesus loved leaning upon the breast of his beloved Lord and Master. It is this disciple that tells us in ch. I of his gospel of "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. Here in our Lord's guest chamber, we see the beloved disciple in the bosom of the only begotten Son. The Lord having loved "His own" in the same measure in which He was beloved of the Father, (Jn. XV, 9) He would have them enjoy that measure of intimacy, fellowship and communion, that He enjoyed with His Father. Here the affections of Christ are seen flowing out in their fulness to John, and the affections of John's heart are seen centred in His beloved Lord. In the language of the Song, it was, "I am my beloved's and my Beloved is mine," and this resulted in a measure of intimacy being enjoyed by John beyond that experienced by the other disciples. This was surely a night to be much remembered by John, the last night spent in the company of his Lord prior to His death. Remembering the dignity, the glory and the power of Christ, how wonderful it is that such poor failing creatures as we, should become the objects of His love and affections. For verily each one of "His own" is now privileged to speak of himself as John did, "The disciple whom Jesus loves," and to enjoy this intimacy, and fellowship not only with our precious Saviour, but also with the Father. (I. John I. 3).

Good then for us to meditate on the glorious prospect before us of entering into the Father's house above, the heavenly sanctuary, to enjoy there in the fullest

measure and without alloy throughout an eternal day, the sweet fellowship and communion that characterises that abode of love.

THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST. This is the Lord's purpose for us, the purpose for which He gave us being, which was before Him before the worlds were framed, or their foundations laid. Before time had a beginning, then were His delights with the sons of men. And to bring to fruition these purposes of love, our blessed Lord carries on in the sanctuary above a service similar to that witnessed in the upper room. The present service of Christ is to sanctify and cleanse by the washing of water by the word, so that in the coming day of display He may have a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, Holy and without blemish. We have seen that grace and love were in full display in the upper room. Thanksgiving and praise was also heard there. Joy and peace was set forth in the precious sustaining and encouraging ministry of Christ Himself as set forth in John XIV. All these and very much more will be in full display, to be enjoyed by us in the fullest measure in the abode the Lord has gone to prepare for us, in the Father's house, the heavenly sanctuary, Christ's guest chamber.

There Christ is seen supreme: Amidst the ransomed
throng
His glorious work will be the theme: His praise His
people's song.

Might we not well pray, Lord Jesus, grant that these hearts of ours may even here and now know in a fuller, richer and deeper way than ever we have yet experienced the joys, the privileges and blessings that are associated with Thy guest chamber, so that we may indeed find ourselves amongst those of whom it is recorded, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house and Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of

Thy pleasures." Ps. XXXVI. Saints, beloved of God, may we not do well to here challenge these hearts of ours as to the measure in which these precious realities are known and enjoyed by us at the present time. Note, it was not until after the Lord had washed John's feet, that he is seen so intimately near to the heart of Christ. So with us, it is only in the measure that we profit by the present service of Christ, that we are enabled to enjoy a like portion.

PETER AND HIS WARNINGS. The Lord's people do not always profit in the measure they might do by the present service of Christ on their behalf, and this is seen as we briefly view the Lord's dealings with Simon Peter, whom the Lord has to teach by bitter experience. It would appear that Peter had three distinct warnings that he would deny his Master. The first was given in the upper room when the Lord, taking the disciples into His confidence, in reply to Peter's question, Where goest Thou? replies "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now but thou shalt follow Me hereafter." "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake," was Peter's boastful reply. (Jn. XIII. 37.) It may be that Luke's account fits in here (though as indicated previously, we must remember that Luke gives a moral order rather than a chronological one, of the events he relates) "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee." Peter's second boast would then be, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and to death." Then having descended from the upper room, on the way out to Gethsemane, the Lord speaking to the eleven says, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night." (Matt. XXVI, 31). This draws from Peter his third affirmative, "Though all men be offended be-

cause of Thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." Dear self confident Peter. He honestly thought that a denial by him of his much loved Master was simply impossible. Three distinct warnings by his Lord, met by three definite assertions of his whole hearted devotion to Christ, only to be followed later by three distinct and definite denials accompanied by cursing and swearing that he "Knew not the man of whom they spake." Then later on, three testing questions by the Lord for his full recovery. Jn. XXI, 15—17.

SATAN'S SIFTING Poor impetuous Peter. He loved OF PETER. his Master much, and the Lord loved him more. Loved him so much that when Satan expressed the desire that he might have him to sift him as wheat, the Lord gave the needed permission, so that through Satan's effort, Peter might learn a much needed lesson, through which he might be better fitted for the service the Lord had in view for him to do. Satan's sifting would but remove the chaff, and as the outcome of these exercises, bitter as they were for him to experience at the time, the fruit of them is seen as we read of his ministry in the early chapters of the Acts, as also in his two very valuable epistles. It is good to note that Satan had no more power to interfere with Peter, than he had to interfere with Job, and his circumstances. In both cases divine permission had to be obtained ere he could display his power. But it is good to note that against the power that the enemy was allowed to display, was our Lord's intercession. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Do we desire to know the character of this intercession, we may get an insight into it by reading John XVII, the prayer of the blessed Lord on behalf of those whom the Father had given Him, and Peter was

one of these. Satan's effort against Peter taught him two very much needed lessons. As the outcome he learnt to know himself and his own weakness, and he learnt to know God and His power for recovery. And as with Peter so with us. Our adversary knows that our weak points are those in which we think we can never be shaken, so he that thinketh he stands must take heed lest he fall. But Satan, even if successful in bringing about the breakdown at which he aims, has no lasting triumph, because "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called, according to His purpose." Needed lessons there are for us to learn, and the Lord would teach us the need of dependence upon Himself. Should we fail to learn from His word He may see well to teach by passing us through bitter or sorrowful experiences, for He loves us too much to let us go our own way altogether. But the outcome of these exercises will be our lasting good, and His eternal glory though we may have to await the day of manifestation to see the way in which this has been worked out.

(To be continued D. V.)

OBITUARY

It is with mixed feelings that we record the passing away of another well known and honoured servant of the Lord, our beloved brother Mr Henry Portsmouth of Warminster, in his 84th year. For him we are confident that the Apostle's words apply, "Absent from the body ... present with the Lord." but all those who know the loss of loved ones from the family circle after many years of happy memories will extend deepest sympathy to the remaining sister and brother both of whom are of very advanced age. May He who ministered comfort to the hearts of Mary and Martha in a time of bereave-

ment, also minister of the same to our brother and sister, not in view of a reunion here, but in anticipation of that time of eternal association to which we are all rapidly advancing.

Our brother seemed to suffer little pain and after a brief period of unconsciousness passed peacefully away on Saturday, June 22nd. The interment took place at Warminster on the following Wednesday.

Below is a brief summary of the proceedings. At the house the meeting opened with hymn 271 (H.S.) followed by prayer (W.W.): Bro. R.B. then spoke a few words from a most applicable Scripture (Acts 13. 36) for no one could have more zealously endeavoured to serve his generation in divine things than our departed brother. Bro. A.I.C. spoke of Abraham (Gen. 25. 8,) and of Stephen a man full of the Spirit, whilst bro. J. Portsmouth spoke most affectingly of the joy of the Lord. This joy which is threefold, (1) in salvation (2) in His servants and (3) in their presentation in a coming day, may *now* be the believer's strength and for the *future*, his hope. The house meeting closed with hymns 48 (R.B.), 202 v. 1 and 2 and last verse of 18 app. (J.P.)

At the graveside bro. A.C.H., spoke of the sympathy of Jesus (Jn. 11. 35) and bro. A.M. referred to the lamentation over the death of Stephen, contrasting the fitting behaviour of present day believers, with the completed Scriptures with which to comfort one another. Hymn 175 (R.B.) followed, then prayer (A.M.) and hymn 204 (R.R.)

Throughout the day the Lord graciously gave fine weather and travelling mercies for those who gathered for which we return our thanksgiving, as also for His manifest blessings in consolation and good hope ministered to the bereaved ones.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Wondrous love—what tongue can tell?
Love of God unsearchable!
Which before the world began,
Planned to save poor sinful man;
God to this sad world would prove
All His great, and wondrous love.
His own Son—His great delight!
Dwelling in that glory bright,
He would give in grace, that He
Sacrifice for sin might be.
Willing Victim! Jesus came,
Glorified God's Holy Name.
On the Cross, He shed His blood,
Holy spotless Lamb of God!
All His Love and Justice shown,
In the One who met our doom.
God then raised Him from the dead
Set Him over all as Head.
Those who now on Him believe
Everlasting life receive,
Brought to God, Oh! wondrous grace,
Now to know the childrens place;
Abba, Father now to cry,
Know the love that brought us high,
Thus to worship and adore,
By His Spirit evermore.

F.E.M., N.Z.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Q.—Is it correct to say that the New Testament is absolutely silent about *how* Christians should worship; and is it significant that no particular form or method of service has been given? E.

A.—The greater part of the O. T. is taken up with man under the restraint of law, and is full of things and ceremonies enjoined by God, and which were to be exact copies of what was shown Moses on the Mount. The utter failure of man under such a system is evident, and hence the new order and arrangement under grace in the N. T. In the former the rule was made by outward restraint; in the latter, by an inward change wrought by divine power. The O. T. shows service to God by instruction and command; the New, on totally different lines in spirit and in truth. Thus it is quite in harmony with each part of the Scriptures, that one should give precise instructions and that the other should maintain silence except for general outlines. Isaiah said "This people draw near me with their mouth, ... but have removed their heart far from me." (ch. 29. 13.) This was characteristic of the greater part, and it was the natural result of the application of the law to fallen man. The Lord Jesus taught, "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4. 24.), and such a state can only be brought about by divine intervention and the implanting of a new nature, born of God. Under this new order man is viewed as knowing what is suited to God, being in-dwelt by the Holy Spirit whose duty it is to take of the things of Christ and show them to the believer. This equips him for taking part in the service of God in praise and worship intelligently. What cannot be apprehended under the old order of nature, even when instructed, can be imparted by the Holy Spirit operating thus within (see I Cor 2.).

With reference to form of service collectively, we find that the Holy Spirit operating on behalf of Christ, is sufficient for this also. Gifts are ministered to the individuals forming an assembly or church, which, when operated by Him, *all* minister to the well being. and pro-

gress of the whole (Eph. 4, 1—13; 1 Cor. 12&14.). Thus fitted and managed, collective service becomes spontaneous and ever fresh. Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus could say, "He shall glorify me," and this is brought about in the worship of those thus operated by Him. In writing the Old Testament holy men were guided by the Spirit. To-day the same Person both ministers to the heart and brings forth from it as a result, that which will glorify God. Set forms are no part of the present order; they belonged to the time when man was told what he must and must not do. They deprive the Holy Spirit of control and relieve the believing worshipper of dependance and godly excercise. For details of free operation of the Holy Spirit in the church in early days, see, Acts, 4, 31: 11, 28: 13, 2, 4: 20, 23, 28: 21, 4, 11. May the Lord lead His own into the path of freedom and acceptable service; where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

THE SAME NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED.

(Continued from Page 108)

Christ's intercession on behalf of His own having been brought to a close, He now leads them over the torrent Cedron a stream that forms a deep gorge in the valley of Jehosaphat between Mount Moriah upon which the temple stood, and the Mount of Olives. The name Kidron is derived from a Hebrew root which signifies "gloom." We read of David in his day crossing it when fleeing from his son Absolom. There certainly was gloom in the heart of David, and in the hearts of all those who at that time crossed the stream with their rejected king, for it was a time of much weeping. It was in fact David's Gethsemane for he began the ascent of the mount with his head covered, but with bare feet,

weeping as he went. (2. Sam. XV. 30.) And now the heir to David's throne, David's Lord, and David's Son, rejected by the nation, is seen following the same path, until the place named Gethsemane is reached, the meaning of which is winepress or oilpress. With every step taken towards that place, spoken of by John as a garden, the pressure upon the Lord's holy soul had increased for the time had now arrived when He must face alone in the presence of the Father the cost of our redemption.

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE. It is very suggestive that of the eleven disciples, there were only three whom the Lord could take aside to be watchers with Him in the time of His sorrow. Separating then Peter, James and John from the rest, He takes them apart to be with Him in the ordeal He must now experience. Matthew tells us that "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy": "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with Me." Having thus made known to these three His desire for their fellowship and support, He moves on about a stone's cast, and there kneels down and prays. His agony increasing, He now falls upon His face praying, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. We read of no reply from the Father reaching the ears of His beloved Son in this terrible agony of soul. When Abraham took Isaac to the place of sacrifice, twice we have the divine record that "they went both of them together," and if Isaac bore the wood of the burnt offering, Abraham carried the fire and the knife. Remembering what Isaac was to Abraham, his only begotten son, (Heb. XI. 17.) we might well question, whose heart bore the heaviest burden? Whose was the greatest sorrow, as they went both of

them together? Here at Gethsemane the Father and His own beloved Son are together, going over in spirit what the cost would be of the supreme sacrifice that was to be made within a few hours at Calvary. And may we not believe that as each of these agonising cries broke forth from the lips and heart of our adorable Saviour, they touched a corresponding chord in the heart of the Father, for they too also "went both of Them together," the Father and the Son, to unitedly work out for man, a perfect redemption.

THE LORD'S If it was night when Judas retired from **MIDNIGHT.** the guest chamber, it was now midnight for the soul of our beloved Lord. It was the fourteenth day of the first month, and therefore the anniversary of that midnight scene in Egypt when the angel of Jehovah carried the sword of judgment through that land, and in the slaying of the firstborn brought bitter weeping into every home not sheltered by the blood of the slain lamb. And here in Gethsemane's garden, this night was for the Lord also a midnight of weeping "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," (Heb. V. 7.) as He tastes in anticipation that bitter cup of judgment which He would drink to the dregs in those coming hours of darkness, when all the waves and billows of divine wrath would break upon the head of the spotless sinless sinbearer. Little did the three disciples realise what their Lord was then passing through on their behalf, for though they had been asked to watch with Him, He coming to them from the place of intercession, finds them fast asleep. This was not the first time that these three favoured ones had slept when they should have kept awake. Peter, in his first epistle refers to "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Here in connection with the sufferings of Christ, these dear disciples are found asleep.

"The glory that should follow," was prefigured in the scene upon the mount of Transfiguration, but even at such a glorious scene as this must have been, we read in Luke IX. 32, "But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep." And thus the Lord finds the disciple, who just prior to their entering Gethsemane had boasted, "though I should die with Thee yet will I not deny Thee." It would appear that for this reason the Lord singles out Peter from the others saying "Simon, sleepest *thou*? Couldest *thou* not watch one hour? Watch ye and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

RENEWED INTERCESSION. The blessed Lord now returns to the place of supplication and is again seen prostrate before the Father. In addition to His first petition "If it be possible let this cup pass from Me," He now adds, "O My Father if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Moses, when he turned aside to see the great sight of the bush that burnt but was not consumed, was told to put off his shoes from his feet for he stood upon holy ground. Does not a similar attitude become us as we stand to view the wondrous sight now unfolded to us? Are not we also here upon holy ground? Here is the One by whom the worlds were framed, the One who could claim equality with God, now seen taking the place of perfect subjection to the Father's will, and prepared at all cost to carry it out in its entirety. "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." He completely surrenders His own will, and would learn obedience by the things which He suffered. It is at this juncture that Luke makes known to us that "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him," but His disciples slept on. What an opportunity they were missing. They had within their reach the privilege of ministering to, and supporting their suffering Lord upon

this unique occasion, but they failed to respond and what might have been to their eternal credit was missed, whilst instead, an angelic being has received the honour of strengthening the blessed Lord in the hour of His supreme sorrow.

The Lord's agony in prayer increases with each successive return to the Father's presence, so that Luke writes, (XXII. 44) being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." "In an agony!" Yet it must be kept in mind that not as yet was He drinking the cup of wrath as expressed against sin. Not yet had He entered upon His atoning sufferings, when He, the holy One, in whom was no sin, who did no sin, was to be made sin for us. Not yet had God's unmitigated judgment broken upon His devoted head. That was reserved for those hours of darkness upon the cross; but if Gethsemane's exercises could produce this terrible agony of soul, what must the realities of Golgatha have meant to Him? We may well recall the prophet's words, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." (Lam. I. 12.) There could be no sorrow like this, no anguish of soul like His, no sacrifice like He here binds Himself to accomplish, and also no love like His. He stands alone, above, and beyond all others in perfect devotedness to God, obedience to the Father's will, love to His own, and willing service on their behalf. He is the perfect Man, the perfect Servant, the perfect Sacrifice, the perfect Saviour, He, who is the eternal Lover of our souls, the Man Christ Jesus !

(To be continued D. V.)

Are we not prone to confine our thoughts of Christ to what He did for *us*, to the virtual exclusion of what He is to God?

Extract.

TRUE WORSHIP.

To worship in the true sense, is to ascribe divine honours, and consequently the command given to the descendants of Abraham—to whom the "God of glory" appeared—was, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." The deliverance of this people in miraculous ways out of many difficulties, and His constant care for them, gave continual incentive for their worship to ascend, and many beautiful instances of this are given, for example, in the Psalms.

In Old Testament days, however, God's plans were only partially revealed and hence the standard of worship of those days does not serve as a complete guide for us who are privileged to live in a day of fuller revelation. It would ill become us to belittle the worship of the godly Israelite; it was good and acceptable in view of the limited scope of truth made known, but to be satisfied now to copy or repeat word for word the utterances belonging to a past dispensation, unless symbolically, does not show either a proper understanding or appreciation of present blessings.

For instruction as to what is now suited we may look forward to a future scene described in Revelation 4 and 5. This is admissible because for all who rely on the finished work of Christ for salvation, their blessings are a present possession, to be known and enjoyed now. Granted our appreciation of them will be infinitely augmented when we are ushered into the divine presence, but nothing more remains to be done to complete what God has in hand for us, but to translate us from earth to heaven and change our bodies to suit that sphere. Consequently our worship will be the same in principle then as now, only more suitable in quantity and quality.

Now as has been noted, our worship must accord with what we are privileged to know. God has now revealed Himself as the Tri-une God; Three in One; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and we are also taught the part played by each in the salvation of a sinner. Thus in John's Gospel we read much of the *Son* coming from, and acting for, the *Father*; and towards the close of the same book we are instructed regarding the coming of the *Holy Ghost*, sent by the *Son* from the *Father*. Redemption was accomplished by the *Son*, by the will of the *Father* and is now born witness to by the *Spirit*. The *Father* gave His *Son*, and that Beloved *Son* gave Himself a ransom.

Now the question arises, to whom should worship be directed, to *Father*, *Son*, or *Holy Ghost*? The field can be narrowed down quickly by noticing that the Word gives no authority for either prayer or praise to be directed to the *Holy Spirit*. It will not surprise us to read in John 4. 23, that the *Father* is seeking worshippers to worship Him. Seeing the part played by the *Father* in blessing the human family, we readily acknowledge that this is very fitting and we can fully endorse the words of Paul in Eph. 3, 14, 20 and 21, directed to the *Father*.

This leaves only for consideration, the suitability of addressing worship to God the *Son*. We find in the historical account of our Lord's life, instances of those whom His grace and power delivered from the effects of sin, worshipping Him without any thought of correction (see Jn. 9. 38; Matt. 8. 2.) and in fact in the case of the leper, very marked approval was shown in immediate cleansing. Inappropriate worship is strictly and immediately forbidden by the inspiring *Spirit* when making the record of the respective events. (see Rev. 22, 8-9; Acts. 10, 25-26; 14. 13-15).

Turning now from what is purely historical, we can refer to a glimpse of the future as given in chapters 4 and 5 of the Revelation and see how this bears out the former. The scene is set in heaven and just sufficient descriptive matter is given to make the interpretation sure. The first thing to catch the eye is a throne in the midst of heaven occupied by One encircled by a rainbow. (4. 2-3). In the right hand of Him that sits on the throne is a sealed book, and One described as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David," comes and takes this book from the hand of Him that sits on the throne. No one will deny that this One is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord; and reference to John 5. 22-23, will confirm that He receives the book of judgment from the hand of the Father. In fact imagination could not find any other person to fill the throne depicted in these chapters.

In connection with both of these Persons we read of twenty-four elders and from chap. 5, verses 9 and 10 we understand that they represent those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; in short they represent ourselves who are saved by faith in the death of Christ. In both chapters we find them occupied with worship and chap. 5. verse 13 includes both "Him that sitteth upon the throne and ... the Lamb" as the Objects of veneration. Chapter 4 shows praise to God the Father in connection with the plan of creation—"for Thy pleasure they are and were created,"—for in such a sphere opportunity would be given for a full display of certain attributes of God. Chapter 5 shows praise going out to God the Son on account of His love even unto death.

To the churches in chapters 2 and 3, which have their representatives amongst the elders in chapters 4 and 5, exhortations are given for the encouragement of

the overcomers, but here is One in every way superior to them, for He has overcome, not only in the daily combating of the obstacles of the way, but in that great conflict in which He vindicated the throne of God and introduced into the divine presence the subjects of grace. Though led as a lamb to the slaughter, without any to stand by Him, and though His life was forfeited, He was the Overcomer, to the glory of God. What wonder, then, that we now see Him in the same character, as the Lamb with the marks of death still apparent, but in this heavenly sphere, the very centre of it for all eyes to gaze upon. Now that once more exceptional circumstances arise, who so fitted as He, to fill the place and take the book? Following the lead of the first of the elders, the whole company begin to proclaim His worthiness for the present occasion on account of the past, "Thou art worthy, ... for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood ... " It is spontaneous acclamation of the Person on account of what He is to themselves, and led in it too by one of their number. No command from God, no lead given by the archangel, but just telling forth with the mouth, of the abundance of the heart. The angels follow in speaking their praises and then too, all the creatures of heaven and earth, but only the company of the elders can *sing* of Him as *their* redeemer. It is their privilege in that hour with the experience of the past in mind, to proclaim the Lamb to be the one, and the only One, sufficient for that time and to set the tune in which all creation afterwards joins, as it were at a distance.

Even now in this life it is our happy portion to sing the praise of Him who died. We *do* get foretastes of home, when seated around the Lord's table with Himself in the midst, we give ourselves up to the remembrance of Him. It is then that we learn what He is to

our hearts and our praises flow forth to Himself because He is worthy ! Peter, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, tells us the angels desire to look into these things. If they want to know the love of God, and have something whereby to measure it, they have to look to us for it, for we are the result of the working of that love. Let us then magnify it in our praises for His glory whilst we look forward to Rev. 5, when the angels and all creation shall follow our lead in the worship of the Lamb. Let us not forget however that the Spirit would direct our praises unto Him that sits upon the throne as well as unto the Lamb and also that in the mind of the Spirit, our being risen and seated together with Christ Jesus, has an intimate connection with the display in the ages to come, of the Father's kindness to us through Christ Jesus, Eph. 2. 6—7. Consequently later in the same epistle we find the writer saying, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and closing his burst of worship with these words, "unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." ch. 3. 14—21. May we know even now what it is to be able to praise more suitably our blessed Saviour and also what it is to have Him in the midst of the assembly as the Leader of our praises to the Father. (Psa. 22. 22.)

A.T.

"The prerogative of our Christian faith," says one, and his words are good and seasonable," the secret of its strength is this—that all which it has and all which it offers, is laid up in a *Person.*"

J.G.B.

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS ECHO.

True faith, producing love to God and man;
Say, Echo, is not this the gospel plan?

The gospel plan.

Must I my faith and love to Jesus show
By doing good to all, both friend and foe?

Both friend and foe.

But if a brother hates and treats me ill,
Must I return him good, and love him still?

Love him still.

If he my failings watches to reveal,
Must I his faults as carefully conceal?

As carefully conceal.

But if my name and character he blast,
And cruel malice, too, a long time last;
And if I sorrow and affliction know,
He loves to add unto my cup of woe;
In this uncommon, this peculiar case,
Sweet Echo, say, must I still love and bless?

Still love and bless.

Whatever usage ill I may receive,
Must I be patient still, and still forgive?

Be patient still, and still forgive.

Why, Echo, how is this? Thou'rt sure a dove!
Thy voice shall teach me nothing else but love.

Nothing else but love.

Amen! with all my heart, then be it so;
'Tis all delightful, just, and good, I know,
And now to practice I'll directly go.

Directly go.

Things being so, whoever me reject,
My gracious God me surely will protect.

Surely will protect.

Henceforth I'll roll on Him my every care.
And then both friend and foe embrace in prayer.

Embrace in prayer.

But after all these duties I have done;
Must I in point of merit, them disown
And trust for heaven through the blood of Christ alone?

The blood of Christ alone.

Echo, enough, thy counsels to mine ear
Are sweeter than, to flowers, the dewdrop tear;
Thy wise instructive lessons please me well;
I'll go and practise them. Farewell, farewell.
Practise them; farewell, farewell.

FOLLOWING HIS STEPS.

Much has doubtless been written on following the steps of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. To do so, however, with a single eye for the glory of God calls for much self-judgment, as well as consideration for our fellow-men—be they believers or men of the world.

Our Lord, in His wonderful pathway of suffering and of shame and of loss, has given expression to many most profound truths, and to act up to such, calls for real searching of heart by His followers if they truly are to follow His steps. In this connection attention might be drawn to Matthew 6. 22, wherein we read "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." This statement is followed by an intensely solemn one in the next verse—namely, "but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

With these verses before us we would press upon the souls of such as may read "Green Pastures," the necessity of allowing the sharp edge of the Word of God, both the Old and the New Testaments, to act upon all we say or do, and particularly in relation to our dealings with those bound up with us in the bundle of life. In this way alone can we be said to follow His steps.

The Lord Jesus Himself was the fullest expression of perfection, though in wondrous grace He could say to His disciples. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5. 48.) One striking example of His perfection is seen in His readiness to pay the tribute money, though under no obligation to do so, but "lest we should offend." (Matthew 17.) In other words, lest an occasion be given the enemy to blaspheme (2. Samuel 12. 14) by asserting He did not pay, as others, their lawful debts. Truly we do well to follow Him. Alas ! how prone our poor hearts are to withhold what is righteously due, or as promised, by making excuses of one kind and another. Good (is it not?) for us to remember the words of the man of God to Amaziah (2. Chronicles 25), when the latter feared he was to suffer by getting no return for his outlay to Israel "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." And is He not still able? He is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever—How cheering! There is a fine principle in Romans 13. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Attention might also be drawn to that word in Deuteronomy 23. 20, in regard to our dealings with fellow members of the body of Christ "unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury."

Again to follow his steps with a single eye involves not only self judgment, but responsibility as well. The Lord Himself has enjoined our washing one another's feet, following the example He set in John 13. Were this more in evidence how very different would oftentimes be the relation of one assembly to another—of one brother or sister to another brother or sister—and even of a husband to a wife and vice versa! Then there is a further responsibility in answering to the remembering of Himself in this the day of His absence. It does not of

necessity require that there be a large company. The minimum is two, and it may be by only a brother and his wife, for the Lord has said that where two or three are gathered unto His name there is He in the midst. In view of the near return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our subsequent manifestation at the judgment seat of Christ (or God), at which each one must give an account of his or her doings in this wilderness scene does it not become each one to gird up the loins of our minds, and thus be able to answer to the theme of this well-known hymn? (Little Flock 36 Appendix.)

We go to meet the Saviour,
His glorious face to see;
What manner of behaviour
Does with this hope agree?
May God's illumination
Guide heart and walk aright;
That so our preparation
Be pleasing in His sight.

W.W.F.

POWER.

God's ways are behind the scenes, but
He moves all the scenes He is behind.
There is a power which men can wield,
When human help is vain,
That Eye, that Hand, that Arm to reach,
That listening Ear to gain.
That power is prayer which soars on high
To Jesus on the throne;
And moves the Hand that moves the world
To bring salvation down.

Pray without ceasing. I. Thess. 5. 17.

THE SAME NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED.

(Continued from Page 115.)

Whilst the blessed Lord was passing through His terrible ordeal in the garden, Judas was busy arranging with the priests, Pharisees and elders, the details for the betrayal, and the sign by which he would indicate to them the One they were desirous of arresting. With the full knowledge of this, the Lord now arouses His disciples from sleep, intimating to them that what He had foretold was now at hand, His deliverance into the hands of sinners. As He thus speaks, Judas draws near followed by a great crowd with lanterns, torches, swords and sticks. In Luke VII we learn of the woman that was a sinner kissing the feet of the One whose attractions had drawn her unto Him in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Chapter XV describes the affectionate greeting the father bestowed upon the returning prodigal as he fell upon his neck and kissed him, whilst in Acts XX. 37, we learn how the elders of the Church in bidding their farewell to the beloved Apostle whose face they were to see no more, fell upon his neck and mingled their tears with their kisses. The Greek word used in these three instances is one that has been translated "covered him with kisses." It was no mere formal embrace or solitary kiss, but an action that implied all the affections of the heart accompanying it. The only other place in the New Testament where this particular word is used is in connection with the betrayal. Judas, as he indicated to the armed mob that followed him, the One who was the object of their search, and the One from whose hand he had so recently received the love portion, in embracing Him, "covered Him with kisses." Thus Judas fulfilled his base and wicked treason with what appeared to be a most loving, ardent, affectionate and happy greeting, for

the "Hail Master" indicates "Rejoice Master" this being the way in which this word is generally translated.

**THE PRICE OF
INNOCENT BLOOD.**

It was Judas that sold his brother to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; but he lived to repent of his wickedness. For Judas the betrayer of Christ, there was no real repentance, it was rather remorse that filled his heart as he takes back to the priests the thirty pieces of silver received from them, with the confession that he had "Betrayed the innocent blood." On the great Day of Atonement, it was the service of Israel's High Priest to take into the Holy of Holies the blood of the sin offering, and in the sprinkling of it upon and before the Mercy Seat, therewith to make atonement for the sins of the people. It is very striking and suggestive that upon the refusal of the priests and the elders to accept back from Judas the pieces of silver with which they had bribed him to commit his treacherous act towards his Master, he casts the price of innocent blood into the inner Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, the earthly dwelling place of Jehovah. For this is what the word translated "Temple" in Matthew XXVII. 5, implies the inner sanctuary in contrast to the Temple as a whole. Thus in the earthly Jewish sanctuary there lay under the eye of God, man's estimation of the value of His beloved Son, which solemnly witnessed there in His holy presence to the wickedness and hatred in the heart of man towards Himself and His beloved Son; whilst so soon after, there would be seen in the heavenly sanctuary, that precious blood as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, that would so gloriously bear witness to the love that was in the heart of God manward, as also the love and devotion of His well beloved Son, our Redeemer, Substitute, and Saviour, towards ourselves for whom that precious blood was shed.

CHRIST THE GREAT I AM. Whilst our blessed Lord, in obedience to the Father's will would submit Himself to those now about to arrest Him, a glimpse of the glory and dignity, as also the Deity of His person is witnessed as He turns from Judas to those about to take Him in charge. "Whom seek ye?" is the question put to them. In response to their reply "Jesus of Nazareth," He answers "I AM." (John XVIII. 5.) What a marvellous sight is now to be witnessed ! Here, on earth at this midnight hour, about to be taken bound before man's tribunal, there to be scourged, scorned, smitten, spit upon, judged, condemned and crucified, was the great "I AM THAT I AM" who on that same passover night fifteen centuries previously, was at the midnight hour displaying His power in judgment upon the Egyptians. But here in Gethsemane's garden, our blessed Saviour does not display His power in judgment upon His enemies: He allows Himself to be taken prisoner by them, though not before He has displayed to them the evidence as to His power to escape their hands if He so wills. He has but to assert who He is, and the whole crowd fall to the ground before Him. With them, as with Pilate later, "Thou couldst have no power against Me except it were given thee from above." With all His foes prostrate at His feet, there was nothing to hinder the Lord from departing and returning to the glory from whence He had in grace come. But had He done so, He would have been there alone. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, if there is to be "much fruit," and so we hear Him saying to Peter "The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" There is also a further display of His power and authority in the restoring of the ear of Malchus which Peter in the impulse of fleshy zeal had cut off, as also in the demanding that His disciples be allowed to go their way.

THE SUBJECTION OF CHRIST.

And now our precious Saviour submitted Himself to the captains and officers of the Jews, who bound Him and led Him away. But it was not the cords with which they bound Him, that held Him now their captive to be taken to judgment and to death, it was rather the intensity of His love and affection as displayed towards His own, as also towards the Father. He was now taking His place as the true Hebrew servant. The declaration had already been made "I love My Master, My wife, and My children, I will not go out free." He was now about to be brought before the judges (Exo. XXI. 6). They "bound Him" (John XVIII. 12). Well might we pause to meditate upon these words. Those loving hands that broke the bread and miraculously supplied the needs of the hungry multitude, that touching the eyes of the blind caused sight to be restored, that coming into contact with a diseased leper, immediately removed the disease, those arms which in love had encircled the little children brought to Him for blessing, these hands and arms are now bound by those who would hinder His blessed ministry of love. And He, the One of whom Isaiah XL testifies as coming with strong hand, whose arm should rule for Him, who at creation had measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, the Creator, Upholder, and Sustainer of the universe is here seen bound by those to whom He had given Life and breath and being. It was indeed a night to be remembered, the same night in which He was betrayed.

(To be continued D. V.)

EXTRACT.

What enabled Peter afterwards to strengthen his brethren? He discovered that there was utter badness in himself when he meant best, and that there is perfect grace in Christ even when he did worst.

ANTICIPATION.

How often in this life have we found ourselves in such a position as to find untold delights in anticipation, but how often too, has the realisation paled before the picture which our mind had drawn for us of the object in view. But never can this be so in divine things; in fact in connection with that which is so much before us as a pilgrim people, the entry into the eternal state, the Word of God says expressly, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

In the fulfilment of the divine counsels connected with redemption, too, anticipation must needs have a great part, as the One who did the fulfilling was Himself one with the Father, in the spirit and purpose of those counsels, so that the delight of the one in seeing the fulfilment accomplished, ran parallel with the delight of the other in carrying forward the accomplishment. This is nowhere so manifest as about the time when the foundation of blessing was laid. In that upper room in Jerusalem see Him, the Lord of glory as a man, partaking of the Passover supper with His own, and unfolding to them His thoughts, and not confining Himself to His life here, but taking them back to a time before the earth was formed, when His "delights were with the sons of men." How full of meaning are those words, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." Not merely the expression of a lifelong desire surely, though it was that of course, but the breathings of the heart of One who is Himself a Divine Person, earnestly anticipating the accomplishment of the divine counsels, laid in eternity. His desire too, was not connected with *any* passover for we understand that many an one had He kept since His lowly birth, but

it was "this passover"; for this would be the last one with the same significance. No more would it be possible to partake of the roast lamb in anticipation of Christ's death, for "this passover" was to be immediately followed by that event, and it was this which filled with joy the heart of the Blessed Lord. Long ages of expectant waiting had passed and His desire was about to be fulfilled.

With ourselves the case is different though similar. We now, through grace, look on memorials, the bread and the wine, reminding us of the same occasion and in doing so can delight ourselves in the thought of that love which was stronger than death. But we can also look forward and whilst still feasting on the slain Lamb under the shelter of the blood, we see a time limit fixed. Our delight, and desire too, is now to be found remembering the Lord's death, a most blessed occupation for us and surely a deep joy to Him. But it is only "till He come." Just as the Lord Himself could experience the joy of an accomplished desire when with His disciples in the upper room, before and after his death, but not then the fullness of all that it brought with it; so we have a delight in this remembrance but await the fullness of joy.

Speaking of the cup after supper the Lord could bid His disciples to divide it amongst themselves for He himself would "no more drink of the fruit of the vine till all be fulfilled." Oh, what unbounded joy awaits both Him and us! *His* desire accomplished at Calvary, *our* desire accomplished in remembering Him, but the fullness of joy which we anticipate, and Himself likewise, waits yet to be fulfilled.

Anticipation shall soon give place to realization when "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" and we shall be ushered into that scene at His right hand, where is to be found the fullness of joy and

also the pleasures for evermore. May it be that as He desired with desire, or yearned after, that scene in the upper room, we may be found yearning for His coming again that we may be placed by His grace in that scene of display which is to be enacted for His glory.

A.T.

SERVICE.

Connect your service with nothing but God—not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by fellowship, and your heart refreshed; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on anyone whatever; for if you do, you cannot be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith and *one's own communion with God*. Saul even may be a prophet, when he gets amongst the prophets ; but David was always the same—in the cave or anywhere. Whilst the choicest blessings given me here are in fellowship, yet a man's service must flow from himself else there will be weakness. If I have the word of wisdom, I must use it for the saint who may seek my counsel. It is “bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.” But also, “*Let every one prove his own work*, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another.” There is no single place grace brings us into, but is a place of temptation, and that we cannot escape though we shall be helped through. In every age the blessing has been from individual agency ; and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined into the world; 'tis humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God. The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another.

When there are great arrangements for carrying on work, their's is not the recognition of this inherent

blessing, which "tarrieth not for the sons of men." I don't tarry for man if I have faith in God—I act upon the strength of that. Let a man act as the Lord leads him. The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man.

All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the *individual*. Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13), were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, recommended to the grace of God by the Church at Antioch, but they had no communication with it till they returned, but then there was the joyful concurring of love in the service that had to be performed.—He that had talents went and traded. Paul says—"Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Where there is a desire to act accompanied by real energy, a man will rise up and walk, but if he cannot do this, the energy is not there; and the attempt to move is only restlessness and weakness.

Love for Jesus sets one to work—I know no other way.

YOUR FATHER KNOWETH. Matt. 6. 8 & 32.

Your Father knoweth, and upon that we must REST; otherwise FAITH will break down. Of course He knows—loves—cares, and whatever OUR changes or circumstances, spiritually or temporally, HE is the SAME and is still FOR US.

It takes, as we know, deep waters of experience combined with the simple trust of a child to really enter into these things.

At the same time exercises of heart and spirit come in as to our privileges and responsibilities—Godward and manward.

A.R.C.

ABRIDGED LIST OF SELECT PUBLICATIONS BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Many others are available: if you do not see here what you want please enquire of, S. Warren, Hebron, 2, Rivington Avenue, Woodford Green, Essex.

NOTES ON THE PENTATEUCH. C.H.M. Six vols. 2/- ea.
MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS OF C.H.M. Vols. 1, 2, 3, 4,
2/- each. Gilt 3/- each.

LIFE AND TIMES OF DAVID. C.H.M. 1/6.

LECTURES ON MATTHEW. W.K. 5/-.

EXPOSITION OF EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. W.K. 7/6.

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH. W.K. 7/6.

1 & 2 EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY. W.K. 3/- each.

LETTERS OF J.N.D. 3 vols. 7/6 each.

SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE. 5 vols.
J.N.D. 3/6 each.

A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY BIBLE. J.N.D.
5/- to 35/-.

HYMNS FOR THE LITTLE FLOCK. 1881 ed. 1/6 to 15/-.
Large type 4/6 to 12/6.

HOLY BIBLE from 1/- upwards.

Magazines and Tracts supplied to order (postage extra)
Green Pastures 1½d. Links of Love (for children) ½d.
Holding Fast and Holding Forth (commencing next April
D.V.) and many others.

GREEN PASTURES

1936.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR ALL WHO HAVE
FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Gt. Britain: S. Warren Hebron, Rivington Avenue, Woodford Green
Essex.

New Zealand: Bible & Book Depot, 200, Manchester St.,
Christchurch.

Editor: A. Tunley, The Nook, 76, Lincoln Road, Werrington.
Peterborough, Eng.

INDEX.

	PAGE
ADVOCACY	59
A FEW THOUGHTS ON JOHN 1, 29-51	10
A FLOWER FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY. LAM. 3, 22-33 ...	1
AFTERWARDS	18
ANSWER TO "LEAN HARD"	143
AS FOR GOD	44
AT REST	144
A SONG IN THE NIGHT	96
BE YE SEPARATE...	7
BRIEF MUSINGS ON LUKE 23, 40-43	85
CHEERING WORDS	138
CHRIST ALL	49
CONFOUNDED BECAUSE THEY HOPED	124
DEVOTEDNESS	46
DRAW ME !	132
EXTRACTS	1, 12, 33
GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR ME	84
GOD'S MINISTERS...	76
GOD MEANT IT UNTO GOOD	52
HE LEADETH ME	13
HE SHALL TABERNACLE WITH THEM	35
HIS BODY AND HIS BLOOD	70
HOW DO I SERVE ?	73
IN MY NAME	53
INTROSPECTION	116

	PAGE
JOY IN SORROW ...	26
LEAN HARD ...	120
LIKE A WEANED CHILD ...	61
NO MAN KNOWETH THE SON BUT THE FATHER. MATT. 11, 27	6
NOT I, BUT CHRIST ...	76
ONE AS MUCH AS ANOTHER. LEV. 7, 10 ...	14
ONE MORE HONOURABLE THAN HIS BRETHREN ...	116
ON PLEASING GOD ...	133
OUR PATRON ...	128
PLEASING GOD ...	97
REIGNING ...	51
REST IN THE LORD ...	57
SEARCH ME AND TRY ME. PSA. 139, 23-24	87
SILVER TRUMPETS ...	93
SOME DAILY REMINDERS FOR THE BELIEVER...	114
SOME REMARKS ON WORSHIP ...	139
SPiritism ...	3
THE ACTS OF MAN BEFORE CHRIST'S DEATH AND THE ACTS OF GOD AFTER IT. MATT. 26 & 27	37
THE BALANCE OF THE SANCTUARY ...	129
THEE AND ME ...	29
THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ...	2
THE KNEELING CAMEL ...	25
THE LABOUR ENDED THE REST BEGUN ...	127
THE LORD JESUS IN JOHN 11 & 12 ...	65
THE LORD JESUS IN THE MIDST ...	121

			PAGE
THE MANNA DESPISED	...	...	10
THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION		...	67
THE THOUGHT OF THOUGHTS	...	...	47
THE WAY	...	...	33
THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE MADE PLAIN		...	109
TILL I COME	...	...	102
WAITING	...	...	64
WAITING AND WATCHING	...	...	127
WHAT IS TRUTH?	...	...	106
WHERE HE DWELT. JOHN 1	...	...	45
WHY AND WHY NOT?	...	...	33
WRITTEN IN HEAVEN. LUKE 10, 20		...	99

"HE LEADETH ME."

"In pastures green?" Not always, sometimes He
Who knoweth best in kindness leadeth me
In weary way, where heavy shadows be ;

Out of the sunshine, warm, and soft, and bright ;
Out of the sunshine into darkest night,
I oft would faint with sorrow and affright ;

Only for this : I know He holds my hand.
So, whether led in green or desert land,
I trust, although I may not understand,

And by "Still waters?" No not always so,
Oftimes the tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.

But when the storm beats loudest and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, "Lo it is I."

Above the tempest wild I hear Him say,
"Beyond the darkness lies the perfect day,
In every path of thine I lead the way."

So whether on the hilltops high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys where
The shadows lie—what matters? He is there.

So where He leads me I can safely go ;
And in the blest hereafter I shall know
Why, in His wisdom, He has led me so.

ONE AS MUCH AS ANOTHER ; Lev. 7. 10.

" Every meat offering, mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one as much as another."

Our Lord Jesus prayed for His own and said, " That they all may be one as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." Jn. 17, 21. Every Christian is equally united to Christ and John says, "As He is, so are we in this world." I. Jn. 4. 17. All that are Christ's, old or young, weak or strong, are identified with Christ and this to a remarkable degree as the following texts indicate.

We have the same *Father and God*; I ascend to my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God; Jn. 20. 17: the same *nature*, that ye might be partakers of the divine nature; 2. Pt. I. 4: and are made to *sit together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; Eph. 2, 6. We are *crucified* with Christ, Gal. 2. 20; *buried* with Him by baptism into death, Rom. 6. 4; *quickened* together with Christ, Eph. 2. 5; *raised up* together with Christ, Eph. 2. 6; so that it may be said, because I live *ye shall live* also, Jn. 14. 19. We have the same *heirship*, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, Rom. 8, 17: the same *joy, peace and love*; that they might have *My joy* fulfilled in themselves, Jn. 17. 13; *My peace* I give unto you, Jn. 14. 27; that *the love* wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, Jn. 17. 26. The same *words*, same *Spirit*, and *power* in prayer are ours; I have given unto them *the words* which Thou gavest Me, Jn. 17, 8; if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ* he is none of His, Rom. 8, 9; and whatsoever ye ask the Father *in My name* He will give it you, Jn. 16, 23.

We have the same *knowledge* and *resources*; all *things that I have heard* of my Father I have made known unto you, Jn. 15, 15; and He (the Spirit) shall receive of *mine* and show it unto you, Jn. 16, 14. In

waiting He says, Thou hast kept the word of *My patience*, Rev. 3, 10. In *working*, take *My yoke* upon you, Matt. 11, 28. In *suffering* and *rejection*, if so be that we *suffer with* Him &c. Rom. 8, 17; if they have persecuted Me they will also *persecute* you, Jn. 15, 20.

We have the same *mission* and *power*; as My Father hath *sent* Me even so *send* I you, Jn. 20, 21; all *power* is given unto Me in heaven and on earth; Lo *I am with you* always, Matt. 28, 18—20. Of a coming day it is said, when He shall appear we shall be *like Him*, I. Jn. 3, 2; and respecting glory, the *glory* which Thou gavest Me I have given them, Jn. 17, 22: *glorified* together, Rom. 8, 17, and marked with *His new name*, Rev. 3, 12. We have the same *rest*, for he that is entered into his *rest*, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labour therefore to enter into *that rest*, Heb. 4, 10—11; and to him that overcometh is the promise, I will grant to sit *with Me in My throne*, Rev. 3, 21.

We find four figures in the New Testament expressing unity, but different aspects of truth are taught in each, yet all conveying the same thought of one-ness..

- 1 The Vine and it's branches.
- 2 The foundation and the Building.
- 3 The Head and the Body.
- 4 The Husband and wife.

I—THE VINE. I am the Vine ye are the branches. This shows a one-ness, but a one-ness that can be severed through unfaithfulness of the branch (of course this does not refer to eternal security. Jesus says of all truly born again, They shall never perish neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. Jn. 10, 28. The reference here is to visible testimony for God in the world). The great lesson from this is not the security of the branch, but the abiding in Me. Prove that your

profession is grounded on possession of life drawing all from the trunk, keeping close to it and abiding: then there will be seen seven effects of this.

- 1—The same bringeth forth *much fruit*. John 15, 5.
- 2—Ye shall *ask* what ye will and *it shall be done*. v. 7.
- 3—Ye shall *abide in my love*. v. 10.
- 4—Your *joy* might be *full*. v. 11.
- 5—Ye are *my friends*. v. 14.
- 6—That ye *love one another*. v. 17.
- 7—Ye also shall *bear witness*. v. 27.

2—THE FOUNDATION AND THE BUILDING. Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord. Eph. 2, 20-21.

This is a one-ness which can be added to by external effort, not by internal natural growth as in the vine. The quarrying of the Evangelist and the polishing of the teacher raising up the Temple and every stone large or small fitting its own place, neither can the larger ones be in the place of the little ones. To whom coming as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, I. Peter 2, 4-5.

3—THE HEAD AND THE BODY. As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is (the) Christ. I. Cor. 12, 12. This is a wondrous mystery which was hid in God, providing a sphere and the power for the exercise of gift and which rests upon the eternal security of the believer and his intimate connection with Christ. If one member were insecure, then "the Christ" would be in danger of being incomplete. The Epistle to the Ephesians reveals what the body is to the Head, and

that to the Colossians, what the Head is to the body. In Ephesians the wondrous truth is told out—the Church which is His (i.e. Christ's) body, the fulness or complement of Him that filleth all in all, Eph. 1, 22-23. The theme of the epistle is, the Christ not complete without the body. In Colossians it is—in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him, which is the Head. Col. 2, 9-10. Here the body requires the Head for its completion.

4—THE HUSBAND AND WIFE. But besides the Vine, the Building, and the Body each of which has its special teaching we get a one-ness that the *heart* cannot do without. Thus we have the husband and wife. The husband is head of the wife even as Christ is Head of the Church. Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it be holy and without blemish. Eph. 5, 23-27. Adam was not left alone; Eve was for his heart. Christ is gathering "His Eve" to Himself. We are not mere branches in the vine, not mere stones in the building, not mere members of the body, but we have hearts, and Christ has a heart, bless His name. He is our object and we are His. My beloved is mine and I am His. Cant. 2. 16. May the Lord stimulate, encourage, comfort and fill our hearts with overflowing love as we gaze upon this wondrous mystery.

Oh teach us Lord to know and own
This wondrous mystery:
That Thou with us art truly one,
And we are one with Thee.
And soon shall come that glorious day
When seated on Thy throne,
Thou shalt to wondering worlds display,
That Thou with us art one.

G.R.

AFTERWARDS.

It is always well to consider both the cause and the effect, the beginning and the end when making a survey of events or when laying our own plans, and to bear in mind the unvarying rule of God that "whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." Unfortunately we find that it is not always the way of men to profit by past experience of themselves or others, hence so often the little word heading this paper carries with it such a tale of untold bitterness; of bitterness coupled with humiliation too, when it is considered that the sufferer's own present is simply the "afterwards" of his own sowing. Unfortunately, when a soul gets out of close touch with God, the spiritual sight becomes dim. The result is that a path of fair promise is chosen, but the end of the path is not foreseen.

Of such a kind was the national calamity of Israel spoken of in Acts 13, 21, "Afterwards they desired a king." The desire was the outcome of what preceeded it and the attainment of their desire was in itself only the sowing of further trouble which ended in the removal of the broken remains of the children of Israel from the promised land altogether. Yet in its day what could seem fairer or more desirable than that Israel should have a king to lead them out and in, and who, judging by appearance, could better fill the office than Saul, the man head and shoulders above the rest of the people in stature, yet humble of heart. Ah, there was one thing forgotten on that day by the people, though God reminded Samuel of it after Saul's rejection, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart." Thus it was that the causes leading up to this calamity

were unnoticed, though the alertness of the natural man detected something wrong and sought to apply a remedy. To see that such a remedy was not according to God and indeed, incurred His marked disapproval, it is only necessary to read the words of Samuel and the account of what happened at the time; I. Sam. 8, 11-18 & 12, 16-19. Nothing could be plainer.

At this point we shall do well to dig for the causes that led up to such a thing. To take the view of an onlooker having a knowledge of the past history of this people we can only say their desire for a king spoke of base ingratitude. God had nursed them from the beginning and had always shown them that He desired that they should recognise no authority but His. It was by His direction that they found themselves in Egypt and by the strength of His arm according to His promise, that they came out of it. It was by His power and wisdom that they were preserved and guided in the wilderness and by trust in Him and His promises that they got possession of the promised land. Whilst Moses lived we read they came to him to enquire of God for guidance, Ex. 18, 15, and the record of a later day was, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for Israel." Josh. 24, 31. Failure followed them when in the land of Canaan but as oft as they confessed it to God He raised them up deliverers; thus right up to the appointment of Saul as king they maintained touch with God more or less as their Ruler. Samuel, who was God's prophet at the time, felt the wrong of their new choice and prayed to God about it as we cannot doubt he was a godly guide to the people like Moses before him. God graciously answered him as being in complete

accord with the thought of Samuel but withal as the one more deeply wronged and grieved, "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." I. Sam. 8, 7. Considering this brief survey what volumes our little word "afterwards" speaks; a nation seeking a king may seem good at first sight, but to see them dethroning God to do so, how terrible ! Samuel may be deeply grieved at such an action, but God is not taken by surprise as we see by His words to the prophet, " according to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other Gods, so do they also unto thee." I. Sam. 8, 8. There was the disposition of the people to stumble and turn aside laid bare, the wandering of their hearts after other gods belonging to the nations around them led them to order their lives like them and to desire a king to look up to in time of national need.

We in our day may be able to point our fingers at them and say where they were wrong and how much, but let us examine ourselves and shall we not find that the germs of the same thing are in our own hearts waiting for the opportunity to leap to the front and carry us away? Is not Satan continually whispering in our ears that we need not make ourselves appear so different from the worldling, we need not deny ourselves this or that, there is no harm in it? Let us take timely warning. The choice of Saul was marked by God's disapproval at the time and ended in Saul's rejection by God from being king. Finally this leadership so desired by the people met with disaster at the hands of the Philistines on mount Gilboa where Saul and Jonathan his son were killed. David his successor reveals in Psalm 4 the be-

wilderment that followed with some and also the continuance of his own trust and blessing, in these words ; " There be many that say, who will show us any good ? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in *my* heart, more than in the time that *their* corn and *their* wine increased." v. 6 & 7. Whatever others thought and did, David encouraged himself in the Lord and reaped the corresponding advantage.

Now however sad it may be to see the leanings of the human heart in a direction away from constant touch with God there is an even more distressing cause of the failure we are considering, yet to be unearthed, and which, sad to say has its counterpart to-day. It may have manifested itself before the days of Eli's high-priesthood but at any rate there we see it fully blown. To fully understand the significance of what we are about to look at it is necessary to see something of the law of the sin offering as given in Leviticus 4, because here we learn the value which God set upon things. First we read of the priest that is anointed and of the offering he must bring for his own sin, a young bullock without blemish. After this we read of the whole congregation being enjoined to bring a similar offering for their sin, no more and no less, and after that again "when a ruler hath sinned ... he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats." If we take this in the order presented we learn that the most important thing of all is the undisturbed communion of the priest with God, for where a sin is, sacrifice must be made to restore communion. Then as to the value of the sacrifice to be offered we note that there is no difference between that for the priest and that for the whole congregation for we can easily understand that in those days when the

people approached God through the priest, the way would be barred if the priest's own access was not open.

Now as to Eli and his son's, though the former was without doubt a godly man, the latter were described as sons of Belial. I. Sam. 2. 12, and in this same chapter we read of the way they went on and how by reason of their doings "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." Now how was it possible we may well ask, for the people to be in communion with God under such circumstances? What awful responsibility rested upon these young men and can we wonder that God's wrath finally descended on them as it did? I. Sam. 4. 17. They were out for self, even seeking to feed themselves at the expense of the congregation and in so doing heaping up wrath against themselves and turning away the people from God. How sad we say, yet can we not also see much the same to-day. True we who know God through grace are able to approach Him direct but there are many who are professing to be God's ministers, who are but self seekers and the means adopted to curry favour with men and foster a large congregation are in themselves a condemnation of those who do them, when compared with the word of God, and the methods advocated therein.

The case of Samuel and his sons is somewhat similar to that of Eli and his sons though Samuel is spoken of as judging Israel not as priest and his sons he made judges in his place when he grew old. Alas again the sons were not faithful like the father "but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. I. Sam. 8, 3. Thus these men became the direct cause of the desire of the heart to be made manifest, "now make us a king," ver. 5, and thus do we see that although the capacity for stumbling was in the heart of the people, the direct cause of its manifestation was the unfaithfulness of

their leaders. In the sons of Samuel do we not see the counterpart of those to-day who profess to be the guides and judges of the people of God and yet for the sake of reward make the truth conform to the desires of those who hire them?

Were it not for the authority of the word of God one would hesitate to make such charges but we learn from its pages that in the very early days of the church such things were happening and the same source assures us that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2. Tim. 3. 13. Who can look round to-day on Christendom and deny that the things of God have been made a trade by unscrupulous men? and who can deny that professing Christians as a whole have laid themselves open for it and delight to have it so as long as it ministers to their ease and relieves them of individual responsibility. With many to-day the cry is still "Who shall show us any good?" and they pass from one place to another finding them only broken cisterns that can hold no water. "For the time will come" says Paul, "when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." II. Tim. 4, 3 & 4. How remarkably easy to be turned aside from those things which cease to interest us and how active is Satan to provide just the thing man wants to keep him away from the enjoyment of Christ. Listen again to the same writer, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." II. Tim. 3. 1-5. Was there ever a day when these Scriptures were seen

to be more absolutely true than the present? With some, certain lines of teaching have been seized upon, and around them a system has been woven and teachers have been found forthcoming to teach as required. Again with others a form of godliness is enough, a mere cloak to wear over anything, a name to attach to what one desires to do to make it seem better, a form of godliness without any power because it is nothing more than a name.

Such is the picture without a doubt but what is the remedy? All is not lost though the Church of God as a thing of testimony has well nigh disappeared. God remains and so does His word; let us hold fast to both. Leaders may fail, but let us not therefore despise gifts which are given of God to His people for their instruction, but let us "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." I. Thess. 5. 20, 21. Christians are not responsible for what they hear but for what they receive, neither are they responsible for others but are told to turn away from such as are mentioned above II. Tim. 3. 5. Let us always bear in mind that, corresponding with the present as we form it, is the "afterwards." One honoured servant of God could say "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day," 2. Tim. 4. 8, but this was because of a life of devotedness to God, and was not reserved for him only as he makes plain, "but unto all them also that love His appearing." Our lives may savour of failure but for the true heart close communion with God is the surest defence. The Psalmist found it so when writing Psalm 73 after watching the worldling and even envying him, he could say, "Thou hast holden me by my right hand, Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and *afterward* receive me to glory.

A.T.

“THE KNEELING CAMEL.”

The camel at the close of day
Kneels down upon the sandy plain.
To have his burden lifted off,
And rest to gain.

My soul, thou too shouldst to thy knees
When daylight draweth to a close.
And let thy Master lift thy load
And grant repose.

Else how canst thou to-morrow meet,
With all to-morrow's work to do,
If thou thy burden all the night
Dost carry through?

The camel kneels at break of day
To have his guide replace his load;
Then rises up anew to take
The desert road.

So thou shouldst kneel at morning dawn.
That God may give thee daily care.
Assured that He no load too great,
Will make thee bear.

Anna Temple.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: to show forth thy loving kindness in the morning and thy faithfulness every night. Harken unto the voice of my cry.....: for unto Thee will I pray. My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.
Psa. 92, 1-2: 5, 2-3.

JOY IN SORROW.

Assembled at the Lord's Table to show His death we meet to take part in a service designed to be eucharistic in character. The Lord in instituting the supper *gave thanks*, and that was all, thus teaching us in what light He viewed the results of His death for God and for His people, and, by consequence, in what light we should view them like-wise.

The service was new and peculiar, it was new for it had respect to His death, an event then still future,

It was peculiar, for nothing in the Mosaic ritual could be cited as a parallel to it though, in common with the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt it spoke of redemption. At the Red Sea it was redemption by power; at the table we remember redemption by blood, and in that upper room, for the first and only time, both of these interventions of God in goodness were brought before the disciples; the former of them as they partook of the feast in the land of Israel's inheritance; the latter as they partook of the supper just then instituted, in reference to that which would so soon be an accomplished fact.

But in what sorrow were they as they reclined around the table! The Lord knew it, and told them He knew it. "Because I have said these things unto you sorrow hath filled your hearts (John 16. 6.) Never before had they been called to keep that feast in circumstances so adverse to the out-flow of joy: thinking of their immediate future, they might well be sad, for they were about to suffer bereavement through the death of the Lord, a bereavement, a sorrow such as we have never known, nor can ever know. Now it was at such a time, and in such sorrowful circumstances, that "when they had sung an

hymn they went out unto the Mount of Olives."

It is the evangelists Matthew and Mark that tell us of this (Matt. 26. 30. Mark. 14. 26.) those two in whose writings we have the darkest picture of the cross and its surroundings, are just the two who have recorded this instructive fact. Doubtless the Master raised the note of praise, who else could have been free in spirit then to do it? But they all joined in it. All of them in the midst of sorrow sang praises to God!

How incongruous, some might have thought, and might have quoted the words of the preacher. "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart. (Prov. 25, 20.) On ordinary occasions this would be true; but the Master could make no mistake, clearly it was right, it was fitting that they should sing to God. But why? They were celebrating redemption by power, accomplished of old by the arm of Jehovah, the joy and thanksgiving in remembrance of that was for the time to over-ride all personal and present sorrow.

The Lord knew that they were sorrowful, He did not condemn it; He did not rebuke it. But He taught them, and surely would teach us, that, when engaged in the remembrance of redemption, the joy of that is to over-ride personal sorrow. It was so with them. How truly they loved Him, Thomas has taught us (John. 11, 16) yet they sang; not the Lord only, but all of them together, so surely when at the Lord's table, it is for us to remember what they did: and like them, to learn from our common Lord and Master in what spirit we should remember and celebrate that most wonderful intervention of God in Grace, redemption by blood.

On another occasion, six weeks later, we see the same company once more in circumstances naturally

calculated to distress them, their sorrow, consequent on the Lord's death, had been turned into joy, when they had Him again in their midst as the Risen One. Thus, having accompanied Him to the Mount of Olives, they had seen Him ascend heavenwards, and they were returning to Jerusalem without Him, surely some might have thought that was the moment for weeping and depression. Not so with them. "They returned to Jerusalem," Luke tells us "With great joy." (Luke 24, 52) Now at that moment they were without the Lord in person on earth, and without the abiding presence of the Spirit, for He had not come. Again are they found in circumstances in which no Christian can ever be here below, yet, they rejoiced; why this seeming incongruity? It was not the laughter of fools, but the joy of earnest, sober, thoughtful men. What could have made them rejoice at such a moment, was it not the words of the men from heaven, who assured them of the Lord's certain return?

At His death they had lost all hope. On the occasion of His ascension, they could re-enter the city animated with the hope of His certain return. The remembrance then of redemption, and the hope of the Lord's return, did act we see, in this way on them. It is surely to be the same now. We never can be in the circumstances in which they were. A dying Christ we can never know. We cannot, like them, be deprived of His presence, nor can we know this earth without the Holy Ghost dwelling in the House of God. If they then were to sing, and could rejoice on these two occasions no sorrow that we can know, it is plain, should stifle the stream of worship, *due from us to God*, as we sit around the Lord's table, where we look back to the past, and onward to the future, the retrospect and the prospect alike demanding a note of praise.

Words in Season. 1890.

C. E. S.

THEE AND ME.

The Lord said, he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. The answer to His words was, behold here are two swords, to which He replied, it is enough. Yes, beloved, two are always enough for the Lord of Glory with which to do much or little. If we have His two swords, the Word and Himself, we can go out and win victory after victory. It is not what we have outside, but what we have *in* the house that matters. "According to your faith be it done unto you," the Lord said to the two blind men. Wonderful and blessed indeed that our faith, or patience, or expectation of hope should be allowed to measure the active and bounteous power of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is so—*according to your faith* be it unto you—*as thou hast believed*, so be it done unto you. Just as long as the poor widow produced her vessels, the pot produced the oil with which to fill them. The oil waited on the vessels, which did but measure it out. Divine power waits on faith, which brings out the active resources of God.

How have we faith? Beloved, if it is like a grain of mustard seed only, in the Lord's hands it is enough. The two swords are there, we use the one, *faith*, the Lord Jesus will use the other, *power*. Have we, dear ones, the faith to expect that which we ask? If so, He will perform it. When the blessed Lord stood with Abraham of old, as long as Abraham, (whose name means "father of a great multitude.") stood interceding, the Lord stood promising. It was only when Abraham left off that the Lord left off too. Gen. 18. 17-33. How are we using the sword of faith and prayer? Do we as the Lord's people give up too soon, forgetting that the blessed Lord has for each a little testing time of waiting? Noah

thought he saw the earth dry, but God knew better, so He remained silent. Noah must let patience have its perfect work; he could send out the dove but back it came with no answer at first. No use to send out a raven, it cared not for anyone, but went to and fro until the waters were dried off the face of the earth. Indifference on the part of an individual or assembly as to the mind of the Lord, will only bring in strife and division and one is sorry to see that it is so even to-day. Let us therefore as holy brethren, have faith to send out the dove again; it may be a little longer wait for us, but it will bring back the knowledge as an olive leaf that that the Lord is remembering us in our testing time. He will send a message of peace, and a green peace too. Soon will come the time when the Lord shall say, come forth of the ark, that earthly dwelling place, for the ground has become dry. Are we prepared for that time, or are we saying, my Lord tarrieth, and one goes to his farm and another to his work, and the sword is returned to its sheath? That is not enough: faith must go out and keep going out until the Lord can say, it is enough. Beloved, ought we not to be more in the attitude of Jonathan and go up to face the enemy of souls on our hands and knees? What a word he spoke! What faith he showed! Two men; two swords; but it was—come let us go over to the garrison of the enemy, it may be *the Lord* will work for us. Faith reached up higher, for there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few. How, by these two men, were proved the words of the Lord; if two of you be agreed as touching anything you shall ask on earth, it shall be done for you of My Father, which is in heaven. So these two swords went up and found as the Lord had said; it *was* enough. Though the slaughter was little at first, just twenty men

in an half acre of land, yet the Lord magnified faith's resource by a great trembling in the garrison. Yea the earth quaked and trembled, just as when those dear ones waited on the Lord's promise of the Holy Ghost, as Comforter, Guide, and Friend—faith's resource. The vessels were waiting, the oil came and filled them, a great rushing, trembling time.

Truly these two men saw a Pentecostal Spirit of power, but beloved, one grieves to say, where is the Pentecostal Spirit today in the assemblies, or the love in the individual? Is it Jesus only we want? Are we truly satisfied with Him? Can we truly say the Lord is working for us? Ought we not to go up more in the power of His strength and Spirit? Would there not be less division if there was more of Jesus? If we laid more of our letters as it were, before the Lord as did Hezekiah, surely then it would be enough to know Jesus had put His seal upon them and had given a right answer. May we all say Lord here are two swords and He reply it is enough.

G.G.

Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching there unto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Eph. 6, 13, 18.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Q.—Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, Rom. 1, 1: Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is a Cenchrea, Rom. 16, 1. According to the teaching of the New Testament are all true believers looked upon as servants?

E.

A.—Service in the N. T. is of a different order to that in the Old. In the latter it was by command and to a definite ritual, but in the former it is on a higher plane where the servants are reckoned as friends, (Jn. 15, 15.) and the service flows from a sense of indebtedness. Thus we read in the epistle to the Romans of our *reasonable service* which the Apostle balances against *this grace wherein we stand*. To such as the Thessalonians, to be converted from idols was to be made servants of God. I Thess. 1, 9.

With regard to the character of service, this covers the widest range possible, and it is most important to understand this. The basis is that we belong to God and that the life we now live should be the exhibition of Christ living in us. Being called upon to reckon ourselves dead to the old order of natural desires we should be active in the new life which springs from new birth, Rom. 6. With such an outlook everything takes on the character of service to Him who has given us that life. *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward....., for ye serve the Lord Christ.* Col. 3, 23-24. In addition to this daily and constant service, gifts are given to the members of Christ's body the church, to be used for its benefit and advancement, but in this connection be it noted, success in, or at least constant regard for, the more ordinary things, forms a necessary background (see for instance I. Tim. 3.) These gifts may not be such as to bring those possessing them into the public eye, Romans 12, gives a list, covering the ground from prophecy, to shewing mercy, and it is the individual's responsibility to see that in what soever he is blessed by the Spirit, the gift is exercised in the service of the church, either for its increase or moral well being.

A.T.

WHY, AND WHY NOT?

Whither has fled the joy unspeakable of the early Christians?

Why are Christians now without it, but because they have not learned to give up the first Adam for the last Adam—because they have not learned to walk as the early Christians walked? Do we not know a want of the Holy Ghost in *power*? A want of walking with soul full of heaven? Is it not because we have not learnt that all that is of self is a stony rock, which all that is of Christ is to flow through, to show everything in self is to be set aside?

Oh! do not be satisfied with ordinary Christianity; but be saying, "If nobody else is heavenly-minded, why not I? If others are not full of the Holy Ghost why not I?"

G.V.W.

EXTRACTS.

Where FAITH is *not*, a present object engages the heart, and becomes the treasure. W.K.

In God's ordered path alone can we find God. In His marked-out way, it would be impossible not to find Him. F.W.G.

Our blessedness—and let us not miss it—is this, that our treasures are treasured in a Person. J.G.B.

"THE WAY."

"That way is upward still where life and glory are: Our rest's above in perfect love the glory we shall share."

That way must be upward which He has marked out for His people in His Word. The way in which our feet must walk until we get home. Has He not said, "This is the way walk ye in it?" Isa. 30, 21

It is the good and right way as well as the narrow way, "and I will cause them to walk in a straight way;" and it is still upward, "the way of holiness." Isa. 35, 8. It leads us to where God dwells and holiness must mark the feet that tread that way. The Lord speaks of it as the narrow way and it leads to life. Life is there, and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Where life in all its fulness will be displayed, "and the Lamb's glories dwell."

Then we come to the rest long ago mentioned to His servant Moses. "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." Ex. 33, 14.

This rest he would know along the road, and rest at the end. On the one hand rest in toil, the internal deep repose and liberty of a spirit which has found a hidden refuge and retreat, where feeling is calm and dis-engaged, while the march, the battle, the climb, are still in full course. On the other hand another day, a distant day, was to come when he should taste the endless rest *after* toil, when he should sink down on Pisgah in the arms of the Lord. and (to quote the beautiful legendary phrase) should die—if death it could be called—"by His kiss." "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." Heb. 4, 9.

Love too we shall have in all its fulness where faith and hope will no more be needed. "When faith and hope shall cease, and love abides alone."

And when we shall have come to glory, we shall share it "with Him," "the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them." John. 17, 22.

“ Jesus, we wait for Thee,
With Thee to have our part;
What can full joy and blessing be
But being where Thou art.”

S.W.

HE SHALL TABERNACLE WITH THEM. Rev. 21, 3.

This emphatic statement is an advance on the previous one. There we read, “The tabernacle of God is with men:” now, “He shall tabernacle with them.” In the one case it is the tabernacle, in the other it is Himself. What an amazing truth that God, the very God, the maker and sustainer of heaven and earth, shall actually and really dwell with men on earth. This is no figure of speech, but a coming grand reality—one which in profound depth baffles human understanding.

“They shall be His people,” that is, God shall appropriate the eternal dwellers on the earth for Himself. Israel of old was Jehovah’s people, now the appellation “His people,” assumes a breadth and depth of blessing utterly unknown in old Testament times.

“And God Himself shall be with them, their God.” In this marvellous declaration, God so to speak, comes out of His tabernacle and personally is with His people.—God Himself! Here there is no mention of any thing, tabernacle or aught else, intervening between God and His people, He is “with them,” apart from any covering or external medium of communication. Then is fulfilled the words of the Lord, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5, 8.) May we not, too, give an enlarged scope to the words of the apostle quoted from the old Testament, God hath said, “I dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall

be my people." (2 Cor, 6. 16.) The topmost stone of blessing is reached in the closing words of this marvellous paragraph. "Their God." Could anything be higher? Could any character of blessing be conceived morally superior to what is here stated. God in the greatness, glory, and moral excellence of His being! God in His own infinitude is for His people then on earth! All is wrapped up in the grand creational name beyond the keenest research of a finite mind to grasp or fathom. The source—absolute and independent of all craved for by heart and mind—is treasured up in God. What He *is* and *has* is the assured, and everlasting portion of men, of all men then on the earth. The Lamb is not once named, nor any economic or other change intimated. It is God, His tabernacle, and men. God in all and for ever more. His life-time the duration of the existence of the "new heaven" and "new earth;" the life of God Himself the measure of the life and rest of the inhabitants of these eternal regions. We sum up:— (1) God's tabernacle with men; (2) He tabernacles with them; (3) They are His people; (4) God Himself with them; (5) God—their God. In the eternal state all is fixed on a permanent basis, but measures, and distinct characters of blessing there are, for even then all vessels are not of the same capacity, while all shall be filled. In these five statements we have graduation of blessing,

"And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall not exist any more, nor grief nor cry, nor distress shall exist any more, for the former things have passed away." The wiping away of tears is not an action ascribed to the Lamb, God does this. The eye is said to be "the fountain of sorrow," but God shall wipe it dry

W.S.

THE ACTS OF MAN BEFORE CHRIST'S DEATH AND THE ACTS OF GOD AFTER IT.

(Matt. XXVI, XXVII.)

The woman's seed "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," was God's announcement to the serpent in the garden of Eden on the first day of man's disobedience and fall.

Century after century the fearful consequences of sin were only more plainly developed, as the ruin, which that one transgression brought on the world, reached far and wide wherever man was found. The Saviour appeared on earth in the fulness of time, to be rejected and at last killed. Often had the Jews attempted His death whilst He spoke to them in Galilee and Judea, but hitherto without success. He could traverse Samaria, as far as we know, without His life being once endangered. He could go through the regions of Tyre and Sidon, and no man rose up to destroy Him. But from the Jews and the Galileans, whose King He was and is, and whose blessing on earth depended on His presence among them in life, He was frequently in danger of death. As yet their plans had been frustrated, for "His hour was not yet come." That hour spoken of by God in Eden now approached. The restraint placed upon man's action was to be removed ; and he, a child of the devil, was to manifest it by his deeds. It was an hour of activity on the part of Satan, and of the instruments of his choice. "This is your hour and the power of darkness," Luke 22, 53, was the statement of the Lord as they led Him away from the garden, which threw a lurid light on all that passed on that night, and all that would take place on the morrow. Satan was to be permitted to do what he would—to bruise His heel. Unrenewed man was to make a full discovery of himself,

to see if at the bottom there was any good in him. God also was to show what He was.

The scene in the garden of Eden bore witness to the malignity and subtlety of the serpent, who effected man's ruin by means of man himself. That scene also disclosed man's readiness to become Satan's tool. Within that garden, God's faithfulness to His word was evidenced, when sentence was pronounced on Adam and Eve ; but within that same enclosure were heard words telling of mercy and grace for sinners. In the garden of Gethsemane the devil again attempted man's ruin, and a second time through man himself. Had he been again successful, it was man's ruin effected for ever. The Lord was crucified by the hands of men. From his pierced side the blood had flowed. He had died without establishing the kingdom, or delivering Israel from the hands of their enemies : all seemed in favour of the enemy. But that body broken and bloodshed became the ground on which God's mercy and grace to sinners could be displayed, and His faithfulness to His word (this time on man's behalf) be again manifested.

Of the four histories of the Lord's death, we would invite the reader's attention for a few moments to that given us by the inspired apostle Matthew, as far as he recites the events which took place from the arrest in the garden to the death on the cross. It is in his narrative that we have the most complete exhibition of what man is, beginning with the disciples and ending with the thieves ; and there also we have detailed how God acted after the Lord had died.

The chief priests and scribes and the elders of the people were holding a council in the palace of the high priest. What was the purpose of their deliberations ? Were they desirous to stir up the people to demand the just execution of Barabbas ? Were they making

arrangements for the due observance of the approaching feast, or framing regulations for the more effectual putting away of leaven from the midst of the people ? Neither righteousness nor holiness prompted their conference. They were taking counsel together how they might capture and have put to death the Lord Jesus. True children of their father the devil, they hesitated not to commit murder, and, following the example of the serpent, would effect their purpose by subtlety. Whilst as yet their plans were unformed, and uncertainty reigned in the palace, Satan was preparing an instrument in the company of the disciples. Judas, rebuked by the Lord about the ointment, six days before the passover, became the ready tool for His betrayal. Satan entered his heart, and he repaired to the chief priests. And, to show the real character of the rulers of Israel, this agent of Satan finds his natural place to be in their midst, volunteering his services, yet bargaining for his price. The betrayal, affected by the defection of one disciple, resulted in the desertion of all, and the subsequent denial of acquaintanceship even with the Lord by Peter, confirmed by curses and oaths. Such is the picture, at this juncture, of that company selected by the Lord to be His attendants on earth, as drawn by one of themselves. They were weighed and found wanting. For, though John was found subsequently at the cross, he, with the rest, had first forsaken Him.

What of the chief priests and scribes, versed professedly in the law of God ? The Lord stood before the council, presided over by the high priest himself. There surely, justice would be administered, and the forms of law be duly observed. But the spirit of justice had fled from the hall of judgement, for the judges became advocates to ensure His condemnation. "They sought for false witnesses to put Him to death." To have

listened to such knowingly would have been a crime. To seek for them was a heinous crime. Failing to find two witnesses that agreed, they condemned Him for speaking the truth ; and, professing a zeal for God, they forgot the decency and decorum which judges should exhibit, they spat in His face, and buffeted Him, and allowed the servants to smite Him.

From Caiaphas He was taken to Pilate, who had the power of life and death in his hands : whilst declaring His innocence, to pander to the popular will, he pronounced the sentence of death. He knew He was innocent, he affirmed it again and again, yet set free a notorious robber and murderer, and gave over the Lord to be crucified. Not content with this, he had Him scourged whom he had most solemnly pronounced to be righteous.

From the hall of judgement to the common hall was another step, which the Lord in His condescension was willing to take. Here fresh indignities were offered Him. Stripped of His own clothes, and arrayed in the mock emblems of royalty, the Roman soldiers, the whole band of them, bowed the knee before Him, and hailed Him as King of the Jews. With a reed for a sceptre, thorns for a crown, and a scarlet robe covering Him, they mocked Him, spat on Him, and smote Him on the head. As king, they deridingly hailed Him, yet as King they will one day see Him. With a vesture dipped in blood, a rod of iron where they placed a reed, and with many crowns on that head they wounded with the crown of thorns, will He appear, followed by the armies of heaven. Will these soldiers accompany Him ? some might ask. The more pertinent question is, will the readers of these lines appear with Him then ?

From the common hall to Golgotha was the next change, Simon of Cyrene being compelled to bear His

cross. Nailed to the cross, He endured the railings of those who passed by. Who stopped to revile the *thieves*? The passers by reviled *Him*. "The chief priests, too, mocked Him, with the scribes and elders." Industrious in procuring His condemnation, eager too for His death, their enmity pursued Him even to the cross, where they taunted Him with being forsaken of God. It was true He was for a time forsaken, and we can give thanks for it, but which of those who said, "He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him : for He said I am the Son of God," (Matt. 27, 43,) knew the value of their words ? It was the bitterest taunt that was levelled at Him, and suggested surely by the devil. Matthew alone records it. If any who joined in these words discovered afterwards why He had been forsaken, what must their sorrow have been as they remembered what they had said. He was forsaken that we might know evermore the joy of being in the Father's favour. Low indeed had He come down, but He would go lower ; for "the thieves that were crucified with Him cast the same in his teeth."

Such was man, as Matthew sets him forth. We read in Luke of the confession of the repentent thief. Matthew tells of the boldness of Joseph ; and John of the devotion of Nicodemus ; but testified after his death. Of man, before the Lord died, Matthew has nothing good to relate, whether of the disciples, the Jews, the Romans, or the thieves. Till He died God allowed man to act as he would. During the three hours of supernatural darkness man seemed overawed, for we read of nothing done to the Lord, till, at the close, when He cried out, the sponge full of vinegar was given Him to drink. Before that darkness supervened man's enmity was fully displayed. The vinegar tasted, this the last act of indignity submitted to, the last Scripture to be

fulfilled whilst He lived received its elucidation and accomplishment, and He died. Beyond this world man could not pursue the Lord.

Jesus yielded up the ghost, and God immediately began to work : but—let it be pondered over, as it deserves—to work in grace. “Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom ; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent ; and the graves were opened.” No house that we read of was destroyed by that earthruake ; no one of that guilty company was killed ; Jerusalem was not engulfed ; not an animal, not a dog was hurt. All must have felt the earthquake, but in the temple a wonder was to be seen—the veil was rent. Who witnessed it ? It took place at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer, when the incense should have been offered up on the golden altar in front of it. Mysterious it must have seemed as the holy of holies was disclosed to one who had never seen it. From the top to the bottom, from heaven downwards, the veil was divided, betokening a divine act, and that *immediately* on the death of Christ.

From the days of the sojourn at Sinai to the hour of the Lord’s crucifixion, a veil, dividing the sanctuary into two parts, proclaimed man’s inability to enter into the holy presence of his God. Adam in the garden after the fall felt this ; God at Sinai confirmed it, though teaching, by the ceremonial He himself had appointed, that a way might someday be opened. The Lord died, His body was broken, and the veil was rent. God, with His own hand as it were, tore down what He had commanded Moses to put up, and that whilst the Lord was still hanging on the cross, a witness to the universe of man’s guilt. This was the *first* act of God after the death of His Son. One sin was enough, had no sacrifice been found, to shut out man for ever from the presence

of God. That one sacrifice, when offered up, was enough to open a way into His presence for the vilest of the vile, and even for the perpetrators of that terrible crime. Had God then come forth from the thick darkness and vindicated His Son by the destruction of His murderers, who could have accused Him of injustice or of haste ? Instead of that, He has opened a way for the sinner to enter the holiest. None at that moment (if any witnessed it) could have understood the significance of a rent veil. None in the present day should stand for one moment in ignorance or in doubt about its meaning ; for the Holy Ghost has declared it, and Heb. 9 and 10, are divine comments and explanations about it.

But further, the rocks were rent. Matthew, Mark and Luke, all speak of the rending of the veil. Matthew alone tells of the earthquake, the riven rocks, and open graves. And this is in keeping ; for as we have in this gospel the darkest picture of man's sinfulness, in connection with the cross, we have also the fullest details of the actings of God in grace after the death of Christ. The rocks were rent, no unnatural accompaniment of an earthquake ; but on this occasion there was something unusual, for the graves were opened, and from them, but after His resurrection, as the evangelist is careful to relate, many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and entered the holy city. As first begotten from the dead He arose first, but the graves were opened before the stone had covered the mouth of that new tomb, and had been sealed with the seal of authority. The rent veil speaks of access to the immediate presence of God ; the opened graves attest deliverance from the grasp of death, and the consequent resurrection of the body. Observe, the graves were opened, but only the bodies of the saints arose. The general result consequent on

His death was shewn in the opened graves, the special result for God's saints was manifested when saints arose from the dead. The converse of all this was seen in Eden, where Adam felt himself unfit for God's presence, and heard sentence of death pronounced on himself for his sin.

But why this seeming haste? Why was no interval allowed between the giving up of His Spirit into the hands of His Father, and the manifestations of what His death had effected? Because the work was a finished work, and God would have sinners believe this. It is true if Christ had not risen we should be yet in our sins. Had the grave retained His body, it would have been because He was not spotless, and able to make atonement. We have likewise been quickened with Him, and raised up with Him. But ere the sun sank that day beneath the horizon, some fruits of His death were made apparent. God's own hand, we may say, rent the veil; God's own power opened the graves. The sacrifice of His Son offered up, He waited for nothing more. No prayer of man was needed ere He could act. No supplication arose from earth to heaven praying that the results of a finished work should be announced. Before the Lord was taken down from the cross, before the Roman governor knew He was dead, God by His acts declared some of the blessed consequences of Christ's sacrifice; for what took place inside the city within the temple, and what was seen in the rocky chambers of the tombs outside Jerusalem, spoke clearly and loudly of the finished character of that work.

AS FOR GOD.

His *work* is perfect, Deut. 32, 4. His *way* is perfect, Psa. 18, 30. His *love* too is perfect, and Soloman tells us of "the perfect day."

S.W.

WHERE HE DWELT. JOHN I.

It is one thing to be *in* a place and quite another thing to *dwell* there. The blessed Lord was *in* the world but the violence of those to whom He came, and the presence of sin, precluded Him from making it His *dwelling*, or place of continued habitation. Yet even in such circumstances the grace of God made mention of that state which *was* continuous, and which would be extended in scope, for not by all was Christ rejected. John wrote, "the Word was made flesh and *dwelt* among *us*." Not amongst those to whom grace linked Him by natural birth, nor amongst all and sundry who were the work of His hands, but a peculiar class, *us* : for, he explains, *we* beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.

This reminds us of another point, that of the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son which no visit to earth could break. His rightful and continuous *dwelling place* is in the bosom of the Father (Jn 1, 18); in heaven (3, 13), but in infinite grace we find Him stooping to connect Himself at the same time with a few on earth. He was here for a while to declare the Father and who so fitted to do so as one who dwelt with Him? The effectiveness of the testimony is seen in the statement, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Amongst such though few in number He was pleased to dwell, thus affording them fuller opportunity to observe what He had to reveal.

Thus the latter part of this chapter shows us the case of the two disciples of John who followed Jesus and asked, "Where dwellest Thou?" No place is described, but the result of spending the night in such company is seen in Andrew's haste to bring his brother to Jesus,

saying, "We have found the Messias, which is the Christ." If it is left on record of the Apostles that the people took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him, may we not be sure that such was the kind of sight that these had seen that night? His *habitation* may have been of the roughest, for we read elsewhere He had not where to lay His head, but His dwelling in the bosom of the Father was such a manifest reality that it bore fruit in convincing these invited ones, in Whose company they were. Isaiah could write, "thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I *dwell* in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit (57, 15). Thus also was it in later days. The One who dwelt in the bosom of the Father was also *in* the world, but *dwellt* among those who recognised and received Him and from this reception of the truth and acquaintance with the Person, flowed acceptable and successful service, for Peter was thereby won for the Master. Thus also it is today. Service in the true sense can only flow from such a beginning, for only those who are in direct connection with the Throne of the Universe can know *what* to do, and acquaintance with the perfect Servant gives the knowledge *how* to serve.

A.T.

DEVOTEDNESS.

In all true devotedness Christ is the first and governing object; next, "His own which are in the world" and then our fellow-men—first their souls, then their bodies, and every want they are in.

The sense that we are not our own deepens the claim in our hearts, yet takes away all merit in the devotedness.

J.N.D.

THE THOUGHT OF THOUGHTS.

“ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (Jn. 3, 16).

Here is what Cyprian calls “ an ocean of thought in a drop of language.” Who can sound the depth of this “ thought of God ? ” It will form the theme and the problem of eternity. Manifold other and glorious are His thoughts regarding His people. But this is the centre and focus of all,—around which all the others constellate. It is the jewel of which all the others are the setting,—the thought of thoughts—the gift of gifts. We may well say “ How precious ! ” There is no measuring that love;—it defies all human computation. Christ Himself, in speaking of it, can only intimate its indescribability. He puts the plumbline into the hand, but He does not attempt to gauge or fathom;—all He can say of the precious thought and the precious love is, “ God so loved ! ” And His redeemed Church in heaven will for ever stoop over the edge of the precipice and exclaim, in the contemplation of the profound abyss, “ Thy *thoughts* are very deep.”

Think of that love in the *past*;—a love so great as to put into the lips of the Eternal Father the mysterious summons, “ Awake ! O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow; smite the Shepherd.” The same Almighty Being is represented elsewhere as looking around,—scanning and surveying the wants of a doomed and dying world: “ I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that was none to uphold; therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto me.” The alternative, “ condemn or not condemn,” was before the Infinite mind. But “ God sent *not* His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world

through Him might be saved." Think of that love when it culminated thus in its triumph on the Cross. When God's "precious *thoughts*," had their awful exponent and interpreter in "the precious *blood* of Christ." Think of that moment when Infinite Paternal love laid His Isaac on the altar, and the unsheathed sword descended on the priceless Sacrifice! Think of it, too, as a love evoked by rebels,—a love manifested towards the guilty and undeserving. History's noblest deed and record of love is in the self-devotion of one generous heathen, Pylades, who forfeited his life to save *his friend*;—but "God commendeth His own love toward *us*, in that, while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us!" "You have not yet seen," says a great writer and profound thinker, "the greatest gift of all—the Heart of God,—the love of His heart—the heart of His love, and will He, in very deed, shew us that? Yes, unveil that cross, and see. It was His only mode of shewing us His heart. It is Infinite Love labouring to reveal itself—agonising to utter the fulness of infinite love. Apart from that act, a boundless ocean of love would have remained for ever shut up and concealed in the heart of God. But now it has found an ocean-channel. Beyond this He *cannot* go. Once and for ever the proof has been given—God is love."

J.R.M.

The love of Christ is a love which is above all our wretchedness, but which adapts itself to all our wretchedness, and which is not repelled nor chilled by any of these wretchednesses.

J.N.D.

LIKE A WEANED CHILD.

"Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with his mother." Psa. 131, 2. (R.V.)

This little 'Psalm of Degrees' or 'of Ascents,' is one of the sweetest and tenderest utterances of faith in the whole Old Testament. From the first of its few words to the last it is the voice of the child of God, deep at rest in the Father's mother-like arms, and only looking outward to say to others, to Israel, just at the end, "hope in the Lord." As if the thought were, "Here am I, in the place of peace; it is a good place; the peace passeth understanding; dear brethren, dear fellow pilgrim, you cannot too simply, nor too long, trust the Giver of that peace."

Let us look a little closer at the happy witness to the deep and blissful content to be found within the mighty hands of God. This possessor of repose indicates to us, in a very instructive way, certain conditions of that repose, which have suggestions of their own for us, full at once of heart-searching and of love. We observe at once an allusion to a state which has preceded the present sacred happiness; 'I have stilled and quieted my soul.' So the soul, with its consciousness, its emotions, its depths and currents of feeling, had *needed* stilling and quieting. It had been in agitation. A storm had swept it, with a tumult, with strong crying. The present calm had come on by way of a contrast; in some wonderful way the unrest had heard a voice saying, 'Peace, be still,' and had obeyed, The quiet, was quiet heightened by the reminiscence of distress.

Still further we find an indication of the kind of disturbance which had come—and gone. This is given us in that exquisitely tender simile, 'like a weaned

child'! The trouble of the weaned child is the trouble of a deprivation; the loss, the unexplained loss, for it is too young to understand explanations, of the sacred sustenance of its new-born life. It is the pain and grief of '*having to do without*.' And the stillness and the quiet, the silent rest 'the low beginnings of content,' are the results and symptoms of '*learning to do without*'.

Here is a simple but very fruitful lesson for thee and for me, Christian reader. Very various are life's troubles; but a large class under that large variety comes to just this, the troubles occasioned by 'having to do without.' They meet us everywhere. They range from the lightest, the smallest, to the deepest and most dark. Quite possibly your example of the species just now may be a thing in itself very small. It may be the call to do without some innocent pleasure of the hour, an eagerly expected but frustrated holiday, or interview, or visit or the like. It may be some looked-for letter which the postman will not bring. It may be the schoolboy's or schoolgirl's, missing of the prize; a pain to parents as well as child.

But then it may be something very much graver in kind and in results. Perhaps you have to 'do without' health. Some mischief of our mortality has touched you, and you cannot get well. The spring and buoyancy of life are gone, and there has come to you, perhaps, in the place of them, the presence of a stern incessant pain, or, what some sufferers know to be even worse, an incessant exhaustion, a chronic inward failure. It seems but yesterday that your step was strong, and your spirits young; to-day you have, for the season at least, to 'do without.'

Perhaps you have to 'do without' scenes and

surroundings so dear that they seemed to be part of your heart. Your old landscape is in sight no more. If you went now to the familiar and beloved door, you would have to ring the bell.

"Children not thine have trod my nursery floor," says the orphan poet to "his Mother's Picture;" realizing afresh what it is to have to 'do without' the dear scenes which cradled life in their love and beauty.

Aye, and for William Cowper, it was not the nursery, after all, but the mother that it was so hard to have to 'do without.' His immortal Elegy over that precious portrait does but put into perfect words the unutterable sighs of numberless hearts which have tasted deep of bereavement. You know all about it, you, dear orphan child, and yon, childless parent, and you, widowed wife or husband in your desolation, and you, O friend, to whom the world can never be the same since you have had to 'do without' that 'half of your soul in the other body ? Already upon you all has come the skirt of the great shadow, or rather, perhaps, the heaviest folds of it are wrapt about your heads. You are called to a sore and heavy experience of this mysterious 'weaning,' this having to 'do without.'

Beloved friends, experienced in loss may I point you with a sort of silence, (for print is very quiet), to the loss-stricken Psalmist's testimony. Do we not gather that he had just been called to some mysterious trial, akin to yours, and was just learning to be quiet about it, not to 'exercise himself in great matters,' seeking to look behind the holy will of God and, and to understand it all before the time? He was just getting a glimpse of the sacred blessedness to be found, under certain divine conditions, in 'learning to do without.' He was tasting a strange sweetness in the cup of grief.

Falling back quite simply on a Father's love in the unexplained sorrow, he found himself, he knew not how, getting to rest ; not to sleep, but to rest; a rest out of which he could say to others, like one who had *a right* to say it, 'O Israel, hope in the Lord.'

One little touch of suggestion tells us where the secret of the blessed change was to be found. He compares his soul to a child weaned, not '*from*' but '*with*' his mother. The loss is there. The joy is taken away, and he must do without it. But the *parent* is there, more profoundly, more fondly loving than ever. And that is a guarantee that ultimate happiness lies deep within the sorrow; nay, it has begun already, in the simple consciousness of the beloved presence. And even so it is with the 'weaned' mourners and their God. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Isa. 66. 13.

MOULE.

WAITING.

I am waiting for the dawning,
Of the bright and blessed day;
When the darksome night of sorrow
Shall have vanished far away.
When for ever with the Saviour,
Far beyond this vale of tears,
I shall swell the song of worship,
Through the everlasting years.

I am looking at the brightness,
(See it shineth from afar)
Of the clear and joyous beaming
Of the "Bright and Morning Star."
Through the dark grey mist of morning,
Do I see its glorious light;

Then away with every shadow
Of this sad and weary night.
I am waiting for the coming
Of the Lord who died for me;
Oh, His words have thrilled my spirit,
"I will come again for thee."
I can almost hear His foot-fall,
On the threshold of the door,
And my heart, my heart is longing
To be with Him evermore.

S.T.F.

THE LORD JESUS IN JOHN XI., XII.

These chapters show us in what different channels the Lord's thoughts flowed from those of the heart of man. His ideas, so to speak, of *misery* and of *happiness* were so different from what man's naturally are.

The eleventh chapter opens with a scene of human misery. The dear family at Bethany are visited with sickness, and the voice of health and thanksgiving in their dwelling has to yield to mourning, lamentation, and woe. But He, who of all had the largest and tenderest sympathies, is the calmest among them; for He carried with Him that foresight of resurrection, which made Him overlook the chamber of sickness, and the grave of death.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He abode two days longer in the place where He was. But when that sickness ends in death. He begins His journey in the full and bright prospect of resurrection. And this makes His journey steady and undisturbed. And, as He approaches the scene of sorrow, His action is still the same. He replies again and again to the passion of

Martha's soul, from that place where the knowledge of a power that was beyond that of death had, in all serenity, seated Him. And though He have to move still onward, there is no haste. For on Mary's arrival, He is still in the same place where Martha had met Him. And the issue, as I need not say, comes in due season to vindicate this stillness of His heart, and this apparent tardiness of His journey.

Thus was it with Jesus here. The path of Jesus was *His own*. When man was bowed down in sorrow at the thought of death, He was lifted up in the sunshine of resurrection.

But the sense of resurrection, though it gave this peculiar current to the thoughts of Jesus, left His heart still alive to the sorrows of others. For His was not *indifference*, but *elevation*. And such is the way of faith always. Jesus weeps with the weeping of Mary and her company. His whole soul was in the sunshine of those deathless regions which lay far away from the tomb of Bethany; but it could visit the valley of tears, and weep there with those that wept.

But again.—When man was lifted up in the expectation of something good and brilliant in the earth, His soul was full of the holy certainty that death awaits all here, however promising or pleasurable; and that honour and prosperity must be hoped for only in other and higher regions. The twelfth chapter shows us this.

When they heard of the raising of Lazarus, much people flocked together from Bethany to Jerusalem, and at once hailed Him as the King of Israel. They would fain go up with Him to the Feast of Tabernacles, and antedate the age of glory, seating Him in the honours and joys of the kingdom. The Greeks also take their place with Israel in such an hour. Through Philip, as

taking hold of the skirt of a Jew (Zech. viii), they would see Jesus and worship. But in the midst of all this Jesus Himself sits solitary. He knows that earth is not the place for all this festivation and keeping of holy day. His spirit muses on death, while their thoughts were full of a kingdom with its attendant honours and pleasures. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone."

Such was the peculiar path of the spirit of Jesus. *Resurrection was everything to Him.* It was His relief amid the sorrows of life, and his object amid the promises and prospects of the world. It gave His soul a calm sunshine, when dark and heavy clouds had gathered over Bethany; it moderated and separated His affections, when the brilliant glare of a festive day was lighting up the way from thence to Jerusalem. The thought of it sanctified His mind equally amid grief and enjoyments around. Resurrection was everything to Him. It made Him a perfect pattern of that fine principle of the Spirit of God: "let Him that weepeth be as if he wept not, and he that rejoiceth as though he rejoiced not."

Oh for a little more of the same mind in us beloved! —a little more of this elevation above the passing conditions and circumstances of life!

May the faith and hope of the Gospel, through the working of the indwelling Spirit, form the happiness and prospects of our hearts!

J.G.B.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION. Ephesians i. 14.

The earth is the subject of redemption as well as man. It is already purchased, and by-and-by, in due

season, it shall be rescued or delivered. That is, it is the subject of the twofold redemption known in Scripture, redemption by *price*, and redemption by *power*.

The blood of the cross has already reconciled or purchased it. As we read, "And having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." (Col. i.)

This gives the inheritance the title of "the purchased possession."

But though purchased, it is not yet delivered. It is still under "the bondage of corruption." (Rom. viii.) It is redeemed by purchase, but not yet by power. We therefore wait for the "redemption" of that which is already a "purchased possession."

This bright and happy truth, this mystery found among the mysteries of God has had its pledges and fore-shadowings, as well as others.

The ordinance of the Jubilee seems to set forth this twofold redemption—by price and by power. (See Lev. xxv.) For that chapter teaches us that at any time during forty-nine years, the alienated possession of an Israelite might have been purchased by the kinsman of the heir and thus redeemed or brought back to the family to which, under God, it had belonged; but if that were not done, it would return to the heir in the fiftieth year, or the Jubilee, without purchase.

These two ordinances, again, I say, seem to set forth the mystery I am speaking of—redemption by money and redemption by power. The kinsman might redeem with money, the Jubilee would redeem without money, by virtue of its own title, by virtue of that force or authority imparted to it by Him who was the God of Israel and the Lord of the soil.*

* We ourselves wait to be redeemed by power. Resurrection will do that.

Again, Jeremiah the prophet was commanded to purchase the field of Hanameel, his uncle's son. He did so, in the spirit and obedience of faith, though at that moment the Chaldean army was in the land, and was under commission from the Lord to tread it down, and waste it, or possess themselves of it. But when Jeremiah made inquiry respecting this strange thing, that he should be asked to lay out his money upon a piece of land thus devoted to the sword of an invader, the Lord tells him that a day of *power* was to come, and that in that land there should be redemption, and that the Lord's own people should possess it again, brought back out of the hand of every spoiler. This was the Lord's answer to His servant. And thus Jeremiah had reason to know that the purchase now made by good money of the merchant, should be made good in a coming day of power. (See Jer. xxxii.)

And let me add one other notice of this distinguished case, the purchase of Hanameel's field, for it has interested me. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" is the Lord's challenge of Jeremiah on this occasion, as it is of Sarah in Gen. xviii. Sarah did not know how she, whose body was then dead, could have a child, for *she knew not the resurrection-strength of God*. Jeremiah did not know how he, who was laying out his money on a piece of ground which was then in the hand of the enemy, could get its value back again; for, like Sarah, *he knew not the resurrection-strength of God*.

That strength makes all simple. The victory of Christ, the resurrection of Jesus, gives as to our inheritance sure rights under the seal of a title-deed easy to be read.

C.E.S.

HIS BODY AND HIS BLOOD.

Nothing can be plainer to the student of the Bible than the connection between sin and death. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Apart from the entrance of sin into the world there would be no such thing as death, for, the wages of *sin* is death. How hopeless then, is the lot of man apart from the intervention of God on his behalf, and how gloriously does the light of the gospel shine out in the words of the Apostle John, *herein* is love, not that *we loved God*—that were to us both undesirable and impossible—but that *He loved us*, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (I. John 4. 10.)

Of Old Testament figures, that of the Passover shines out very clearly as a type of this deliverance by divine intervention, and in connection therewith two things may be noted. When the lamb was killed, *the blood* was to be put outside, for God to look upon; "When I see the blood I will pass over you." Ex. 12. 13.; whilst *the carcase* of the lamb, was to be food for those thus sheltered in the house.

Not only in Egypt was this feast to be kept, but continually year by year, as a reminder of deliverance. Thus do we find our Lord Jesus as a devout member of the house of Israel, occupied with it in the upper room in Jerusalem with the disciples, but never again after that time would it be kept with the same significance, because this, in common with other Old Testament figures, found its fulfilment in Him.

A new dispensation was about to open, in which God's dealings would cease to be principally concerned with one nation and would embrace all alike. Further-

more if this feast was to be fulfilled as a type, then it must sooner or later give place to the reality. This we know took place when "Christ our passover was sacrificed for us," and consequently we see on this last occasion of its celebration by our Lord with the disciples, He gave them something else to supersede it, which would be of absorbing interest to both Jewish and Gentile believers in Him.

In principle this new institution was similar to the old inasmuch as it was nothing but a reminder of something done. Keeping the passover made no one a member of the house of Israel, neither did it make them suited for the presence of God. *Circumcision* was the distinctive mark of the Israelite, and *the day of atonement* was the basis of their standing before God. Thus also this which the Lord asked His disciples to do was to be in remembrance of Him, or as Paul puts it, to show forth His death. Just as the lamb and its blood were separately used in the passover, so also do we get a similar distinction here.

We read that first of all the Lord took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me. Now here we need to recall where we began: *death* our *due* because of sin. Death never could be *His* due for He never sinned, but as the expression of God's grace to a ruined race, He tasted death, Heb. 2. 9. Peter speaks thus; who His own self bear our sins in *His own body* on the tree. I. Pt. 2. 24. There, exhibited for all to see, hung His blessed body upon which had been enacted the sentence against sin; *death*. There each who realises the awfulness of his position of sinner before God, can look and see the sentence poured out upon his substitute, and in connection therewith can read, "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body

of sin might be destroyed," Rom. 6. 6. This is man's side; the sentence of death carried out, a fact too well attested to be denied and to be continually shown forth in the breaking of bread.

In addition to this we read, He gave the cup to the disciples saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. Again be it noted, the form is nothing more than a reminder of what has already been done, and as with the blood of the passover, so here, the blood of which the wine spoke was for the eye of God to behold. Thus in Hebrews we read of Christ's priesthood and of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. The earthly high priest went once a year into the holiest with the blood of atonement and sprinkled it, a record for the ensuing year in the presence of God that a sacrifice had been offered and accepted on behalf of the people. Of this latter priest we read, Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands ...but by *His own blood*, entered in once into the holy place, *having obtained* eternal redemption for us, Heb. 9. 11-12. Here are facts to make our hearts rejoice; firstly, that eternal redemption is already obtained, and secondly, that commemoration is made in the presence of God in heaven by the blood of the Sacrifice. This is God's side, and furnishes a complete answer to the demands of His holiness in connection with sin.

Thus when celebrating the Lord's Supper we are reminded of these two things; firstly, that the sentence of death which stood written against us was enacted upon Him and His body laid in the grave as a result; and secondly that His blood shed for the remission of our sins speaks in the presence of God for us, of a sacrifice offered and accepted.

A.T.

parents, partakers of the common national distress, but was raised by divine intervention to the royal palace where we should imagine he would receive such education as would fit him to rule and guide a nation. Evidently he thought so too when full of energy and of delivering by his own power, he went forth and slew the Egyptian on account of which he had to flee from the land. In the wilderness for 40 years keeping sheep was he prepared in the school of God for his life's work, and only once afterwards do we read of him being carried away by his feelings, when he smote the rock and was in consequence forbidden to enter the promised land. The human wisdom gathered in early days was not in evidence in his later life in the wilderness as leader of the people. God was the Guide and gave wisdom for each circumstance as it arose.

Of those chosen ministers of Christ who companied with Him and formed the nucleus of the Church after His ascension how many noble or educated do we find? Of the Lord himself they said, "How knoweth this man letters having *never learned*?" Of His prominent followers, Peter and John it is recorded that "they perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Poor, working fishermen without time or opportunity to devote to other things till the call came to follow Christ. Paul's record is similar to that of Moses in that he had what is popularly called a good start, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the most noted Jewish scholar of the day. Yet this foundation only led him in the wrong direction, filling his mind with ideas of persecution even to death, to rid the earth of the name of Jesus. In infinite grace God met him in his mad career and undid all the results of such training as he had received, finally sending Ananias to him saying, "I

have appeared unto thee for this purpose, *to make* thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Thus in later years he gives his estimate of his early attainments; only dross and dung, to be thrown on one side to make room for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. That which was the foundation of his later service he received directly from God without any intervention of men (see Gal. 1). When occasion called for it he could recount a list of experiences and attainments, such as no one else could equal. Of visions too, and things impossible to utter he could speak, but with all such things was a danger of being lifted up, hence did he consider himself but a fool in recounting them and would rather glory in reproaches, infirmities and necessities. Why was this? Because he realised he was a servant sent by God to serve his brethren, and thus though so able to minister in abundance in foreign tongues he would rather give five words spoken so as to be understood than 10,000 for self glory in any other language. Here is the sentiment of a true servant; ready to be nothing himself as long as that for which he was sent prospered; to put it in his own words, "I seek not yours but you."

Now to look round us to-day, we do not see many like Moses or Paul, perhaps not any, but we shall do well not to be discouraged by this. The Ephesian elders wept when they parted from Paul the last time, but his commendation of them was to God and the word of His grace. Timothy he exhorted to commit what he had learned to faithful men who should be able to teach others also, and thus must it be through time till the Lord comes. God and the word of His grace continue; may the faithful also continue to use such resources.

Feeble though we may be, let us all take courage from the divine records. Wisdom and learning from earthly sources do not fit one for God's service, though those who have them may be used. Moses from the best training grounds of Egypt and Saul of Tarsus from the school of Gamaliel, both had to begin all over again before being used in God's service. Amos who wrote to Israel, was a herdman and gatherer of wild figs, whilst Peter, John, Andrew and James were fishermen. In the Corinthian assembly the apostle drew attention to the fact that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called, but God chose the foolish, the weak, the base and despised to do His work. The reason is obvious, for by wisdom God cannot be found or known, neither can that which man affords in the realm of learning add anything to what God would give His own to feed upon. It may be that the five words will be our contribution in the service of God, let not either minister or listeners despise them, for *nothing else* will fit in the space provided. If the servant withholds them *he* will lose the chance of serving his Lord and the future reward too, whilst those who should have received them will go soul-hungry for lack of them. *Long* orations or prayers find no place on the page of Scripture, but how telling a few words can be, may easily be gleaned from the same source. May Paul's words to the Thessalonians be carefully weighed by all; "quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesying, prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

If those to whom God in His grace has committed a testimony do not employ this testimony in behalf of others according to the grace that bestowed it, they will soon become unfaithful in their own walk before God.

J.N.D.

THE MANNA DESPISED.

(Numbers 11.)

“ And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; and the Lord heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah; because the fire of the Lord burnt among them. And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons, the leeks and the onions and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”

Here the poor human heart lets itself thoroughly out. Its tastes and its tendencies are made manifest. The people sigh after the land of Egypt and cast back wistful looks after its fruits and its fleshpots. They do not say aught about the lash of the taskmaster and the toil of the brick-kilns. There is total silence as to these things. Nothing is remembered now, save those resources by which Egypt had ministered to the lusts of nature. How often is this the case with us! When once the heart loses its freshness in the divine life—when heavenly things begin to lose their savour—when first love declines—when Christ ceases to be a satisfying and altogether precious portion for the soul—when the word of God and prayer lose their charm and become heavy, dull and mechanical; then the eye wanders back toward the world, the heart follows the eye, and the feet follow the heart. We forget, at such moments,

what the world was to us when we were in it and of it. We forget what toil and slavery, what misery and degradation, we found in the service of sin and of Satan, and think only of the gratification and ease, the freedom from those painful exercises, conflicts and anxieties, which attend upon the wilderness path of God's people, And this is most sad, and should lead the soul into the most profound self-judgment. It is terrible when those who have set out to follow the Lord begin to grow weary of the way and of God's provision. How dreadful must those words have sounded in the ear of Jehovah, "But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." Ah, Israel, what more didst thou need? Was not that heavenly food enough for thee? Couldst not thou live upon that which the hand of thy God had provided for thee? Do we count ourselves free to ask such questions? Do we always find our heavenly manna sufficient for us? What means the frequent inquiry raised by professing Christians as to the right or wrong of such and such worldly pursuits and pleasures? Have we not even heard from the lips of persons making the very highest profession, such words as these, "how are we to fill up the day? We cannot always be thinking about Christ and heavenly things, we must have a little recreation." Is not this somewhat akin to Israel's language, in Numbers XI? Yes truly; and as is the language, so is the acting. We prove alas! that Christ is not enough for the heart by the palpable fact of our betaking ourselves to other things. How often, for example does the Bible lie neglected for hours, while the light and worthless literature of the world is greedily devoured. What mean the well-thumbed newspaper and the almost dust-covered Bible? Do not these things tell a tale? Is not this despising the manna, and sighing after, nay devouring, the leeks and onions?

We specially call the attention of young Christians to that which is now before us. We are deeply impressed with a sense of their danger of falling into the very sin of Israel, recorded in our chapter. No doubt we are all in danger; but the young among us are peculiarly so. Those of us who are advanced in life are not so likely to be drawn away by the frivolous pursuits of the world—by its concerts, its flower shows, its pleasure-parties, its vain songs and light literature. But the young will have a dash of the world. They long to taste it for themselves. They do not find Christ an all-sufficient portion for the heart, they want recreation.

Alas! Alas! what a thought! How sad to hear a Christian say, "I want some recreation. How can I fill up the day? I cannot always be thinking of Jesus." We should like to ask all who speak thus, How will you fill up eternity? Shall not Christ be sufficient to fill up its countless ages? Shall you want recreation there? Will you sigh for light literature, vain songs, and frivolous pursuits there?

It will perhaps, be said, "We shall be different then." In what respect? We have the divine nature—we have Christ for our portion—we belong to Heaven—we are brought to God. "But we have an evil nature in us. Well, are we to cater for that? Is it for that we crave recreation? Must we try to help our wretched flesh, our corrupt nature, to fill up the day? Nay, we are called to deny it, to mortify, to reckon it dead. This is Christian recreation. This is the mode in which the saint is called to fill up his day. How is it possible for us to grow in divine life, if we are only making provision for the flesh? Egypt's food cannot nourish the new nature; and the great question for us is this. Which do we really mean to nourish and cherish—the new or the old? It must be obvious that

the divine nature cannot possibly feed upon newspapers, vain songs, and light literature; and hence, if we give ourselves in any measure to these latter, our souls must wither and droop. May we have grace to think of these things, to think seriously. May we so walk in the Spirit that Christ may be a satisfying portion for our hearts. Had Israel in the wilderness walked with God, they never could have said, "our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." That manna would have been quite enough for them. And so with us. If we really walk with God in this wilderness world, our souls shall be satisfied with the portion that He gives, and that portion is a heavenly Christ. Can He ever fail to satisfy? Does He not fill all heaven with His glory? Is He not the theme of angels' song and the object of their adoring homage and wondering worship? Is He not the one grand subject of everlasting counsels and purposes? Doth not the history of His ways overlap eternity? What answer have we to give to all these queries? What but a hearty, unreserved, unhesitating YES? Well then, is not this blessed One, in the deep mystery of His Person, in the moral glory of His ways, in the brightness and blessedness of His character—is not He enough for our hearts? Do we want aught besides? Must we get the newspaper or some light magazine to fill up the vacuum in our souls? Must we turn from Christ to a flower show or a concert?

Alas that we should have to write thus! It is most sad; but it is most needful, and we here put this question most pointedly to the reader: Dost thou really find Christ insufficient to satisfy thy heart? Hast thou cravings which He does not fully meet? If so, thou art in a very alarming condition of soul, and it behoves thee to look at once, and to look closely, into this solemn

matter. Get down on thy face before God in honest self-judgment. Pour out thy heart to Him. Tell Him all. Own to Him how thou hast fallen and wandered—as surely thou must have done when God's Christ is not enough for thee. Have it all out in secret with thy God, and take no rest until thou art fully and blessedly restored to communion with Himself—to heart fellowship with Him about the Son of His love.

Things New and Old, 1869.

GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR ME.

From highest throne, from loftiest praise the halls of glory filling,
From seraph song that sweeps along, with rolling rapture thrilling;
Thou, Lord, hast come, Thyself hast given, with love that hath no measure,
That I may be a joy to Thee, Thine own, Thy blood-bought treasure.

As yesterday, this love today; and as today, for ever;
In joy or woe it still shall flow—it changeth never, never;
Oh! precious thing, of thee I sing, that hath no break nor bending—
In death or life, in heaven or earth, unfailing and unending.

BRIEF MUSINGS ON LUKE 23, 40-43.

It is very interesting to read the four gospel records and to understand in some measure the reason for four. It is simply this—one record would not have revealed all the precious views of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. God had described in the Old Testament, different offerings which were all necessary to outline God's desire for a complete atonement which would meet man in all his need. So we have four records of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, or I may say of His crucifixion, because they are not all written in the same manner, for which there is a divine reason. But before my mind at the moment are four verses in Luke 23, verses 40-43, "the other answering rebuked him saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, *today* shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The Holy Spirit gives a scene unknown to all around. Above the jeers and the mockings we have a little picture of what the peace offering foreshadowed. In verses 41 & 42, we have the words of the repentant thief which we may link up with the 15th chapter of this same Gospel where the blessed Lord speaks of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, and the prodigal son, with the joy consequent upon their being found told out thus, (verses 7 & 10) "Likewise, I say unto you there is joy *in the presence* of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Here was a case on this occasion when there was joy in the presence of the angels of God, the Father's joy: unknown to those around the cross but known in heaven.

In verse 42, we may note from the words of the repentant thief, that not only were his eyes opened to see and own his guilt, but he had discovered that the one by his side (though nailed to a tree with all the prospects of death before him) was none other than the Son of God. He uses the word which proves his discovery and which, I. Cor. 12. 3, states can only be so used by divine revelation; no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." What a discovery under such circumstances ! "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." What a discovery ! The Lord with a kingdom in the future ! Can anyone describe what a very real joy that was to the blessed Lord there crucified, nailed to that cross of wood with all the attendant sufferings. I may say here that in this record of Luke's, the blessed Lord is not viewed as the Sin Bearer, and thus you do not get that distant cry as given by Matthew and Mark, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" There He is viewed as the sin and trespass offering, but here in Luke there is fellowship unbroken with His Father, see verses 34 & 46. If one read about the peace offering in Leviticus it would be found that God's portion was a sweet savour and there was joy shared also with the priest and offerer: so here, the blessed Lord had the joy of hearing that wonderful confession on the part of the repentant thief. We seem to hear Him saying, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Thus there was joy to the heart of God, and there was joy to the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. One delights in some measure to contemplate this.

We have had that thief's wonderful confession; truly it was the confession of a real living faith, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

unbelief was impossible, but it was future then, and it is future still: it was open to faith.

Now you get that wonderful, surprising answer. The thief looked for some distant future in resurrection, but he was told that "*today thou shalt be with me in paradise.*" Do we wonder at his silence? No; he was lost in wonder and no words could be found to express what that was to him; a joy unspeakable truly was his. May it be ours thus to gather up sweet and precious thoughts as we muse upon the varied records of our blessed Lord's crucifixion and death. No doubt there are real beauties to be gathered from these sources, planned for us by the Holy Spirit.

G.J.H.

SEARCH ME AND TRY ME. (Psa. 139, 23-24).

Of the many favours conferred upon us by our ever gracious Lord, one of the very highest is the privilege of being present in the assembly of His beloved people, where He has recorded His name. We may assert, with all possible confidence, that every true lover of Christ will delight to be found where He has promised to be. Whatever may be the special character of the meeting; whether it be round the Lord's Table, to show forth his death; or round the word, to learn His mind; or round the mercy-seat, to tell Him our need, and draw from His exhaustless treasury, every devoted heart will long to be there; and we may rest assured that anyone who wilfully neglects the assembly is in a cold, dead, dangerous state of soul. To neglect the assembling of ourselves is to take the first step on the inclined plane that leads down to the total abandonment of Christ and His precious interests. (Heb. X. 25-27.)

We assume that the reader is clear as to the ground of the assembly. If the reader will just open his Bible

and read, thoughtfully and carefully, I. Cor. 12, he will find, most clearly established, the great practical truth, that each member of the body exerts an influence on all the rest. Just as in the human body, if there be anything wrong with the very feeblest and most obscure member, all the members feel it, through the head. If there be a broken nail, a broken tooth, a foot out of joint, any limb, muscle, or nerve, out of order, it is a hindrance to the whole body. Thus it is in the Church of God, the body of Christ: "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." The state of each member affects the whole body. Hence it follows that each member is either a help or a hindrance to all. What a profound truth !

And be it remembered that the apostle is not speaking of any mere local assembly, but of the whole body, of which, no doubt, each particular assembly ought to be the local expression. Thus he says, in addressing the assembly at Corinth, "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*" True there were other assemblies; and had the apostle been addressing any of them on the same subject, he would have used the same language; for what was true of each was true of all; and what was true of the whole was true of each local expression. Nothing can be clearer. The whole subject furnishes three most precious and powerful motives for a holy, earnest and devoted life—namely, first, that we may not dishonour the Head, to whom we are united; secondly, that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we are united; and thirdly, that we may not injure the members with whom we are united.

In sitting down to write, there was one special branch of the subject prominently before the mind, and that is the way in which the various meetings are

affected by the condition of soul, the attitude of heart, and the state of the mind, of all who attend. We repeat, and with emphasis, *all who attend*—not merely all who audibly take part, but all who form the meeting.

No doubt a special and very weighty responsibility rests on those who take any part in the ministry, whether it be in giving out a hymn, engaging in prayer or thanksgiving, reading the word, teaching, or exhortation. All who do so should be very sure that they are divinely called and fitted, yea, that they are simply the instruments in the hand of the Lord for whatever they undertake to do. Otherwise, they may do the most serious damage to the meeting. They may quench the Spirit, (I. Thess. 5. 19), hinder the worship, interrupt the communion, mar the integrity of the occasion. ¶

All this is most serious, and calls for holy watchfulness on the part of all who engage in any branch of ministry in the assembly. Even a hymn may prove a positive hindrance, it may interrupt the current and lower the tone of the assembly. Yea, the precious word of God may be read out of place. In short, whatever is not the direct fruit of the Spirit, can only hinder the edification and blessing of the assembly. All who take part in the ministry should have the distinct sense that they are led by the Spirit in what they do. They should be governed by the commanding, absorbing object, the glory of Christ in the assembly and the blessing of the assembly in Him. If it be not thus, they had better be quiet and wait on the Lord. They will render more glory to Christ, and more blessing to the assembly by quiet waiting than by restless action and unprofitable talking.

But, while feeling and owning the gravity of all that has to be said in reference to the holy responsi-

bility of all who minister in the assembly, we are thoroughly persuaded that the tone, character, and general effect of public meetings, are very intimately connected with *the moral and spiritual condition of all*. It is this, we confess, that weighs upon the heart, and leads us to pen this brief address to every assembly under the sun. Every soul in the meeting is either a help or a hindrance—a contributor or a waster. All who attend in a devout, earnest, loving spirit; who come simply to meet the Lord Himself; who flock to the assembly as the place where His precious name is recorded; who delight to be there, because He is there. All such are a real help and blessing to a meeting. May God increase their number! If all assemblies were made up of such blessed elements, what a different tale would have to be told!

And why not? It is not a question of gift or knowledge, but of grace and godliness, true piety and prayerfulness. In a word, it is simply a question of that condition of soul in which every child of God and every servant of Christ ought to be, and without which the most shining gifts and the most extensive knowledge are a hindrance and a snare. Mere gift and intelligence, without an exercised conscience and the fear of God, may be, and have been used of the enemy for the moral ruin of souls. But where there is true humility and that seriousness and reality which the sense of the presence of God ever produces, there you have what will most surely—gift or no gift—impart depth of tone, freshness, and a spirit of worship to an assembly.

There is a vast difference between an assembly of people gathered round some gifted man, and one gathered simply to the Lord Himself, on the ground of the one body. It is one thing to be gathered *by* ministry, and quite another to be gathered *to* it. If people

are merely gathered to ministry, when the ministry goes, they are apt to go, too. But when earnest, true-hearted, devoted souls are gathered simply to the Lord Himself, then, while they are most thankful for true ministry, when they can get it, they are not dependent upon it. They do not value gift less, but they value the Giver more. They are thankful for the streams, but they depend *only* upon the Fountain.

It will invariably be found that those who can best do without ministry, value it most when they get it. In a word, they give it its true place. But those who attach undue importance to gift, who are always complaining of the lack of it, and cannot enjoy a meeting without it, are a hindrance and a source of weakness to the assembly.

And alas ! there are other hindrances and sources of weakness which demand the serious consideration of all. We should, each one of us, as we take our places in the assembly, honestly put the question to our hearts, "Am I a help or a hindrance—a contributor or a waster?" If we come in a cold, hard, careless state of soul—come, in a merely formal manner, unjudged, unexercised, unbroken, in a fault-finding, murmuring, complaining spirit, judging everything and everybody except ourselves—then, most assuredly, we are a serious hindrance to the blessing, the profit, and the happiness of the meeting. We are the broken nail, the broken tooth, or the foot out of joint. How sorrowful, how humiliating, how terrible is all this ! May we watch against it, pray against it, firmly disallow it !

But, on the other hand, those who present themselves in the assembly, in a loving, gracious, Christ-like spirit; who simply delight to meet their brethren, whether round the Table, round the fountain of holy

Scripture, or round the mercy-seat for prayer; who, in their hearts' deep and tender affections, embrace all the members of the beloved body of Christ; whose eyes are not dimmed, or their affections chilled by dark suspicious evil surmisings, or unkindly feelings toward any around them; who have been taught of God to love their brethren, to look at them "from the top of the rocks" and see them "in the vision of the Almighty"; who are ready to profit by whatever the gracious Lord sends them, even though it may not come through some brilliant gift or favourite teacher. All such are a divinely sent blessing to the assembly wherever they are. Again we say, with a full heart, may God add to their number! If all assemblies were composed of such, it would be the very atmosphere of heaven itself. The name of Jesus would be as ointment poured forth; every eye would be fixed on Him, every heart absorbed with Him, and there would be a more powerful testimony to His name and presence in our midst than could be rendered by the most brilliant gift.

May the gracious Lord pour out His blessing upon all His assemblies throughout the whole earth! May He deliver them from every hindrance, every weight, every stumbling-block, every root of bitterness! May He crown, with His richest blessing, the labours of all His beloved servants, at home and abroad, cheering their hearts and strengthening their hands, giving them to be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in His precious work, in the assurance that their labour is not in vain.

C.H.M.

SILVER TRUMPETS.

Dear brethren in Christ Jesus; my one prayer for you all is, that God will richly bless and keep you and yours until He come, with the call to come up hither ye blessed of My Father, to your inheritance in Christ Jesus. May we, whilst awaiting the call, blow the silver trumpets of the Lord, "all of one piece" (or one mind), Num. 10, 2 etc. Trumpets laid aside will never make a sound, and the result of that will be the enemy in possession and the eyes put out (Judges 16, 21.) It does not matter how much strength we had before: we may have been able to remove a great mountain, or take away the gates of a city—doors, posts, locks, bolts and bars—but lay aside the Trumpet or the word of God, ceasing to blow in the name of the Lord, and the enemy will come in like a flood. We shall not only lose our little strength as Philadelphians (Rev, 3. 8.) but we shall have no strength at all, our spiritual eyes will be put out and our testimony ended, so that no amount of *talk* will bring it back. Why? Because we have ceased to *walk*. Beloved are we blowing God's silver trumpet? We cannot all play a beautiful tune, but we can all blow, for only one note is needed to gather God's people together. At the approach of the enemy the alarm was to be sounded and God would hear and deliver.

Brethren, are the alarm notes needed to-day? Are we so perfect as individuals and as assemblies that we have no need to be alarmed? If so all is well, but if not, blow the alarm, have faith in God, and all will be well. The silver voice of the world is ever saying, lay aside God's Word, cease to blow in times of peace or peril, but as with Israel the end of that will be, not to ascend but to descend; not to be added to daily, but daily falling away; not to be gathered together, but to

be dispersed. Beloved do not mistake me: I do not mean that a child of God can lose the gift of eternal life, but we can lose our testimony, we can be dispersed, we can become talked *about* instead of spoken *against*. Israel is not a *lost* nation; only *dispersed*, to be gathered together again in the future according to the word of prophecy. But what is their portion to-day? Their testimony dead, they are in dispersion; spiritually speaking their eyes are put out and their strength gone. Samson went at death to meet His God, with no eyes to see His face. How is it with us? Shall we, when the silver cord is broken, go to meet our Lord, knowing that our eyes of testimony have been put out by the enemy and we have allowed it to be so? If it is not to be so let us blow the alarm, rise up, let God take over and not only will the walls of Jericho fall down flat, but the enemies which surround us will all fade away. But we must blow the alarm and have faith in God and His Christ, the One who blew at all times and in all places, never ceasing or laying God's trumpet aside, until He was laid to rest for a little while in the tomb. His enemies said of Him, never man spake like this Man. No! they had never heard the trumpets blown like that before and never have they been blown like that since, for mortal man cannot say as He did, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness (John 8. 12); and of Him in the heavenly Jerusalem it is written, the Lamb is the lamp thereof (Rev. 21. 23). No, beloved, man cannot say that, or be that, but we can blow His trumpets in faith, so that our candlestick of testimony may not be removed out of its place.

Grace is now sounding forth its message of keeping and guidance, provision and protection to all in Christ Jesus, who laid aside the trumpet for His Messenger, the Holy Spirit, to take it up and make it speak in no

uncertain voice of the glories and wonders of the One who laid it down. The Lord said, "He shall take"—He took; the Lord said, "He shall speak"—He is speaking; the Lord said "He shall show"—He is showing; the Lord said, only the things that are mine shall He speak, take and show—what a Trumpeter! What a Blower, and what a note is blown! Nothing but Christ as onwards the Holy Spirit moves. Of nothing else will He speak and if we seek for aught else we get only silence. Beloved let not our brass trumpet ever silence the Holy Spirit's silver one, or we shall be the losers. The Church of God is yet on earth and Christ in its midst, for faith can and must claim the right to His promise, that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst. Whether our light be dim or bright, let us blow with the trumpet, and let the light shine for its source is divine. In Revelation chap. 2 the Lord walks among the candlesticks to see if they are alight and alive and sees one bright one and six dim, and whether we like it or not, we are one of those dim ones. Nevertheless in each and all the Lord could find a light for Himself. We have the open door, and a little strength, praise the Lord; we stand on His silver, and are covered with His yellow gold*, so beloved brethren, let us hold fast that which we have, let no man take our crown, and may the grace of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ be ever yours, and may the grace of His Holy Spirit lead each and all.

G.G.

* The boards of the tabernacle stood on silver sockets and were covered with gold, signifying redemption and divine righteousness as the foundation and covering of the sinner. Ex. 26.

Editor.

A SONG IN THE NIGHT.
(Translated from the German.)

Look on high !
Darkness flees and morn draws nigh
Tears of anguish shed at midnight,
Shine like pearls in morning sunlight;
Thus our sorrows end thro' grace
In the light of Jesus' face—
Look on high !
Morn draws nigh.

Oh how near
Beams Thy coming, Saviour dear,
When the trumpet-tone resounding,
Every heart with rapture bounding,
Knows the home call come at last;
Conflict, toil, and suffering past—
Yes, 'tis near,
Saviour dear.

Jesus, Lord,
Let the promise of Thy word
Stir our souls with deeper yearning
Fan the flame and keep it burning,
Till we fall Thy face before,
Satisfied for evermore—
Jesus Lord !
Sure Thy word !

PLEASING GOD.

On a recent occasion when reading in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer was forcibly struck with the expression "he pleased God." These three words, penned by the Apostle Paul under the guidance of the Spirit of God, had reference to Enoch—the seventh from Adam. (Jude 14). This patriarch lived three hundred and sixty-five years, according to Genesis 5 : 23—a length of life quite unknown in the present dispensation, though by no means the longest among the patriarchs.

Of Enoch comparatively little is recorded in Holy writ—yet this little is pregnant with instruction for the child of God. Enoch was not only a patriarch but also a prophet, as the above passage in Jude records. Further it is twice stated in Genesis 5 that he "walked with God," and this for three hundred years. Surely a statement which might well exercise the heart and mind of the reader and writer alike, in this the twentieth century. Of Noah also it is recorded "he walked with God." (chapter 6). In the garden of Eden however, man's first parents, instead of walking with God, hid themselves on hearing the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Think of this ! Adam and Eve hid themselves, whereas Enoch and Noah walked, may it not be said, in the full blaze of the Divine presence. Wherein lay the difference? Adam was afraid because he was naked and knew he had sinned against a holy God ; whereas both Enoch and Noah had no sense of fear in walking with God. In the case of Adam a sacrifice had not then been provided by God, but with Enoch and Noah faith had wrought in their hearts and they knew of a substitutionary sacrifice to be provided—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13 : 8).

Of Enoch there are three important statements recorded, namely, (1) he walked with God (2) he pleased God and (3) God translated him. These three statements are well worthy of serious consideration by both writer and reader. To walk with, implies having fellowship with God, and as a consequence a desire to be found pleasing Him. Does it not also convey the thought of submitting one's own thoughts to the thoughts of God? See what is recorded of the Lord Jesus Christ in His pathway through this world, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me," (John 5. 30), and again "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." (6 : 38). Let no one forget also that scene in the garden of Gethsemane when he prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26 : 39). Surely none would question that these utterances speak of a soul in harmony with the will and mind of God. True, He was God manifest in flesh and therefore "without sin"—but He has left an example to follow His steps. Many, no doubt, would readily subscribe to the words of a well known hymn, "Where He leads me I will follow"; but, beloved reader, it is one thing to sing such a line and quite another to be found pleasing God in every detail of life, as did One who said, "I do *always* those things that please Him." (John 8. 29). Well is it to remember that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts etc," and "these are the things which defile a man" (read the whole passage Matthew 15 : 18-20), while Peter exhorts the being holy in *all* manner of conversation. (Chap. 1; 15). O for hearts sensitive to the holiness of God ! Would there not be less failure among the people of God were this given attention to ?

Finally Enoch was not found because God had translated him. Of this translation no details are furnished. It is sufficient to know that God has said so. Be it noted, however, the word of God, while stating that it is appointed unto men once to die, is careful not to say *all* men. Thus provision is made to cover the case of Enoch and likewise those who are alive at the coming of the Lord, of whom Enoch was an O.T. type. Noah, on the other hand, is a type of the godly remnant of Israel, together with believing Gentiles, who will pass through the awful judgments depicted in the book of Revelation.

In closing, a quotation from the pen of a beloved servant of the Lord, now in glory, may not be amiss. He wrote "Enoch walked well, Noah acted aright—Enoch had testimony that he pleased God before he was translated. A word surely this is of admonition for Christians to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. (Colossians I. 10), and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called." (Ephesians 4. 1.) For

We go to meet the Saviour,
His glorious face to see;
What manner of behaviour
Does with this hope agree?
May God's illumination
Guide heart and walk aright;
That so our preparation
Be pleasing in His sight.

W.W.F.

"WRITTEN IN HEAVEN." Luke 10. 20.

What a very beautiful lesson is conveyed to us in these simple words of the Lord Jesus, and how blessedly they fall upon the ear of those who, in this day of work,

of activity, of restless energy, have been led to see that there is something that should be known and enjoyed even though work for Christ—blessed as it may be—is left for other hands to carry out. This is a day when the actual state of a man's soul before God, when his full entrance or otherwise into God's purpose in Christ, when his knowledge of "the certainty of those things in which he has been instructed" is not by any means so much looked after as the fact as to whether he is *doing anything*. Is he actively engaged in some "religious movement?" Has he attached himself to some cause?" Has he taken up any "Christian work?" If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, it is enough. His own soul may be starving; he may himself never have experienced what it is to know his full place in Christ; or, worse than all, he may really never have been himself brought into the presence of God, to learn what he is, to learn his own utter need of salvation.

How sad all this is, and how detrimental to the true testimony for Christ down here in the world! Now, if we, in God's grace, have been brought into a purer and better atmosphere than that which surrounds them—like as into a true Goshen in the midst of Egypt's darkness—yet surely it is blessed to be reminded of what the Lord said under circumstances so nearly identical with those which are around us at the present moment.

We see the seventy disciples coming back to the Lord in all the flush of the success which had attended their mission—that is to say, the success of the outward manifestations of power, for we hear little about the truth they were sent out to preach; their whole thought seemed to be absorbed (like the Corinthians a little further on) with the striking character of the gifts

which were entrusted to them, forgetful that those gifts were only accessories or accompaniments of that "Word of Life" which they were to hold forth.

How does our Lord deal with the exultations of His disciples, occupied as they were with what they had themselves done? "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." The very highest form of gift, that gift which up to that time had been exercised only by the blessed Lord Himself, even that gift was put into the shade completely in the presence of that deep mysterious fact that their names were "written in heaven."

Let us try for a moment to enter fully into the blessedness of what this means. Another Scripture will illustrate it. "For our citizenship is in heaven." (Phil. 3. 20). That is though we are found down here mixed up with the world, and working in it, having to take our share of its troubles, its difficulties, its temptations, yet our blessed place as Christians is away there as citizens of a country where none of these things ever enter, where there is nothing but peace and sunshine.

Do not we get a faint picture of this in what we see in some continental countries where the names of all the citizens are enrolled? whose citizens may wander far away, among people of different blood, different habits, but their names are still kept enrolled in the records of their own native land, and they wait to be called back at any time, should their presence be required.

Just in like manner are our names—the names of all whose portion is in the Lord Jesus Christ—enrolled in those records in heaven, "in the book of life" (Phil. 4, 3); kept continually before the eyes of the blessed God, though we ourselves may be wandering far away,

as true "strangers and pilgrims" here on earth where, like Noah's dove, we can find no rest for the sole of our foot. How wonderful is the thought that my name, perhaps an obscure one on earth, perhaps unknown outside the narrow circle of my daily life, should be written by the finger of God in His book, kept up there in heaven for a perpetual remembrance before Him! How overflowing should be our love to the One through whom it has all come about, and infinitely higher should be our rejoicing that our names are enrolled up there than at the result of any efforts of our own here on earth, however successful, however striking!

What a comfort, too, to those whose work for the Lord Jesus Christ is apparently not successful, is not appreciated by those around them, that notwithstanding their feebleness, their inability to cope with the rough details of this wilderness scene, there is the assurance that their names are "written in heaven," kept in that book of life, in which, blessed be God, there is not a single erasure!

How do our hearts answer to all this? How far do we keep before us the blessedness of being little and unknown here, but well known and recognised up there? How far do we enter into and realise the fact that the Father and the Son, in that wondrous communion existing between them, delight to read together over the pages of that book in which our names—my name, your name—are written!

W.R.

"TILL I COME."

Our true hope as Christians is not death but the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, to take us up to His own blessed presence, according to His promise.

John 14. 3, I: Thess, 4. 13-17. It is called in Titus 2. 13 "that blessed hope," and surely it is just that.

The believer, from the moment of his conversion, is as fit for heaven as if already there, because of the infinite value of that work accomplished by the Lord Jesus on Calvary's Cross. But the Lord has left us here for a while and has made known to us what He would have us do in the interval between our conversion and His coming for us.

There are four things He asks us to do "till He comes."

(I) "OCCUPY TILL I COME." Luke 19. 11-27.

The Lord is the nobleman who has gone to heaven to receive His kingdom, and we are servants left here to "occupy" or "trade while He is coming." Each servant has a pound entrusted to him, that is, each of us is entrusted with some special gift from the Lord to use for Him in His absence, while waiting for His return. One who is faithful gains ten pounds, and another five, and each is commended and rewarded accordingly. May we each one be exercised before the Lord as to what particular gift He has given us, so as to trade with it for Him. Speaking of the gifts in I. Cor. 12. 11, the apostle says, "But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to *every man* severally as He will," and in the same chapter we are told to "covet earnestly the best gifts." v. 31. Each one of us has some gift, and the Lord looks to us to be exercised as to what it is, and use it for Him. Then according to our faithfulness, He will give us a place with Himself in the administration of His Kingdom during the Millennium. How important to remember, in connection with this aspect of things, that our whole Christian life here is but a training ground for further service then.

We are told of one who did not use his pound, but kept it laid up in a napkin. This word napkin means "a sweat cloth." It was that which he should have used to wipe the sweat from his brow, had he "traded" during his lord's absence. Of course, He represents the mere "professor" of Christ, not the real believer. And yet he is placed there as a warning to us, to use our gifts and not let them stagnate, and thus "suffer loss" in that day when all will be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ. I. Cor. 3. 15.

(2) YE DO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME." I. Cor. 11. 23-34.

Here is another precious privilege which is ours during our Lord's absence. In the Lord's supper, the breaking of bread, we remember Him in His love. How can any soul redeemed by Him be indifferent to His request, made before His death and repeated from glory through the Apostle Paul—"this do in remembrance of me?"

In this act we also shew or (announce) His death. We announce to Him our thoughts of it, and the more we are in communion with Him, the more will our estimate correspond with His.

We also announce the Lord's death to the world. The breaking of bread is the best Gospel sermon ever preached. Cases have been known of souls being converted to God through witnessing the Lord's people partaking of the Supper in His appointed way. Everything in it speaks of Christ and His death.

It is "till He come." Each Lord's Day it is our privilege, as we look back to Calvary to look on to that blest moment when He will come and take us up to His own Blessed Presence, and then He will receive unhindered praise from all of His redeemed people.

(3) TILL I COME, GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING, to exhortation, to doctrine." I. Tim. 4. 13-16.

These words are written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy, his son in the faith. But we may well think of them as being the Lord's own words to us. We need, while awaiting His return, to study His Word. Let us read it daily. There is what is called devotional reading—letting God speak to us through His Word as we seek to get His message for us each day. This is most necessary. But we also need to *study* the Word, and in this connection we do well to make use of the helps available in the splendid written ministry which is our spiritual inheritance. We can greatly profit from the writings of those men of God like J. N. Darly, C. H. Mackintosh, C. E. Stuart, F. W. Grant, W. Kelly and others; and from the helpful articles in the current monthly magazines. May we hear the Lord saying to us, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine... Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them : that thy profiting may appear to all."

(4) "HOLD FAST TILL I COME." Rev. 2. 25. And with this verse we may well link another, "Behold I come quickly: *hold that fast which thou hast*, that no man take thy crown. Rev. 3. 11.

This is a day of giving up and toning down the truth. We need to hold it fast. If the exhortation were not necessary the Lord would not have given it to us. There is a crown promised to the overcoming Philadelphian who keeps the Lord's Word and denies not His Name.

As another has said: "Hold fast what? The *Word* and the *Name* and the patience of Christ...HOLD FAST! when it is no longer a question if it be the truth, but

only its consequences. Hold fast: though those who have held it with you, or before you, give it up; though it separate you from all else whomsoever; though it seem utterly useless to hope for any good from it: in the face of the world; in the face of the devil, in the face of the saints—"hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (F.W.G.)

And what, beloved saints of God, will we do with our crowns? What, but cast them down at His blessed feet, (cp. Rev. 4. 4 with 4. 10) and ascribe all praise to Him!

We'll lay our trophies at Thy feet,
We'll worship and adore Thee,
Whose precious blood has made us meet
To dwell with Thee in glory.

Our blessed Lord says, "Surely, I come quickly." May our response be "Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

W.J.M.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." Nothing could be plainer, yet it seems at the present time that no statement of fundamental importance is being more called in question. The presence of sin in the world is too obvious to be denied, but man in his wisdom is continually trying to explain its origin, and usually concludes by predicting that he will finally dispose of it as an active factor in this world, and also visualises a time when man's heart even, will not be subject to it.

Most of the instructors of the day seem to agree that man is not to be blamed for the present state of things: some other agency or person must be found on

whom the responsibility may be placed. Was Satan responsible? Certainly he had a hand in it, but for the admission of sin to this world, God does not hold him alone responsible. In Genesis we read how God set the world in order and placed man in charge at the head of it. Whoever was in that position previously we do not know, but we may say most decidedly that, at the time treated of by the early chapters of Genesis, Adam was the responsible head, so that in a matter so momentous as the entry of sin into the world, no one else is mentioned in God's terse summing up. "By man sin entered into the world."

Some in their folly and hardihood dare to assume that, if man, so placed and tempted in the garden, fell under the power of evil, he could not have been a perfect being at the start, so virtually casting the blame upon the Creator. What absolute folly! Let such people contemplate for a moment what may be understood from the animal creation. How beautiful in its frailty is a gazelle! Perfect and admirably suited, as are all the works of God, for the place and life for which it was designed; but what chance would such have if brought face to face with a lion, even an imperfect specimen? None whatever. The fact is, man does not like to realise his weakness. "God made man upright" we read. He was perfect in the beginning and admirably suited for his sphere as head of the world and yet responsible to God. His responsibility he chose to forget and in so doing he paved the way for Satan's attack to succeed. What God had put under the authority of Adam, he was able to cope with, but here was a foe, the "prince of the power of the air" as a later writer calls him, who was not of Adam's realm and who consequently was beyond his management. God could, if appealed to at the right time, have dealt with him as easily and

effectively as He did after the temptation had succeeded, but man in his folly tried and failed and thus it stands recorded, "by man sin entered into the world."

Having first received the testimony of God on this vital point, how perfect do we find subsequent declarations. Paul tells us in Romans 8. 29, "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." What volumes this speaks ! Not man predestinated to be a sinner as many seem to understand, but God in his infinite wisdom, knowing beforehand the limitations of His creatures; and the result of contact with the Seducer, pledging Himself to defeat the Enemy's object, and raise man to such a level as had not been declared before, or as could be conceived by the natural mind. For it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," I Cor. 2. 9. What then is this wonderful blessing? Let the apostle speak; "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son...moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things?" Rom. 8. 29-31. Here is something that of himself man cannot attain to, and indeed, of which he has no thought, his mind not being capable of such exalted flights: yet to the humble and such as tremble at His word it is God's promise. Let man claim what He will about His origin and prospects, we who believe God have the incomparably better part, "glory with Christ above."

A.T.

THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE MADE PLAIN.

The people of God in every age have been tried and worried by the enemy. All that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. The more faithfully, any one maintains the testimony of God for the time, the more he will be opposed, but inasmuch as it is God's it can only be defended by His power. No one could deny but that the blessed God would defend His own, yet oftentimes His people are as powerless in their attempts to do so as if God had forsaken them. As Gideon said in his day, "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us why then is all this befallen us?" &c, (Judges vi. 13.) There is a readiness in the truly zealous to assert that God hath withdrawn His support when the enemy has done wickedly in the sanctuary, and is succeeding on every side; and as this is accepted, there is necessarily a hanging down of the hands and the cry, "O Lord, what wilt thou do unto thy great Name? There is an implied doubt as to God's power to preserve the testimony, and indirectly the impression is that the power is no longer available, and there is therefore often a contentedness to go on in this state of reproach, like Israel in the days of Haggai, when they said, "The time has not come to build the house of the Lord." They were contented to let the house of the Lord lie waste. Joshua and Gideon ascribe the cause of their weakness to the absence of God's help; as if He had ceased to be on the behalf of His people. They do not attach blame to themselves. They expositulate with the Lord as if He had left them uncared for; and they have to be told that the cause is entirely with themselves; in a word, that God's power is available if they are in a state to receive it. Light is sown for the righteous. There are two fundamental

principles which we must always maintain: namely, first that the power of God is always at hand, but secondly, that it is only available to those who are in a state to receive it. How could God lend His power to support the wrong? but on the other hand, " His eyes are upon the righteous and his ear is open to their cry." "I have never seen the righteous forsaken;" "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness."

There, alas, is evidence enough everywhere of the absence of power on behalf of the people of the Lord in this day. The Joshuas and the Gideons who do not see the church supplicate and mourn before God as if the Holy Ghost had departed like the cloud from the house of God. Prayer meetings and humiliation meetings are proposed as if God required to be entreated to support the name of Christ on the earth. The real cause of the suspension or abeyance of the Holy Ghost is that He cannot countenance those who are defiled, and hence it is not prayer,—calling upon God to help us, but self-measurement, "great searchings of heart," which are required. The moment, whether individually or in the assembly, that there is a mistake or any departure from God's order, then we should at once conclude that it is not at all on God's part the lack is, but that there is something on our side which hinders the Holy Ghost from supporting us.

It is the same as in the individual. If I grieve the Spirit He will not help me until I have renounced and repented of the defilement which I have contracted. Christendom has imbibed the idea that the Holy Ghost is not here because there is no evidence of His presence and power. If we are not decidedly assured of the presence of the Holy Ghost, we have lost faith in the

plainest scripture. The Holy Ghost was sent here consequent on the departure of Christ. "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." We must start then with the undeniable fact that the Holy Ghost is here, sent from the Father in Christ's name, to comfort and support the saints here, and also sent by Christ, as He said, "To testify of me." The Holy Ghost being here for these two services, it is clear that if either of them is in any degree not fulfilled or in abeyance, we cannot ascribe the cause of the restriction, or lack, to the Holy Ghost. He cannot deny Himself. The cause then must be on our side, if we do not know His power and comfort in both services. The sun shines, and if I cannot avail myself of it the cause is in my eye and not in the sun. The believer who does not enjoy the Holy Ghost sent of the Father in Christ's name, evidently must be at fault, and he suffers unspeakable loss; and surely, when by his unbelief or unrighteousness he has been refused the cheer of the Holy Spirit in this blessed way, he must also be unfit to be helped by Him in His other service, namely, "To testify of me."

The question, then, which should arise whenever there is any withdrawal of His power and comfort is, How have I (or we) grieved or hindered the Spirit of God? The fault is not on His side, but mine. I believe every mistake we make is to be attributed to our being out of communion. We have grieved the Spirit of God, and He will not help us, and often we are not conscious of His being in abeyance (for He does not *leave* us) until, like Samson, we have no power to act on generally the very next occasion. "Samson wist not that the Lord had departed from him." He had been unrighteous, how could the Lord help him? The more

distinctly we are in the path of faith, the more promptly and manifestly will He refuse to aid us when we err from it, in order to expose to us our declension and induce us to search out the cause of His reserve. Whether it be an individual believer or an assembly, assuredly it will be found that the more faithful they were, the more openly and painfully were they exposed when they lacked integrity of heart. We see a Lot saved as by fire, but we see his daughters who had married in Sodom, and his wife who looked back consumed. God is not a respecter of persons. He judgeth according to every man's work, and the way of the righteous is made plain. (Psalm cvi. 30. 31.) If one were walking in communion the snare would be at once detected; "vain is the net set in the sight of anything on wing;" but if not detected before we are taken in it, the Lord leaves us to find out our own helplessness without Him, and in the interval, before we discover the root, Peter-like, however the heart is drawn out or restored to the Lord as his was, we are out of communion—we are not in the current of His will. This is the most marked evidence of the Spirit's abeyance. Like Peter, there may be a curious mixture—real confidence in Christ's love and immense energy, in work not according to His mind.

We do not sufficiently regard the "rewarding openly." If I in secret grieve the Spirit by promoting, say, worldliness in my family, while seeking to get the credit of the opposite, surely the Lord will reward me openly. He will answer me according to the idol in my heart. (Ezek. xiv. 4.) The more we accept unqualified dependence on the Lord, the more are we openly exposed if we depart from it. For instance, if a man undertake to serve the Lord, counting upon Him for

support, if there be simple faith he may have trying moments, yet he will have a blessed time. But if he wavers and looks to man, the Spirit will not help him and he will be exposed. If a man desires to be acknowledged as one prominent in service, secretly indulging in any worldliness which if known would disparage him as a servant, his way surely will not be made plain, and there will be a lack of confidence, though possibly no one can say why. The Lord does not support him. Not only will one's sin find one out, but the darkness of soul, the intemperance of manner, the rashness, the lack of power in prayer and every ministry, is traceable to a grieving of the Spirit and a departure from communion which has never been judged. I know nothing that I am more assured of or that keeps me in more fear than the simple fact that if by any kind of levity I check the Spirit, generally in the very next act I shall betray myself—I am reaping what I had sown. It is to be noted that it is in the quality for which you have been most esteemed that you will fail most when out of communion. Moses speaks unadvisedly with his lips. David numbers the people. If I have a distinct gift of grace, in that very gift I shall fail most if I grieve the Spirit. If a man has any special or remarkable gift, in and by that will he be most exposed. Thus the man of faith may use his faith entirely and altogether for the world, and the man gifted to teach, as has occurred, alas, hundreds of times, may use his gift to the hindrance of the truth. And often we find a reputedly honest man baffled, and his way not plain, because God sees the latent defect; that with a great deal of open honesty there is not candour of heart. Perhaps there is nothing so hard as not to appear anything but what you are. If you do so to your advantage, you will be some day

found out, but if to your disadvantage, there is no doubt that He who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins will one day vindicate you.

I have dwelt long and largely on the individual exercises and discipline, because I see there is no use proposing to an assembly to examine itself. The individual must do so. Joshua has to cast lots until at length man by man is taken. No believer is really better naturally than his brother, but the one who lives in continual self-judgment, and is afraid of the plague of his own heart will be kept in righteousness, and he will see his way, when others are tossed to and fro, and are as perverse if not as staggering as a drunken man. The man who sees his way walks out boldly and firmly on it. And the path of the just, or righteous, shineth more and more unto the perfect day. God stands by him also. "I have never seen the righteous forsaken." "The Lord stood by me," said the Apostle at the close when all forsook him; "the righteous are as bold as a lion." The prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and Satan is frustrated before the breastplate of righteousness. "So that a man shall say verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth."

J.B.S.

SOME DAILY REMINDERS FOR THE BELIEVER.

1. Keep before you the great Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me," (Gal. 2. 20.)

2. Reckon yourself (as being in God's mind about it), Rom. 8. 3,—to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God ... Rom. 6. 11. Gal, 2, 20.

3. Live in the conscious enjoyment of the inliving Christ. Gal. 2, 20. Col. I. 27; 3, 3. Eph. 3, 17. John 14, 28 etc.

4. Set your affections on things above, for where your treasure is there is your heart also. Col. 3, 1-3. Matt. 6, 21.

5. Present your body (wholeself) a living sacrifice Rom. 12, 1-2. (Daily consecration).

6. Make frequent retreats into the secret of His presence. Matt. 6, 6. Eph. 6, 18. Heb. 4, 14-16, etc.

7. Search the Scriptures daily. Acts. 7, 11. I. Tim. 4, 11-16, 2. Tim. 3, 16.

8. Examine yourself. I. Cor. II, 28-32. 2. Cor. 13, 5. Psalm 139. Let me quickly discover and crucify (put to death, see note 2) everything which would give the least disturbance to the enjoyment of thy love. Rom. 8, 13. Col. 3, 5.

9. Keep short accounts with God, as His child. Rom. 8, 16, etc. When sin and failure come in, go to Him instantly and confess, see I. John 1, 9; 2, 1.

10. Keep to the simplicity that is in Christ. 2. Cor. II, 3, etc.

11. Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is within you ... and thus confess Jesus before men. He is wise that winneth souls. I. Peter 3, 15; 4, 16. Prov. II, 20, rv. Rom. I. 16.

12. Keep ever before you the coming of the Lord. John 14, 1-4. I. Thess. 4, 13-18. I. Cor. 15, 51-57. Titus 2, 12-13. Phil. 3, 20-21. Eph. 5. Rev. 22, etc.

A.R.C.

INTROSPECTION.

As soon as Jacob set his face to go to Bethel, and to follow out the call of God, he said to his family, "Put away the strange gods that are among you; and be ye clean, and change your garments." What can be allowed when at a distance from God, cannot be suffered when we are nearer to Him; and the allowance of unholiness always indicates that the soul is at a distance from Him. O may the heart ponder it ! and may we fear to yield to the discontent of our nature; seeing that when we gratify it, or attempt to do so, we have lost our true calling; and that then, in order to preserve an easy conscience, we reduce the revelation of God to that measure which will not interfere with or rebuke us in our carnal position. This is a more serious and a more constant evil than perhaps any of us are aware of.

ONE MORE HONOURABLE THAN HIS BRETHREN.

There is no principle of scripture that is more true than any and every other. But some are more striking and more clearly and copiously illustrated than the rest, and of these none more so than this—"Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed"—that principle which the man of God enunciated to the aged Eli. The word of God exhibits, from one end to the other, the working out of this principle in its two-fold applications.

The Old Testament teems with illustrations of the tenacity with which God always adheres to His word, "Them that honour Me I will honour." Enoch and Elijah translated from the earth; Joseph, David and

Daniel exalted on the earth; "Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name," are but a few of those witnesses for Jehovah, in singularly different ways and spheres, in whom this principle found its Divine expression.

In the New Testament we recognise with joy of heart that it reached its culminating example and display in Him who could say, "I honour My Father," and, "it is My Father that honoureth Me." (John viii.) And again in chapter xvii,—"I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Nor shall we fail to welcome it as it appeared in the case of Stephen, whose face shone as that of an angel; for whom also, as well as for the beloved Apostle John, the heavens opened; while in Paul's case, he was himself caught up into the third heaven!

Each of these New Testament instances being of a heavenly stamp and order, points unmistakably no less to the character than to the source of that honour which God is now conferring, or is about to confer, on them that honour Him in this day. "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." The martyr arraigned before the Jewish Sanhedrim; the disciple whom Jesus loved in the grip of the Roman lion; and Paul in collapse, possibly, under the stoning of the infuriated Jews of Antioch and Iconium, were respectively suffering for the honour they would give to God only, as witnesses for the rejected One from the earth in whose name they

had given testimony. In each case they found the Divine answer in the signal honour of a heavenly character (more correctly heaven itself opened), which God made good to them in unction and in power. The honour may for the present be devoid of everything demonstrative, but is undeniable as to fact, and in character answering to our calling—it is essentially heavenly.

Nor ought we to lose sight of this, that God Himself has a real and positive appreciation of the honour paid Him by His saints. "He taketh pleasure in His people," and therefore cannot fail to value every bit of honour rendered to His name. If we go back to Israel's history, we get here and there little episodes which serve to illustrate our principle. Let one suffice. Jabez, the child of sorrow; his name was the standing memento of the bitterness in which his mother bare him. (I. Chron. iv.) But he "was more honourable than his brethren." Not that he was honoured by them, or by his nation, but the Spirit of God registered him as one of *God's honourables*. And wherefore? Because his heart was toward God. He honoured the God of Israel, and called upon His name. He has no record but the sorrow of his conception, and his prayer to Jehovah. His parentage, his genealogy, his locality, are all denied us. He sprang out of Judah, and was closely connected with Bethlehem—a passing shadow thus of One that was to come! No more do we know, but the breathings of his heart Godward. He cries with deep earnestness, and with touching pathos, to the God of Israel, "Oh, that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!" His resource is in God,

nor has he any other. It is Him whom he counts upon for blessing indeed, and to enlarge his coast, and to give him His presence, and to keep him from the evil. He has learned, at least, that every good, and every perfect gift, is from above. This alone he values, the gift which cometh from God; and this alone he dreads, the evil which God hateth. His heart was right with God. He was in fellowship with the heart of God; he honoured the God of Israel, and God honoured him, and he being dead yet speaketh. "And God granted him that which he requested," for he met the heart of God and refreshed His spirit in a dry and thirsty land more than the hosts of Israel; and the Spirit of the Lord has given an eternal testimony of his words, the child of his mother's sorrow is ennobled by the God of Israel, and his honour shall never decay !

Now, if this be God's answer to one of His ancients of Judah, may we not gather from it how true He must ever be to His own immediate word—"Them that honour Me I will honour"? Every breathing of our hearts by the Spirit of God is precious in His ear; every cup of cold water given in His name; every service rendered to His saints; every sigh over that which grieves Him; every thrill of joy for what brings glory to Him; every step trodden, or word spoken, in furtherance of interests dear to His heart, is written with an eternal pen, and treasured in the archives of heaven, nor will he fail to requite even those who *think* upon His name. (Mal. iii. 16.) Children of sorrow we may indeed be, of whom the world has no record, and knows neither whence we come nor whither we are bound, but if our hearts be in the secret of the Lord, we are not only of the royal line, like Jabez, but, like Jabez, also of the *line of faith*; our requests are answered, our

record is on high for eternity, heavenly resources are ours in their richest plentitude, and an opened heaven will soon receive us into its bosom, and then shall be fully displayed what only faith accepts now, the immutability of that word, "Them that honour Me I will honour."

W.R.

LEAN HARD.

Child of my love, lean hard,
And let me feel the pressure of thy care.
I know thy burden, child ; I shaped it,
Poised it in My own hand; made no proportion
In its weight to *thy* unaided strength;
For, soon as I laid it on, I said,
'I shall be ever near, and while she leans on Me,
This burden shall be *Mine*, not hers.
So shall I keep my child within the circling arms
Of Mine own love.' Here lay down, nor fear
To impose it on a shoulder which upholds
The government of worlds. Yet closer come;
Thou art not near enough. I would embrace thy care,
So I might feel my child reposing on My breast.
Thou lovest Me ! I know it. Doubt not then;
But, loving Me, *lean hard* !

THE LORD JESUS IN THE MIDST.

The first mention of this is found in the Gospel of Luke chap. 2, 46, His parents taken Him for the first time to keep the passover and when they had fulfilled the days, they turned towards home, but the child Jesus tarried behind so that He was lost to their view. The result was that they returned to Jerusalem seeking Him and found Him in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions. One able writer, writing of the moral glory of the blessed Lord, refers to this and says though He was the Son of God and there was no lack of knowledge in Him, yet here He takes the child's position with no assumption on His part, listening to them and asking them questions and truly they were astonished at His understanding and answers.

For the next scene where we see Him in the midst, we are indebted to John 19, 18. What a different picture ! Here we see Him in the midst of thieves. He who went about doing good for God was with Him. We see a fulfilment of Isa. 53, 12,—He was numbered with the transgressors—a very solemn picture, but it was the popular will of the people. Pilate could wash his hands confessing that he was innocent of the blood of this just person (Matt. 27, 24.), but in verse 20 we see that the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude. What a scene ! Those who should have been the guides of the people to lead them to obey the word of God, were those who led them to accomplish the greatest sin that ever was committed. What a picture ! The writer has often contrasted with this the scene in John 7 when the officers were sent to take Him, but returned with these words on their lips, "never man spake like this Man," yet here He answers never a word. Never was there one so silent as He was.

The next records are in Luke 24, 36 and John 20, 19, 26. Here He is seen in the midst of His beloved disciples giving utterance to the words, "peace be unto you." In these remarkable circumstances He would comfort their hearts as only He could, for we read that then were the disciples *glad* when they saw the Lord, but what a loss it would be to *us* if we had no other testimony as to Him being in the midst. Readers will see that all the events so far referred to have passed into history and it is our pleasure to read of them, but I now would turn attention to a scripture that has been a comfort to the Lord's people all down the ages to this day. I refer to Matt, 18, 20: "for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." What a real comfort this is to His people. Many have added to this, "and that to bless," but on this point scripture is silent.

Another scripture, Psa. 22, might engage our attention (you can read it in conjunction with Heb. 2.) Any-one who has read their Bible will know that Psa. 22 is a prophetic outline of what is recorded in Matt. 27 and the parallel chapters in the Gospels, but here in Psa. 22, 19, Christ is speaking to Jehovah and saying, "be not far from me": what words to fall from the lips of the blessed Son of God. Then in verse 21 He says, "Thou hast heard me," and in Psa. 16, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." So in reading Acts 13, 37, we get, "He whom God raised again saw no corruption," but in the psalm and there only, have we a foreshadowing of the Lord's delightful occupation—"I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, *in the midst* of the congregation will I sing praise unto Thee," and adding, "ye that fear the Lord praise Him and glorify." Him." It is almost passing strange, that here, and here

only, are we told of His occupation. What a cheer in these days of weakness to know that the promise of Matt. 18, 20, can be enjoyed. To make this more clear I will quote the words of the hymn (Little Flock, 35, append.)

Now He praises, in th' assembly,
Now the sorrow all is passed;
His, the earnest of our portion,
We must reach the goal at last.
Yes, He praises ! grace recounting
All the path already trod,—
We associated with Him—
God, our Father and our God.

Join the singing that He leadeth,
Loud to God our voices raise ;
Every step that we have trodden,
Is a triumph of His grace :
Whether joy, or whether trial,
All can only work for good,
For He healeth all—who loves us,
And hath bought us with His blood.

We may also note that at the institution of the Supper as recorded by Matt. 26, 30 and Mark 14, 26, "when they had sung an hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives." We are lost in wonder at such a scene as this.

Who was there to lead this singing a song of praise to God? Again I say we are lost in wonder. Was it in anticipation of victory when He would sing as the one raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, to which we have been referred in Psa. 22. 22 and Heb. 2. 12 ?

G.J.H.

CONFOUNDED BECAUSE THEY HOPED.

A poorly clad coloured woman rose to her feet,
"Brudders an' sisters, I want you to pray fer me.
The Lord has spoken to me right now. I guess I jest
talk too much and pray too little."

That is the story told by an evangelist of a meeting held among coloured folk in America. But one moment—

With a few powerful strokes Job has drawn a vivid picture of the dangers of desert life. The caravans of Tema and the companies of Sheba journeying through the Arabian desert are short of water. The camels, the horses, the men, hurrying forward, straining their eyes to catch the first glimpse of the life-giving river—all are there. Excitement rises high as they draw near to the place where experience or hearsay has told them water will be found. Every eye scans the desert—Ah ! there is the river bed—the joyful excitement is intense. But—no water—faces fall, spirits are damped, men turn away to hide their feelings. The weary tramp begins again, with death, perhaps awaiting them in the dim distance, confounded because they had hoped. (Job 6. 20.)

This is a parable. Were not we Christians once given "a well of water springing up into everlasting life?" Did not our feelings, melted by the intense love of the Saviour, swell the stream as does the mountain-snow melting under the burning heat of the summer sun? Did not that well of water bubble over, till the passing traveller tasted, and saw that the Lord was gracious and passed on rejoicing?

But Job says "When heat affecteth them they vanish from their place; they wind about in the paths of their course; they go off into the waste and perish." (Job 6, 17—18 J.N.D.)

Could that, too, be true of us as the followers of Jesus? Have the streams that watered the desest

evaporated in the trying heat of everyday life and left it more truly desert than before? Or those streams, wandering about to find "their own level," have they lost "God's level" and gone off into the waste and perished? Could it be said that fellow-travellers through this world, who "counted on us" are ashamed at this hope; they came thither and were confounded? Do we, in fact, talk too much and pray too little?

Let us apply this picture to ourselves. As individuals about our daily business we come into contact with many who knowing "the hope that is in us," hope to quench their thirst at those streams of living water. Our friends perhaps, like the merchants of Tema in the desert are laden with precious merchandise, their talents, education, energy, would use them in the service of our Master, but the streams that should have refreshed them and led them to the fountain-head are dried-up, nothing remaining but sandy hillocks. There are those too, who would stand in the forefront of the battle for Our King, like the "companies of Sheba" but their thirst is not quenched, they pass on to die in the service of His enemy, Satan. Have we not met such people? Did we fail to win them? Have we lost touch with them? If so—why? "They wind about in the paths of their course." May that never be said of us, God offers—"I will guide thee with mine eye," and this guidance comes through prayer and the quiet time alone with Him and His Word. Do we talk too much and pray too little? It must never be said "They were confounded because they had hoped."

The household of Mary, the mother of John Mark commands attention (Acts 12). The family was united in prayer, and many others,—neighbours probably—had joined them having drunk from streams which flowed from the fountain of living water. I would like my

family to be like that ; a home where weary saints or struggling sinners may come and be refreshed, a place where fainting travellers in this desert may come and be restored and directed to the source of those "waters which break out in the wilderness and the streams in the desert." (Isa 35. 6). It was to such an home that Peter came, miraculously delivered from prison but lonely. He was not ashamed when he had come thither; those on whom he trusted had not let him down (cf. Job 6. 19, 20). That gathering was given work to do to carry the reviving waters to other sorrowers. "Go and show these things unto the brethren," said Peter. (Is this a word for us?) They said very little —they prayed the more.

Can we go further— As assemblies of God's people are our meetings charged with the power of the Holy Spirit? Are they the objects of much prayer? Or do they "go off into the waste and perish" in barren theological argument? May they be rather as the greater rivers, swollen by the melting ice and the contributions of each tiny rivulet. Then they will be the means of offering to the world those living waters which spring up into everlasting life. Can it be truly said that the merchants of Tema, who look, and the companies of Sheba who count on us, have not been confounded because they hoped, nor ashamed when they came hither? If not, may we learn to "Pray more and talk less," even though our conversation be as becometh saints. And fellows would never then be "confounded because they hoped."

Oh ! fill me, Jesus Saviour, with Thy love;
Lead, lead me to the living fount above,
Thither may I in simple faith draw nigh,
And never to another fountain fly,

But unto Thee.

M.E.J.H.

WAITING AND WATCHING.

There is a sweet word in the 119th Psalm.

"Remember the word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope," v. 49. In a footnote to his New Translation, J.N.D. says, "the Hebrew word means 'to wait with earnest longing'; and so ver. 147." In this latter verse he waits in anticipation and says, 'I anticipate the morning dawn and I cry: I hope in thy word.' Are we waiting with earnest desire and longing, the coming of our blessed Lord? S.W.

"THE LABOUR ENDED, THE REST BEGUN."

To praise Him in the dance ! O glorious day !

The pilgrim journey done—

No more press forward on the weary way,

For all is reached and won !

His hand at last, the hand once pierced for me,

For ever holdeth mine—

O Lord, no songs, no harps of heaven will be

Sweet as one word of Thine.

Lord altogether lovely ! then at last

High shall the guerdon be;

Thy kiss outweigh the weary ages past,

Of hearts that break for Thee.

Yet now I know Thee as the hidden Bread,

The living One, who died—

Who sitteth at my table—by my bed—

Who walketh at my side.

I know Thee as the fountain of deep bliss,

Whereof one drop shall make

The joy of all the world as bitterness,

My Lord for Thy sweet sake.

Lord Thou hast loved me: and henceforth to me
Earth's ~~Monday~~ ^{noon} is but gloom;
My soul sails forth on the eternal sea,
And leaves the shore of doom.

I pass with the glory even now,
Where shapes and words are not,
For joy that passeth words, O Lord, art Thou,
A bliss that passeth thought.

I enter there, for Thou hast born away
The burden of my sin,
With conscience clear as heaven's unclouded day
Thy courts I enter in.

Heaven now for me—for ever Christ and heaven—
The endless now begun—
No promise—but a gift eternal given,
Because the work is done.

Henry Sust.

OUR PATRON

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." I John 2. 1.

"Parakletos," here translated "advocate" is the same word rendered "comforter" in John 14, &c. Christ manages all our affairs for us above; the Holy Spirit below. There is no word satisfactory to embrace both passages in English. I use "Patron" in the sense rather of the Roman patron who maintained the interests of his clients in every way. So Christ on high; the Spirit here for saints.

J.N.D.

THE BALANCE OF THE SANCTUARY

Beautiful buildings, the result of forty-six years sustained effort, and adorned with goodly stones and gifts ; a full treasury patronised by the rich; special robes and long prayers; such were the things to be found connected with the Jewish worship in Jerusalem. To such things even the Lord's disciples called His attention as though they thought He gave insufficient heed to them (Mark 12. 38 to 13, 1), but what mingled feelings must have filled His heart at that time. Though actually *in* such a beautiful place, its magnificence did not attract Him; no commendation of it escaped His lips; but as He left it the wondering disciples spoke to Him of it, and then their remarks only drew from Him a prophecy of impending destruction. Such a place, though beautiful to look upon was to Him, *their* house, not *God's* house, and was left to *them* desolate. Viewed from the mount of Olives where He went with His followers and whence He was shortly after taken to judgment and death, it became the centre of the story of woe which He alone could tell authoritatively. Imagining this company and this scene, do not our thoughts also run on to the time yet future, when, not in rejection, but in power, His feet shall stand on the mount of Olives again and that city and temple cleansed and reappointed, shall indeed be the place of His name and the joy of the whole earth?

But in the temple that day other things were before His eyes and mind, things that escaped the eyes of His followers as they gazed about in wonder at the buildings. Was it the many rich people with abundant gifts or the long robes and prayers that took His attention? No ; neither. Listen to His voice : without any introduction, as though no other object could command attention then,

He said to the disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury." It is as though He had gone to sit by the treasury at that time specially to see this sight so delightful to His heart, as on another occasion He must needs go through Samaria, to meet a poor sinful woman at Sychar's well. Evidently He knew all about this present case and how sweet the occasion was to Him we may gather from the fact that two of the gospel writers make a record of it. In counting up the value of the offerings in the treasury we can imagine the count being made beginning with the largest money first and probably the odd mites not considered worth counting; left behind for next time; but not so when the balance of the sanctuary is used. The true value of the widow's gift is, "more than all." To build or to adorn a temple it was useless, but as the offering of a full soul, how acceptable ! See how carefully the facts are all stated by the inspired penmen, and all revealed by the Lord who knew them ! The person was poor and a widow, and such qualified for the special care of God who gave particular instructions for the benefit of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Did poverty come between her and God? By no means, it drew her to Him in praise and dependence. Her bank was the infinite resource of God, and her key, the promises of God. Thus all things took their proper place in her soul so that she could come with others more wealthy and deposit her offering in God's house, reckoning that this was not her all which she left, but only that with which her God had blessed her that day. The grace of God records that it *was* all she had ; so it was as the treasurers would count it but she had the key of the heavenly bank, and He who said "your Heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him,"

was there to witness the return she made in thankfulness.

Mercenary men were there, or had been; those who sold oxen, sheep, doves and changed money for others who came from afar, but it seems that all their wares were of too expensive a nature for this poor widow. All she had in current money was one farthing, or two mites, which we learn from Matt. 10. 29, was the price of two sparrows. Is it mentioned for nothing that two sparrows were sold for a farthing, and that also we find in Lev. 14, 4, in connection with the cleansing of the leper, two birds (or, "sparrows," marginal reading) are called for? It seems that her very poverty put her figuratively into the place which the Lord was accorded by the people of His day, that is, outside. The leper was to stay outside the city and cry "Unclean" when any approached, but when cleansed, two sparrows were to be provided, and the priest was to come out and officiate for him. Not until he had been sprinkled with the blood of one of the birds could the leper be allowed to enter the camp again. Thus do we see this woman come, not with her hand full, but with heart full of the promises of God; not as one able to bring an offering as prescribed for those in relationship with God, but as having only that which spoke of the outside place and the grace of God, for only the power and grace of God could deal with the leper.

The balance of the sanctuary works on a proportionate basis; much from abundance still left much, and in the spirit in which it was given that day, counted for little; but two mites from penury left nothing but was counted as more than all the rest.

Deeds of merit as we thought them,
He will tell us were but sin.
Little acts we had forgotten,
He will tell us were for Him.

A.T.

DRAW ME ! (S. of S. 1, 4),

Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. (Hos. 2, 14) Come my beloved, let us go forth into the field : and lodge in the villages. (S. of S. 7, 11.)

The Lord forsaketh not His saints, though the great waves of affliction come upon them and nigh overwhelm them, because they have forgotten their first love; and though the heavy tide of temptation be running strong against them, and they with their little bark of faith be unable to stem it ; though they have given their hearts to that in which the Lord delighteth not; though they have backslidden often and far, yet the Lord "will allure them, and bring them into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto them." O Lord, this world is nothing to me but a wilderness, a place of tribulation, where, being tossed to and fro, I enjoy no rest; but when I lift up my heart and look for peace in Thee, I am supported and comforted. Grant that I may thus be strengthened for the time to come, whenever I am at a loss what course to take. Let me always firmly believe thee to be a present help in trouble, who art willing and able to bear me up under all outward distresses, till I shall safely arrive at the rest of the people of God.

Lord ! what wretched land is this, that yields us no supply,
No cheering fruits, no wholesome trees, nor streams of living joy,
But prickling thorns through all the ground and mortal poisons grow,
And all the rivers that are found with dangerous waters flow.

Extracted from Bogatzky's Golden Treasury, 16th 17th century.

ON PLEASING GOD.

There are some aspects of this interesting yet little known subject which may well claim attention. Man would ever begin with his own thoughts as to how and why God *should* be pleased, and in so doing does not reach the consciousness of that abiding peace and joy which God would have him possess through the provision He has made in the person of His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the present activity of the Holy Spirit. To understand something of *how* man can please God, we must first see how the Lord Jesus Christ made this righteously possible.

I. CHRIST (a) *From Eternity*, see Prov.
ACTING GODWARD. 8. 22-30; Jn. 17, 5, etc. He
could say, I was daily *His*
delight, rejoicing always before Him.

(b) *In His Life*. The heavens opened and the voice of God declared, this is My beloved Son in whom *I am well pleased*. Matt. 3. 17. This was again repeated on the mount of transfiguration. Matt. 17. He was conscious of being in the bosom of the Father, Jn. 1, 18, whilst walking on earth; and of walking so perfectly that none could convince Him of sin, Jn. 8, 46; holy, harmless, separate from sinners, Heb. 7. 26; who *did* no sin, *knew* no sin, in whom *was* no sin, II. Cor. 5, 21; I. Pt. 2, 22; I. Jn. 3, 5. He alone could say, I do always those things that *please* Him, so that even in death He *pleased* God.

(c) *In His death*. Yet it pleased the Lord (God) to bruise Him. Isa. 53; Jn. 10; Psa. 40; Heb. 10; etc.,—an offering for sin. He gave himself.....an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour, Eph. 5, 2; becoming obedient unto death even the death of the cross, Phil. 2, 6-9; satisfying the righteous claims of God's throne, outraged by sin. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is

above every name...Phil. 2, 9; for in Him all the fulness of the Godhead was *pleased* to dwell, Col. 1, 19.

2. GOD Now God makes known to man the reconciling work of ACTING MANWARD. Christ, and signifies His pleasure in so doing, see Rom. 5, 8,—God commendeth His love towards us etc (i.e. for believing sinners; we must not confuse 'propitiation' with 'substitution'; the former satisfies God's claims; the latter, by showing the believing sinner his sins borne by Christ on the cross, satisfies man). Again, the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God; it *pleased* God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, 1. Cor. 1, 18-21. No wonder Paul could say, now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 2. Cor. 5, 20: Rom. 10, 8-17.

3. MAN *Faith* here is the link, for ACTING GODWARD. faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Rom. 10, 17: without faith it is impossible to *please* God, for he that cometh to God *must* believe that He is..... a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.....if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us.....for He is nigh unto all them that call upon Him in truth, Heb. 11. 6: Acts 17, 27 etc.

Having then entered into God's thoughts upon His provision for man, and the obedience of faith unto salvation, we come to the question, how can we *please* Him and one other? This may be arranged under several headings; as Saints and walk; Servants and service; Soldiers and the world; One another and fellow saints; as neighbours and in the family circle; and in conclusion, our aim.

To enable us to live and walk *well-pleasing* to God, we are controlled by *love* and the *Holy Spirit*, and from Rom. 5, 5, we learn that it is the activity of the latter which sheds abroad the former. The opposing forces are the *flesh* and the *Devil* which have each received their death blow through the sacrifice of Christ, see Heb. 2, 14-15; Rom. 8, 3-13; although both these forces are still active to hinder the spiritual progress of the believer. Understanding now the place assigned by God to the flesh and the devil, we gather that while in the body of humiliation, and still possessing the 'carnal' or old nature, those that are 'in the flesh' cannot *please* God; but as also possessing that 'new life' in Christ, we *can please* *Him* whilst we are subject to, and led by, the Spirit and also walk and live in Him. We can also rejoice in the truth stated by the Apostle Paul in Gal. 2, 20, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I live in the flesh (body) I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me !

As *saints* we have great encouragement from the lives of Old and New Testament and present day saints, signified by God's approval of their testimony and who can count those who, though not prominent in the affairs of the world, are in their lives manifesting a 'close walk' with the Lord, whilst carrying on their humble everyday occupations.

We read of Enoch that, 'before his translation' he had this testimony that he '*pleased*' God, Heb. 11, 5. Oh, beloved saints of God, we who have been cleansed with the precious blood of Christ, are expecting any moment, our translation into the presence of our Lord and Saviour (John 14; I. Thess. 4, 13-18; I. Cor. 15, 51-53; Phil. 3, 20-21; etc.); how are we living and walking in this scene? Will those of the world with whom we

come in contact have to acknowledge, and testify of, our righteous godly life whilst amongst them, or otherwise? Remember Lot, (Gen, 19, 14). Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, who will abundantly pardon and restore to us the *joy* of our salvation and let us once again offer the sacrifice of praise the fruit of our lips, not forgetting to do good and communicate, for with such sacrifices God is well *pleased*; presenting our bodies a living sacrifice... not conformed to this world. As good soldiers let us endure hardness not being 'entangled' with the affairs of this life that we may *please* Him who has chosen us to be soldiers. Love not the world neither the things in the world, with the lust of the flesh and eyes, and pride of life; how searching are these needful exhortations.

Then as *servants* serving earthly masters let us serve with singleness of heart not with eye service as *men-pleasers*, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, (Eph. 6; Col. 3). Then as servants of Christ in the gospel and Church (or Assembly), to individuals or collectively, we are responsible to the Lord. "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as *pleasing* men, but God who trieth the hearts." I. Thess. 2, 4; Gal. I. 10; thus there is seen the liberty of the Spirit and fruitful ministry as the Lord's freemen, yet bondservants, I. Cor. 7, 20-24; giving none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God, even as I *please* all men in all things not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved, (I. Cor. 10, 32-33).

As to '*one another*' surely the greatest incentive and pattern is that of our Lord in John 13, washing one another's feet—and by LOVE serving one-another, Gal. 5, 13; Rom. 15, 1-2. (If ye know these things, *happy* are ye

if ye *do* them). Then in the 'domestic life' we also see the divine injunctions for children, parents, husbands and wives. "Children obey your parents in the Lord in all things, for this is well *pleasing* to the Lord." "Fathers provoke not your children (lest they be discouraged) but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6, 1-4; Col. 3, 20-21). How well balanced should be the bringing up of our children, by example and precept, and surely the joy and fruit of the parent's faith, prayers and care, will be to see them not only brought into the family of God, but also themselves to walk worthy of their calling, and find their place with parents where they worship the Lord. Not only are 'husbands and wives' exhorted to 'love and obey,' (Col. 3, 18-19 ; Eph. 5, 21-33.) But in more direct bearing upon *pleasing*, we read "He that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may *please* his wife.....she that is married.....how she may *please* her husband. And this I speak for your own profit.....that ye may attend upon the Lord 'without distraction.'"

Now to come to the conclusion of the matter, though by no means exhausting this deep and inspiring theme. The '*aim and motive power*' of every believer who in sincerity and truth has a real desire to be found *well pleasing* to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ while passing through this scene to those bright and blessed scenes above. We find both these in that wonderful chapter the 5th of 2 Cor. verse 9, "wherefore also we make it our *aim* ... we may be *well-pleasing* to Him." (Cambridge R.V.) Oh for the purposeful heart and single eye for His glory in this; and what better incentive or *motive power* can we have than that in verses 14-15 "For the LOVE of Christ *constraineth* us... that they which live should no longer 'live unto them-

selves" but unto *Him* who for their sakes (yours and mine dear reader) died and rose again.

".....This one thing *I do*.....I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3, 13-14,

"Beloved if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God...and do those things that are *pleasing* in His sight ... I. John 3, 20-23. A.R.C.

CHEERING WORDS.

Midst the sorrow and confusion,
Which surrounds His own to-day,
Have we not a path to walk in?
Are we left to grope our way?
No indeed ! the Christ who sought us,
And in love saved us from sin,
Gave us grace to walk the pathway,
He Himself walked without sin.
Thus His word is all-sufficient,
"That the Man of God may be"—
"Throughly furnished " for His glory,
Till with joy His face we see.
May we then "walk worthy of Thee,"
Oh ! Thou precious Christ of God,
Thou who gav'st Thyself to save us,
Stooped beneath sin's awful load.
Yes; Thou precious, Holy Saviour,
Into deaah Thy love did go:
That redemption and salvation;
Through Thy blood might freely flow.
Thou who stooped to death to save us
From our sins by Thine own blood;
Will complete our journey homewards
To our Father's house above.

To the mansions of the glory,
To the Father's house on high,
Thou wilt lead us safely onwards,
Thy blest presence ever nigh.

Thus by faith we journey onwards,
Ever counting on Thy love,
And the Holy Spirit's guidance,
Till we are with Thee above.

Then it will be what we've longed for;
In Thy cloudless light alway,
Nothing then to dim our vision,
All that's evil done away.

There we shall be ever with Thee,
Fruit of Thine own perfect love,
Will but greet Thee, precious Saviour,
In that blest sweet home above.

There it will be Thine own glory,
That will fill each heart with praise,
Not the crown Thou givest, Saviour:
But Thy love, the note shall raise.

Yes: we shall for ever praise Thee,
"Worthy is the lamb once slain."
Honour, glory, power and blessing,
Every tongue shall Thee proclaim.

J.P.

SOME REMARKS ON WORSHIP.

Induced by the remarks of some on the subject of worship the writer has set out below, instances of those who, approaching the Lord, worshipped Him. It is beyond dispute that all the Persons of the Godhead are co-equal and co-eternal, and it is well to bear in mind that the Son of God is the Christ who is over all, God blessed *for ever* (Rom. 9. 5) and therefore—

“ Worthy of homage and of praise.
Worthy by all to be adored.”

At the very outset of the Lord's earthly career we read that the wise men, or *magi*, from the distant east guided by the (or His) star had come to worship Him who was born King of the Jews. On entering the presence of the young child and His mother they fell down and worshipped the child, presenting to Him gifts, the nature of which, showed how clearly they had apprehended the character and dignity of the One whom they worshipped. (Matt. 2, 11.) As time passed and the child had grown to man's estate He was met again and again by those who, affected by the light of His presence and witnessing the miracles which He performed, bowed in worship before Him. Thus the leper of Matt. 8, had learnt something as to who He was, and coming to Him, worshipped Him, assured of His power, but doubting His willingness to heal him of his leprosy—a power possessed by none other than Jehovah, as every Jew knew. The man of Gadara, afflicted with an unclean spirit, and so wild that no one could bind him, recognised Jesus when afar off, and ran and worshipped Him as Son of God, and praying that He would not torment him. (Matt. 5, 1-19.) So also, a certain ruler Jairus by name, on approaching Jesus, worshipped Him, pleading for the restoration of His only daughter. Nor did he plead in vain. (Matt. 9. 18.)

That Jesus was truly God was shown by His walking on the sea during a storm, and bidding Peter (at Peter's own request) come to Him, he ventured to do so, but when walking on the water, fear seized him, and beginning to sink, cried, “ Lord, save me.” Immediately the Lord stretched forth His hand and caught him, and on their entering the ship the wind ceased, and the whole

company on board came and worshipped Him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Matt. 14, 23-33). At another time a Syro-Phœnician woman, a Gentile, sought His aid for her daughter who was grievously vexed with a demon, and following the Lord into the house which He had entered, fell at His feet worshipping Him and saying, "Lord help me," and her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (Matt. 15, 22-28; Mark 7, 25).

The mother of Zebedee's children coming with her two sons to the Lord, and worshipping Him, presented her petition that He would grant to each a place, the one on His right hand and the other on His left, in His kingdom, a petition, however, He did not grant. (Matt. 20, 20-23.) And the blind man of John 9 having received his sight and learning from the lips of Jesus Himself that He was the Son of God exclaimed, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him. (John 9, 35-38.)

The women who had visited the sepulchre and found it empty, were directed by the angel to go quickly and tell His disciples that He had risen from the dead. On their way they were met by Jesus, whom they held by the feet and worshipped Him. (Matt. 28, 9). And later, on meeting the Lord, His disciples also worshipped Him. (ver. 17.) At the close of Luke's gospel it is related that He led them out as far as Bethany, and parting from them, was carried up into heaven, and the disciples worshipping Him returned to Jerusalem with great joy. (24, 50-52.)

And now that the beloved Lord has ascended and set Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having made purgation of sins, we read, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." (Heb. 1, 6.) Surely if those sinless beings are called upon to do Him homage it becomes those whose sins have been purged by His

own most precious blood, to bow before Him in worship and everlasting gratitude !

It is noticeable that the Lord in answering the Samaritan woman, (John 4) taught that worship should be rendered to the Father and God. He claimed no worship for Himself. Apart from any other thought, there is in the absence of such a claim, a fine propriety and moral beauty, which must command our admiration when we call to mind what the Lord had said of Himself as Son of man, that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mark 10, 45.)

The spontaneous act of worship on the part of those approaching the Lord was never resented, nay, rather, may we not say it was acceptable worship? Peter, Barnabas and Paul, holy men of God as they were, strenuously and becomingly refused anything in the way of worship when it was offered them. (Acts 10, 25-26; 14, 13-15). And when the devil sought to tempt the Lord to worship him, His immediate reply was: "Get thee hence Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4, 10). Can it be doubted that He whom Thomas, by the Spirit, addressed as "My Lord and my God." (Jn. 20, 28) had the right to claim worship even from the devil who was (and is) a creature of His hands? How immense the distance there must ever be, between the Creator—the Lord Jesus Christ—and the creature. (Col. 1, 16-18.)

Finally, as *saints* we meet to worship God; as *members of Christ's body* we gather to remember the Lord in His death. Fitly and rightly therefore, in this dual capacity we offer, by the Spirit of God, our homage of praise and thanksgiving. Could there be a more appropriate season for such an act when thus assembled, for is it not on the ground of the sacrifice of the Son of

that we are privileged to stand before God at all? All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him. (Jn. 5, 23). Here then, there is perfect equality and untrammelled by any doubt as to whether we are honouring one Person of the Deity more than the other, with free hearts and minds, we sing: "We'll lay our trophies at Thy feet,

We'll worship and adore Thee,
Whose precious blood has made us meet
To dwell with Thee in glory."

A.C.H.

ANSWER TO "LEAN HARD."

Father, I *must* "lean hard,"
And lay on Thee the burden of this pain;
This murmuring impatience, too, Thou knowest,
Is harder still to bear. My fainting heart
Must find its shelter 'neath the encircling arms
Of Thine own love. Firm clasped there,
Take *all* my burden. Thou saidst it shall be Thine !
Leaning on *Thee*, I know I shall be strong.
Father, dear Father, I would be closer yet,
But Thou must draw me, else I cannot come;
Thine *arm* is not enough; where else can I repose
But on Thy loving breast? Soft pillow'd there
For ever let me lie. Weary and weak,
My feet had stumbled on this rugged way
Hadst *Thou* not held my hand; and now I'm come
Close to the narrow stream. E'en should its waters roar
And waves swell high; Thine everlasting arms
Shall bear me safely through; its floods can ne'er
O'erwhelm. Father, Thou lov'st Thy child:
I do not doubt, but will lean hard.

AT REST.

On Wed. afternoon (Nov. 4th) the mortal remains of our beloved and well known brother Mr. W. W. Webb, who was called home on Oct. 31st, were laid to rest in Andover Cemetery. A large number of friends and relations gathered to show sympathy with the bereaved ones and were briefly addressed by brothers A. C. Hardy and A. I. Campbell in the cemetery chapel.

After the singing of the hymn, "What will it be to dwell above?" bro. A.C.H. engaged in prayer and then read portions of John's Gospel—chap. 5, verses 24-29; chap. 11, verses 1-6, 14, 21-26, 32-35—Showing beautifully the power of life, death and resurrection in the hands of our Lord Jesus and its practical application in the family of Lazarus at Bethany as the evidence of an infinite love towards them.

Bro. A.I.C. read Phil. 1-23, which bears testimony of the power of the future over the present in the life of the Apostle Paul. To him, to depart would not be a leap in the dark, or the meeting with an unknown Person, but to be ushered into the *full* enjoyment of that of which he had already some knowledge through faith and the operation of the Holy Spirit. With our departed brother too, the same thing had been noted when giving out the above mentioned hymn on a former occasion—evident enjoyment of what was on before.

The indoor meeting was closed with the hymn, "In hope we lift our wishful longing eyes": and followed by prayer. At the graveside, prayer was again indulged and our dear bereaved ones committed to the care and loving attention of the God of all comfort.

CORRECTION : Page 128, 2nd line ; for "Monday" read "noonday."

GREEN PASTURES

1937.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR ALL WHO HAVE
FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Gt. Britain: S. Warren Hebron, Rivington Avenue, Woodford Green
Essex.

New Zealand: Bible & Book Depot, 200, Manchester St.,
Christchurch.

Editor: A. Tunley, The Nook, 76, Lincoln Road, Werrington.
Peterborough, Eng.

INDEX.

		PAGE
AM I A BABE ...	...	84
ANOTHER HOMECALL ...	...	36
AS IS THE HEAVENLY...	...	76
A SONG IN THE NIGHT	...	10
AT REST ...	...	24
AT THE CROSS ROADS...	...	68
BEHIND THE SCENES?...	...	58
BE YE ALSO READY ...	...	104
CHRIST (THE) OF GOSPELS IN THE EPISTLES...	13,	26
II. CHRONICLES 20 ...	...	93
CORRESPONDENCE ...	...	130, 142
DAY BY DAY—NUM. 25	...	35
DISCIPLINE AMONG GOD'S SERVANTS	...	4
DIVINE INSTRUCTION ...	...	120
DIVINE SPRING IN WORSHIPPING...	...	137
ESSENCE (THE) OF THE GOSPEL ...	...	31
EXTRACT ...	...	142
EXTRACT J.N.D. ...	...	117
EXTRACT—THE LIVING GOD—1 TIM. 4, 10 ...	...	59
FAILURE ...	...	76
FAMILY RELIGION ...	...	62
FORGIVENESS, WHAT IS IT ?	...	49
FRUITS OF NEW BIRTH	...	133
GLORY (THE) OF THE CROSS	...	58

	PAGE
GOD'S CHOICE	32
GROUND (THE) OF THE CHURCH AND WHAT IT INVOLVES	45, 51
HAVE FAITH IN GOD	79
IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE	97
JESUS, LORD JESUS	23
JUST FOR TO-DAY	112
LORD (THE) IS MINDFUL OF HIS OWN MAN'S HOUR—JOHN 19, 15	95
MASTER'S (THE) QUESTIONS—JOHN 12, 26 ...	25
MEN OF GOD	96
MORTGAGED (THE) HEART	101
NEW BIRTH	121
OCCUPY TILL I COME	112
ONE OFFERING	67
ON WORSHIPPING THE FATHER	125
OUR JOY IN HEAVEN	73
OUR WARFARE	89
RADIO (THE)	117
SATAN'S WILES AND OUR RESOURCES	113
SERVICE	92
SONGS AND GROANS	85
STEPPING BY THE SPIRIT	1
THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING ...	37
THOU KNOWEST	106

	PAGE
UNEQUAL (THE) YOKE ...	17
WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT ? ...	106
WHO IS ON THE LORD's SIDE ...	55
WHEN I'M AFRAID ...	61
WHEN THOU PASSEST THROUGH THE WATERS. ISA. 43, 2 ...	60
WILL (THE) OF THE LORD BE DONE ...	83
WISDOM ...	79
WITH HIS FRIENDS ...	142
WITH PURPOSE OF HEART ...	34
WORSHIPPING ...	109

STEPPING BY THE SPIRIT.

"If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also step—" Gal. 5, 25. (literally rendered).

So I would render this verse, rather than read it as in the Authorised Version, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." That reading does indeed express eternal truth, but not quite the truth of the Greek original. The Spirit in the Greek, is regarded as the instrument, the means, of the life and the walk.....; it speaks of a life and action *by* Him rather than *in* Him. And the Greek verb of motion is not that which denotes progress generally; it is that which denotes the taking of steps, the moving along step by step.

On this last point let us think to-day. What to us is the message of this precept, "by the Spirit let us also step?"

On the first great truth of the verse, "life by the Spirit," I hardly touch at all. Let that be largely taken for granted, as our faith, and our experience. "By the Spirit," by the eternal Spirit, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of grace, we, "dead in trespasses and sins," must be "quickened," brought to life, if we are to live in and to the Lord. The Lord, the Life-Giver, must give that life to man, by putting man into vital contact with Him who is our Life. Then, and only then,

"Our quickened souls awake and rise,
From the long sleep of death.
On heavenly things we fix our eyes,
And praise employs our breath."

But all this the Apostle takes for granted. He brings it in as a ground of argument, with the argumentative "if." It is the assumed fact on which is now planted the inference of conduct; "by the Spirit let us step," let us take step after step by Him.

Here are two messages for us, as practical as possible. One is, the sacredness of the details of life. The other is the promise of nothing less than the Holy Spirit's power as our resource for a holy walk in detail.

"Let us step." Do we Christians adequately remember the importance of the single steps of a life which in any sense worth naming, calls itself Christian? The vast majority of the incidents of life are of the nature of steps; not leaps, nor flights, but steps. And not one of them, no, not one, in its moral importance, is nothing. The merest trick of habit is helping, more or less, to form character. The mere habit of carelessness about stepping is itself a series of steps which may conduct us with terrible precision to a goal of moral disaster. And look at it from another side; it is upon our little steps, more than on more general aspects of our life, that the observation of those around us is commonly engaged, consciously or not. Character, purpose, temper, the texture of the man's *morale*, is often much more surely indicated by his every-day steps than by some great feat of life in which he seems to spring or fly. Christian friend, your minor life movements are pretty sure to be noticed; your temper under petty trials, your fidelity under small engagements, your attention to simple claims of kindness, your habits at table, your activity or sloth in the morning, your use of the tongue in off-hours, particularly about other persons and their faults. Who shall reckon up the significance of steps? They are great things in their littleness. They are great in power upon our own life. They are great in the impression they make upon those who surround our life, and see it.

"By the Spirit let us step." The Apostle directs us to no lower secret. Do we want to do fully right in the little things of life? We may do something, to modify the surface, imperfectly indeed, but something

by natural means. But do we want to do the fulness of right in the smallest things? Do we want to glorify God in the common hour? Do we ask that our steps may, in some humble measure, leave a track of Christian light and love behind them? Then nothing short of the supreme secret will do. It must be by the Holy Spirit.

This means much for us in the way of recollection, and of purpose, and of the prayer of faith. It means that we must indeed awaken ourselves, and keep awake, with ever renewed persistency, to the momentousness of little things; not miserably, nor morbidly, but seriously, so as to realize habitually that they are *worthy* of the help of God *Himself*. It means the cultivation of a habit of prayer, the prayer which is just faith expressing itself to its blessed Object, and expecting that He will be as good as His word, filling us with His Spirit. Yes, a life in which, "by the Spirit we step," must be a life which, is in earnest for the Lord, and willing to take pains for His sake.

But is it not infinitely worth the while? Is not this the only happy life after all? It is a life which moves along a path paved with the greatest promises that God has given. It walks, it steps, along that pavement in the companionship of the Holy One. It advances in the light, and to the light, "shining more and more unto the perfect day." It is the true walk with God. And its end is an Enoch-Translation, to walk and please Him, with faultless steps, in the land of life forever.

Bp. Moule.

DISCIPLINE AMONG GOD'S SERVANTS.

Only one Servant has ever been perfect and the four gospels are the record of His life. For Him no compulsion was necessary for it was His delight to do the will of God and likewise no circumstances into which He came ever dismayed Him though He was often deeply grieved. Hebrews 10, shows Him ready exactly on time to come to do the will of God, “*Then* said I.....,” and in repeating the same quotation the Spirit shows that where other sacrifices came short, He was perfect, and replaced them, ‘, Lo, *I* come, to do Thy will.’” When men are viewed as servants, however, things are necessarily not the same on account of man's nature and in grace the Spirit has recorded certain things about other servants, not that we may in any sense seek to find fault or decry them but we may read and profit by their failures. Each of the servants of whom we shall read in the following, are worthy of all honour as such and occupy a singular place in the inspired record, but each serves as an illustration of a different way in which the discipline of God works.

The prophet Jonah was given a direct and unmistakable command to go to Nineveh, and tell the people of impending judgment. The spirit so often manifest in our own hearts, showed itself in the prophet, and the fear of consequences instead of the power of God, filled his vision. The grace of God to Nineveh, however, was at stake as well as the authority of God over the servant, God *would* have the Ninevites warned, and in order that such should be done the services of the lower orders of creation were called into use to correct one who should have known better than they, how to respond. Off went Jonah by ship, but the storm overtook him. The big fish, prepared and set in his place,

returned the prophet to the starting point, to be retold what God would have him do. Thus in spite of all efforts to evade his duty, the prophet was brought to the great city and made to deliver his message, a tribute alike to the power of God to make all things serve His might, and to His mercy, in not allowing the failure of the servant to endanger those whom His mercy sought to spare. As for Jonah himself, the last sight we get of him is on the east side* of the city, watching to see what would happen to it, and being taught in the school of God with created things as his lesson books.

The case of Moses was of a different order. Trained by God for a particular mission, the time came when God would have him to be up and doing. In the wilderness, the bush burning but not consumed, arrested his attention, and there, made conscious of being in the presence of God, he listened to the unfolding of the merciful plan of Jehovah to deliver Israel from Egypt, and of his part in connection therewith. There had been a time, forty years before, when he was ready in his own way to deliver the people, and when he wondered that others did not recognise that he was the one to do it, but now we find him reluctant to go back to the task. It may be that those years had taught him much of his own weakness: certainly he was a changed man. God listened in grace to his plea for the substantiation of the message to the people and gave him power to work certain signs to encourage their faith. The people in Egypt were surrounded with idolatry and with the show of the oppressor's power so that they groaned, and in such a condition the grace of God met their weakness with that which would give them strength

* The east side of the tabernacle was regarded as the front—*God's side*, Num. 3, 38; it will also be from the east side the Lord will approach Jerusalem in a coming day, Zech. 14, 4.

and encouragement. With Moses the circumstances had been totally different, yet his faith and courage flagged just when required to be strong, so that we read "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." (Ex. 4. 14.) Lack of ability to speak was the excuse, and may we not say, what a common one? Some are too ready with the tongue as James reminds us, and some like Moses feel unable to speak as the occasion demands, yet why should we fear? "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind?" God had a message to be declared and the ability would be forthcoming if faith and dependence had the proper place, but alas! Moses persisted in his reticence and by so doing lost the honour of being God's sole representative before Pharaoh. One who had not had the experience of forty years deliverance from the oppressor would be the mouthpiece, to speak to Pharaoh, and Moses should be the one to declare the word of God to Aaron.

Later on, after Moses had had experience of the delivering power of God and also of the difficulties of dealing with such a people as these were, we find him feeling the weight of the service. Heavier and heavier he felt the load until at last in a weak moment he sank under it, and we may well ask why? and also learn by what followed the breakdown. The "mixt multitude," that is, those who were not true Israelites, were at the bottom of the trouble: they lusted for flesh to eat, and "Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in Thy sight, that Thou layest the burden of all this people *upon me*? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom.....: *I am not able* to bear all this people *alone.*" (Num. 11, 11-15). Who had

asked Moses to bear the burden alone? Not long before, he had enquired of God, who should go up with him as companion and the answer had been, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Ex. 33, 14.) The responsibility was God's and Moses was His representative, but here Moses assumes a greater part than was his, and finds the weight of it too much. We often say with truth, that God does not call His servants to do that for which they are not equipped, and the narrative here bears out that principle. "The Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel.....and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." (Num. 11, 16-17.) No fresh power was to given, but Moses himself was to be the loser by the transaction. Thus do we find that twice in his lifetime he shrinks from the portion which grace would give him as co-worker with God, and on both occasions he makes himself the poorer from the spiritual stand-point.

Elijah a "righteous man," yet one subject to like passions as we are, ran a faithful course in a day of great difficulty but drooped at the last. He could say with truth, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword....., and they seek my life to take it away." (I. Kings 19, 14.) The burden of sorrow and the strain of the fray at this time seemed to have reached the limit of human endurance and for some reason the prophet had fallen to the level of comparing himself with others (I am not better than my fathers), and of looking at self and self's efforts more than God and His grace, by which 7000 in Israel had been

restrained from subjection to Baal quite unknown to the prophet. What was the result? Simply this; "Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." If the prophet was wearied with the strife the Lord would take him to Himself, with signal honour as we know, and replace him with another to carry on the testimony in his room.

Jeremiah was a man of a meek and quiet spirit, and who, like Moses, realised a natural reticence in speech. "Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak; for I am a child," (Jer. I. 6.) But God graciously encouraged him. He was not to be afraid, for God would deliver him. As long as he spoke what was given him to say he would be like a defenced city and brazen wall. The details of his life may be gleaned from his writings. The way was beset with difficulty and opposition and the wars of his time added not a little to the trials, but through grace and strength vouchsafed to him, he was able to continue to speak faithfully for God and prove the truth and fidelity of His promises. He passed through sorrows which he imagined were greater than any known to man, yet in it all he maintained touch with God and when Jerusalem was destroyed and the people carried away, according to God's word by the prophet, he himself was given his liberty and allowed to go where he pleased.

Thus do we find illustrated, the path of service and its end: God sufficient for every occasion and the servant blessed and sustained through all the trials however affecting they may be to nature. If failure is allowed to creep in, discipline in some form or other will make its appearance, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another. With Jonah for instance, the power of God brought into service natural agencies used in

supernatural manner to compel the prophet to do the necessary work, so that both he and those to whom he went learned more of God. Again the God of grace may seek to use us in service beyond that for which we may think ourselves suited. In such circumstances Jeremiah stands out as an example of trust and of the triumph of grace working through weakness, whilst Moses, in hanging back when he should have gone forward, lost first the honour of standing alone before Pharaoh and then had to share with seventy others the spiritual power given for conducting the people in the wilderness. Elijah appears before us rather as the grand old veteran, worn by many conflicts, and failing before what at least appeared to be the increasing power of the enemy. To such was given an honourable retirement and the knowledge that the struggle which he had so faithfully waged, would be carried on by a successor whom God had prepared and preserved for the day. May God use these few lines to comfort, exhort, or encourage His own in the path of service to-day, that each may hold fast to every word of God and proceed step by step in the knowledge that failure is impossible in any service to which God calls us, as long as it is done in the way that He would have us do it. We may also bear in mind one thing more and that is that God will have His work done whether by compelling one servant to do it in spite of himself or by replacing that servant by another, or again by dividing the responsibility, but in any case the work must be done as the above examples show.

A.T.

A SONG IN THE NIGHT.

Beloved in the Lord; wait for the Lord, be of good courage, for in this waiting time, He shall strengthen thy heart. The days go fleeting past, the summer is ended, the autumn leaf has fallen for many saints and many more are about to fall, and be gathered in, no more to be blown about with the rough winds of the world. Truly for them the Beloved has spoken and said, "Rise up my love and come away." Blessed word ! What joy, when He has His full portion at the rapture, when *all* are safely gathered in. Can we not meditate on our full portion then with Him too? Surely if we have all confidence now in faith to take full personal possession of Him, as *my* Shepherd, what shall the confidence then be, but to say, I have sat down under His shadow with great delight? I have found that I have not wanted; faith's trust has been perfected by Him who has *made me* lie down in green pastures. His power has been put forth to *make* me (blessed truth) lie down for my own personal benefit. How fair is His love for *me*, for He leadeth *me* beside quiet waters. Hast thou not found it so, beloved, that He always uses His power over you to make you enjoy communion with Him? To draw in grace as One who uses it only in grace; if He *maketh*, He also *leadeth* thee into His banqueting hall. His banner over thee is but love, to guide into green pastures, and quiet resting places. In sickness, in want, in departure from full communion with Him, He leadeth only to restore my soul, in the full portion of joy in Himself. He finds the quiet spot where the wings can be let down and we can enjoy full filling by His quiet waters.

Beloved, is thy meditation sweet with these thoughts of His wonderful thoughtfulness for your *personal* comfort? He and thee in personal contact in restoration and peace. His left hand under thy head, His right hand

embracing thee. The Lord taking thee up, though all others may forsake thee, and in grace abounding and abiding, leading *thee* in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Beloved, hast thou not seen the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living? Oh, my soul! I had fainted many times; *my* faith would have vanished away if the Lord had not girded me with His own curious girdle of love and compassion. But how sweet to think that when we are in most need through our own helplessness and weakness and faith's lamp burns dim, the God of Jeshurun never rides higher than then. He comes to our help (Deut. 33, 26-27.) The voice of the beloved is heard, though their faith be dim. He sees afar off and comes to help, not because of *my* little faith, or need, but the Eternal God is *my* refuge and underneath *me* are the everlasting arms. Glorious thought of promises unbreakable, because for His name's sake. Then why, we should ask ourselves, do I mourn? Why have I so little faith? Why have I so little grace? Let us be honest; let us judge ourselves: it is because we are not feeding on Him, leaning on Him, trusting to Him, taking all things to Him on the knees in the closet—pouring ourselves out to Him. Only when we do this can we have full enjoyment of our portion in Him, whom, spite of all, our soul loves. Restoration can only be complete surrender, for only thus can the happy song be, *I am my beloved's and my beloved's mine*; even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For I am as a garden enclosed under His shadow—I will say to Him, *Thou* art with *me* (personally accompanied). He leadeth, O blessed passing saint, accompanied by *thy* Lord, happy communion, happy ending. I AM is with thee to the end. The rod of chastening thou hast found to be for comfort; the staff, a help on the road to glory. Grace holds out the staff, yea puts it into thy hand, and the hand that

holds the other end, holds thee and will not let thee go. Do I measure such a love as this by earthly standards? No, indeed ! I cannot for God *is* love, and His love is stronger than the grave. What has the grave ever given back to man? his loved ones, cherished dreams, lost hopes.....? Has it ever comforted the mourners? Has it not held fast its victims so that tears, wealth, or supplications have only had silence as as their answer? But the power of the grave is broken and the comfort is ours that, against *all* powers God will hold those that are His and none can pluck them away. He holds thy hand; He leads, comforts, prepares thy table in the presence of thine enemies; He stays thee with flagons, His fruit is sweet to thy taste. The day breaks, the shadows flee away, and what blessed communion ! Shall I not say, Lord, thou hast kept the best wine until now. Thou art about to anoint my head with oil. Beloved, what hath grace wrought? Surely I must in gratitude to God exclaim, *my* cup runneth over ! and praise and thank Him for the goodness and mercy which has followed *me* all the days of my life, and which has decreed that *I* shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Through His *making*, His *leading*, His *restoring*, His *preparing*, His *filling*, and His *grace*, I have my full portion in the glory. Brethren, may we each and all as *the day* draws nearer, draw closer and hold dearer the treasure which we have in Him.

G.G.

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS IN THE EPISTLES.

Nothing that touches the person of Christ, for good or evil, can be without interest to any heart that has learnt His value. In view of this we may profitably look at the way in which He is presented by the Holy Ghost in the writings of the New Testament other than the Gospels, but in relation to them; that is to say, the Gospels' character of Christ as it is enshrined in the other books of the New Testament.

As might well be expected, these writings, emanating from the same Master-hand, contain many historical additions to the Gospel narrative of incalculable value, besides wonderfully beautiful touches that tend to heighten and complete the divine transcript.

In Acts I, we learn, as nowhere else, the fact of the Lord's continuance on earth after His resurrection for forty days, during which He was seen of His disciples, making known to them His valedictory commands, and speaking to them of the kingdom of God. Also the special question which, when gathered together, they preferred before Him as to the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. This elicited that momentous word of His designed, without setting the kingdom aside, to direct their hearts to the coming in of the Holy Ghost, signifying that it was not Israel in revived glory and a Messiah in displayed power that He would set before their hearts, but a refused and departing Saviour bringing in a time of testimony, in which the Holy Ghost and they were to be His witnesses, as also He had Himself said before He suffered. (Jn. 15, 26-27). Of the One hated without a cause, the Holy Ghost and they were to be witnesses; all this had faded from their minds, and the Lord's latest breath on earth was expended in re-enforcing it upon their souls (Acts. I. 8), expressing as it does the whole character of the period until He returns.

We all know that the first word with which He met His disciples in resurrection at the beginning of these forty days was, "Peace unto you," expressing their portion in Him; and now, in the closing moment before He ascended, He clearly suggests that His portion would be in them ("Ye shall be witnesses unto Me"), and the Holy Ghost's advent would be the incoming of power unto this specific end. Nor is it unimportant to see that it is as the refused One of men He is received up, and it is as associated with this refused Man, the Christ of that glory into which He has entered, that they go forth as joint witnesses with the Holy Ghost. He went away as the refused Man, and is that refused Man to-day. He constituted His disciples, in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, His witnesses in the scene of His refusal, even unto the uttermost part of the earth, and it goes without saying that just such, if up to our calling, is what we are to Himself this day.

And then that wonderful attendant cloud, the mysterious indication of the divine presence and favour, received Him into its bosom, and He was taken up into glory ! Thus we clearly see man's new place. In heaven as the risen and exalted Man, He was received up into glory, out of sight, gone into the Father's house; we in Christ there. On earth as His witnesses, we go forth in the unseen power of the Holy Ghost, as associated with the refused One; Christ in us here. Man's new place is thus defined both in heaven and on earth.

In like manner as He had gone away should He return; such is the brief but reassuring declaration which the two white-robed ones made to His bereaved disciples, and this closes Luke's personal testimony concerning the now glorified Nazarene.

In the next chapter, as also in chaps. 3 & 10, we have the bold and courageous, no less than the noble and

elevated, testimony of Peter. In Acts 2 how he *identifies* God with the Christ of the Gospels; a man approved of God among them, whose wonders and miracles God did by Him. Equally by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God had He been delivered into their hands for death, out of which death God had raised Him, they being witnesses; by the right hand of God had He been exalted, and the same Jesus whom they had crucified, God had constituted Lord and Christ. In chap. 3 how incisively does he charge home to their souls that they had denied the Holy One and the Just, and killed the Originator of life; but, as for God, He had shown by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should so suffer, and so had He fulfilled it. But He had been fore-ordained for them, and God had raised up His servant Jesus, and unto them first had sent Him to bless them, in turning away every one of them from his iniquities. How beautiful and how precious such grace to the guilty nation ! In chap. 10 he declares of "Jesus, who was of Nazareth," how "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power; who went through all quarters doing good, and healing all that were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him." So much for His life in the flesh; as to His death, slain of the Jews, who hanged Him on a cross, "this Man God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be openly seen, not of all the people, but of witnesses who were chosen before God," who ate and drank with Him after He arose from among the dead. Finally, as to their testimony, "He it is who was determinately appointed of God to be judge of living and dead." In the compass of five verses does the Apostle, in rapid transition, bring to view these four things—His devoted service, His death of shame, His manifested resurrection, and His judicial title and appointment.

We turn now to Stephen: he accuses the Jews, his persecutors, of having betrayed and murdered the Just

One. This they can bear, but when he adds that the law they had received by the disposition of angels they had not kept, their gnashing teeth declared how much more serious in their eyes was law-breaking, than shedding the blood of the Pretender of Nazareth, which, in their unequalled moral turpitude they deemed Him to be. Stephen's shining face of angelic beauty, illumined by no created sun, but by a glory which reached him from beyond its orbit, is upturned of the Holy Ghost to heaven, looking steadfastly into which the martyr saw not only the glory of God, but Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said "Lo, I behold the heavens, opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. It is enough; they stop their ears, clamouring for the life of him who had testified that their slaughtered Victim was standing at the right hand of God ! That they had murdered Him stirred them not, that they had broken the law made them gnash their teeth, but that the One they had slain was in the glory of God, was the signal for his life to be forfeited, and, thirsting for his blood, with one accord they make the fatal rush which conveyed him into the presence of his Lord.

Passing by Philip, the character of whose testimony is summed up by the Holy Ghost in the one pregnant and unsurpassable word, "Jesus" we come to Paul. At the very outset of his service the page of inspiration points out the apostle's predominating note, that Jesus is the Son of God ! Eight or ten years later, at Antioch in Pisidia, in another synagogue, the burden of his testimony is still the same. Not only was that blessed One unknown to the *habitués* of Jerusalem, but so also were the voices of the prophets speaking of Him, though read every sabbath day, and thus they became unwittingly the fulfillers of prophecy by their condemnation of Him. Desiring that He should be slain, and fulfilling all that was written, they took Him down from the tree, and

laid Him in a sepulchre, God raising Him from the dead, and He seen for many days of them who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem.

But Paul then turns emphatically to the divine side of the picture. The former was what man had been doing; what had God? God had been fulfilling promises—wonderful thought; This Saviour Jesus, of the seed of David, whom they had murderously slain, was the object of divine promise to the fathers, as well as of prophecy by the prophets. They had been fulfilling prophecy in their consummate wickedness, and God had been fulfilling promise in His abounding goodness! He had raised up Jesus in incarnation, according to Psalm 2, the Son of God begotten into the world in time, but He had been murdered! What then? Is it beyond all remedy? Shall God be defeated? Shall His eternal purposes be frustrated? No, God's resources of mercy were not exhausted. He had resurrection in reserve, and thus had He raised Him up again from the dead as the sure mercies of David, not seeing corruption, the Man of resurrection, an object for their faith; By this Man was remission of sins afresh preached unto them. Marvellous grace! And now we close the Acts with that precious little revelation of hitherto unrecorded utterance from the Master's lips—the words of the Lord Jesus, which He Himself said—“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

(to be concluded.)

THE UNEQUAL YOKE.

In the matter of service for God one cannot expect to get “worth while” results, unless things are done in a right manner, even supposing the object in view is right. The end never justifies the means, and why should we either desire or expect it to, when we serve the *Almighty* God. Neither can anyone expect to be

an accredited servant of God unless equipped and qualified in a proper recognised manner. To become acquainted with the qualifications and the right way of service is the first duty of all who seek to serve. It may be thought that there are a multitude of services which await workers to do them, and in one sense this is true, but taken broadly, all true service has for its object the furtherance of God's purposes on earth, and the great business that God has in hand, yea, the purpose which was behind the great fact of the creation, is the revelation of God. This purpose has reached its climax in the gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE STARTING POINT. Here then is the starting point. Every acceptable service must bear some relation to this and all else will be as wood, hay and stubble, to be burnt up as worthless and waste of time in a coming day. In fact anything called service which has no relation to this purpose of God is worse than useless as it tends to occupy minds and hearts with something less than what is in the mind of God. Reference to 2. Cor. 6, 14-18, should leave no doubts in the mind about either the qualifications or the way of service. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;" a plain statement which cannot be made to mean anything other than its plain obvious meaning, and lest any should seek to water it down in its clear cutting force, the two epistles to the Corinthians furnish us with the description of both believers and unbelievers.

THE TWO CLASSES. To the former class Paul was writing: I. Cor. 15, 1-11. To these the gospel had been preached; that gospel which spoke of Christ's death for sins, of His burial and resurrection and of which he could say, "so we preach and so *ye believed.*" Of the latter class the same writer said, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of

them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2. Cor. 4, 3-4. Thus the line of demarkation is very plain. The gospel of the grace of God is the touchstone by which all are to be tested and by their attitude towards it two companies are defined, those who believe and those who do not. And note it is not always and only a question of open rebellion and rejection of the gospel, which disqualifies, for the apostle in the Scripture mentioned speaks of eyes being blinded by the god of this world, a description which betokens rather indifference to the vital subject than open hostility towards it. How many do we see drifting along content to be hoodwinked thus, into believing that being, as they imagine, as good as their neighbour, they must be as good as God can expect ! To make such a shakey foundation more sure, they seek to add to it a structure of works of their own devising and fondly imagine that the edifice will be acceptable to God.

Can it be that some who are true believers of the gospel, can go on in service with such, can seek either to guide them into scriptural channels of service or blindly follow wherever *they* may lead? Alas! yes, it is only too true that this is on every hand to-day, and can we wonder that the resulting product, if there is any, is only of the kind that any other worldly society may produce? It is just such a result that the apostle sought to guard the Corinthian saints against when he wrote, "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

TRUE SERVANT AND SERVICE. If we follow the argument of 4th and 5th chapters of this second epistle we shall see how the work of God should progress. The preaching of the gospel brought persecution and in prospect of death the writer could look on beyond the condition of groaning and death to that which would be permanent, a hope which buoyed him

up in time of trouble and caused a redoubling of effort when he considered what the "terror of the Lord" meant, if it should burn continually against the unbeliever. Then the new creation comes under review, a condition in which "all things are of God" and a new thing into which all who believe are introduced. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," or "there is a new creation." (New Trans. J.N.D.) A new society if you like, in which all are alike, children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and into which none can come who are not that, for the register of membership is in heaven, not on earth. Members of this society, and only they, are qualified to carry on the work of God and to that Paul immediately refers; "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech by us." In verse 11 chap. 5, they endeavour to *persuade* men; in verse 14, the love of Christ constrains them; in verse 20 they *beseech* men; and in chap. 6, he beseeches the Corinthians to be workers with him in this same service, but let it be always remembered, *only* in association with those who are members of this new creation, this society of believers in Christ. Diverse gifts are possessed by its members, but such are given of God for their mutual benefit, in order that the main purpose of its existence—the revelation of God—may be helped forward. Surely then, it must be plain that only those who are themselves acquainted with the truth of the gospel and who have themselves tasted of it by faith in Christ, can serve God acceptably. How can a man who has no experimental knowledge of a thing recommend it to another, and if he presumes to do so out of a desire

to be considered correct by his associates, what power or results can follow his efforts? Such service must necessarily be absolutely barren and worse than useless.

THE CONTRAST. How is it then that some who are truly believers are found mixed up with those who are not and all endeavouring to do what they consider to be the mind of God? Is this not the secret, that it is *what they consider* to be the mind of God; that which probably gives scope to natural ability? Inspect the general run of what is done to-day by the professing religious bodies where the searching, divine, dividing line is not applied, and how much will be found to be for the furtherance of the purpose of of God as revealed in the gospel? Human ability, social reform, clean, healthy amusement, one hears much about, but how much do we hear of man's utter ruin and how much will such side shows lead him to think, either of his present state or future destiny? Yet these two things are of the utmost importance and for the promulgation of them this present day of God's grace is being lengthened out. 2 Pt. 3, 9-10. Shall we then, who have tasted of the goodness of God in salvation, allow men to go on fooling themselves, or, shame that it can be said of some, *assist them* to go on in such a course?

On what common ground can believers and unbelievers stand, towards what common goal can they run? There is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, yet these are the two designations placed by God upon the two sections of human society. As well may we say that light and darkness can be mixed. An unbeliever cannot help forward a cause which condemns himself, and cannot therefore be any help or company for one who finds his righteousness in Christ.

THE TWO CLASSES AND WORSHIP.

There is a still further thing to which the apostle goes on in this matter and that is the nearer

thing of rendering a return to God for His goodness, that is, worship in the truest sense. Here again man overrides the rule of God and opens the doors to such as he deems fit to appear before God, whether by humanly ordained rule or by natural attainment. The apostle's simple question is, "What concord hath Christ with Belial, what communion hath light with darkness? The man of the world who is not classed as a believer has no real interest in Christ and can therefore have no such appreciation of Him as will lead him to draw near in spirit and in truth as a worshipper in the true sense of the word. What then are such doing in company with those whose hearts are full of the knowledge of the goodness of God, and who desire to pour out their praises in His ear? It may be objected to all this, our congregations will be reduced by half, our activities will be curtailed, and Christianity will appear suddenly in the eyes of the world to have become a dead thing. A full and sufficient answer to all and any such objections is to be found in the apostle's words amounting to a command from God Himself, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." Apart from all other considerations of suitability of service, is it not much better to be found in company with One who calls Himself a Father to us and Who can reveal Himself as the Lord Almighty, than to be found in large companies of those whom the world approves. In the early chapters of the Acts we see a numerically small company, who felt the power and wrath of the bulk of men around them, yet in company with this same God, their labours were blessed with as many as 3000 converts in one day! "Obedience is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams."

A.T.

JESUS, LORD JESUS.

Tune: Juanita.

Bright in the glory
Where my Lord has gone before.
Safe in the glory, I go out no more,
I shall soon be sheltered,
In His likeness satisfied ;
All my thoughts concentrated
In the glorified.

Jesus, Lord Jesus! Thou art all in all to me.
Jesus, Lord Jesus, I would live to Thee.

Soon in the glory
I shall see my Lord who died.
Throned in the glory, lives the crucified.
Lightly weighs life's burden,
As I journey gladly on,
Precious is my guerdon,
Christ the living One.

Jesus, Lord Jesus ! Thou art all in all to me.
Jesus, Lord Jesus, I would live to Thee.

There in the glory,
We shall gather everyone ;
Loud in the glory, raise the joyful song.
Unto Him who loved us,
Never ceasing praise be given,
Sing we Hallelujah !
To the Lord of heaven !

Jesus, Lord Jesus, praise and glory be to Thee.
Jesus, Lord Jesus, we shall reign with Thee.

AT REST.

(continued from issue of December.)

Another brother, advanced in years, has been taken home to be with the Lord, after a week in bed. Mr. George Stott, resident in Edinburgh for the past 60 years, and at one time connected with the Prison Service and subsequently with the Royal Blind Asylum, fell asleep at the end of November. He was an able minister of the Word and a gospel preacher of no mean order. It was ever his delight to speak well of his Lord and Saviour. Converted as a young man and brought into fellowship in Aberdeenshire some 60 years past, he could relate the occasion of his baptism, when with but two or three believers he passed through the waters of baptism in a stream which had been dammed up for the purpose—following which he went on his way rejoicing. A man of sterling integrity, he was a tower of strength in the gatherings; and he ever set his face to honour the Lord Jesus, who had loved him and given Himself for him. Many can testify to the sweet savour of Christ attaching to his expositions of the Word at assembly meetings. “He being dead yet speaketh.”

A large number were present in Morningside Cemetery when his remains were laid to rest. An elderly brother gave a good word from 1st Corinthians 15, 50-57, while at his house a younger brother spoke from 2. Timothy 1, 12; 2. Corinthians 5, 1; and 1st John 3, 2. Both spoke appropriately, and appreciatively of Mr. Stott. The unsaved were not forgotten in their exhortations.

At Moretonhampstead on Dec. 31st, our sister Mrs. W. Webb passed peacefully away, exactly 2 months after her husband the late Mr. W. Webb, of Andover. The funeral was at Moretonhampstead on Jan. 4th.

THE MASTER'S QUESTIONS

John 12, 26.

Have you looked for sheep in the desert,
For those who have missed their way?
Have you been in the wild, waste places,
Where the lost and wandering stray?
Have you trodden the lonely highway,
The foul and darksome street?
It may be ye'd see in the gloaming,
The print of my wounded feet.
Have ye folded home to your bosom
The trembling neglected lamb,
And taught to the little lost one,
The sound of the Shepherd's name?
Have ye searched for the poor and needy,
With no clothing, no home, no bread?
The Son of man was among them—
He had nowhere to lay his head.
Have ye carried the living water
To the parched and weary soul?
Have ye said to the sick and wounded
Christ Jesus makes thee whole?
Have ye told my fainting children
Of the strength of the Fathers hand?
Have ye guided the tottering footsteps
To the shores of the "Golden Land" ?
Have ye stood by the sad and weary,
To sooth the pillow of death,
To comfort the sorrow stricken
And strengthen the feeble faith?
And have ye felt when the glory,
Has streamed through the open door,
And flitted across the shadows
That I had been there before?

Have ye wept with the broken hearted
In their agony of woe?
Ye might hear me whispering beside you
"Tis the pathway I often go!"
My brethren, my friends, my disciples,
Can you dare to follow me?
Then, wherever the master dwelleth,
There shall thy servant be.

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS IN THE EPISTLES. (concluded from page 17)

In the Romans we learn that He who was David's Son according to flesh was by resurrection demonstrated Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness present with him; also that he was raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, and that God's not sparing Him, but delivering Him up for us all, is such a proof of God for us, that "all things" must needs follow in its wake. There too, we have Him termed "Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God," in which character He confirmed the promises of the fathers, and gave occasion, too, for the nations to glorify God for mercy.

In the Corinthians as the crucified One, He was the burden of Paul's testimony among those polished Greeks, the only foundation which could be laid, the one Lord by whom all things, and we by Him. There we get the revelation He had made to Paul of the Supper on the night of His betrayal and desertion, with its touching reminiscences, the sacred and ever-recurring announcement of his death, to be perpetuated until He come. There also the apostle recapitulates the gospel he had preached—Christ's death according to the Scriptures;

His burial and resurrection according to the Scriptures; and, further, His successive appearances before He ascended, in the course of which it is disclosed that on one occasion, probably by appointment with His Galilean disciples, He manifested Himself to a company of no less than 500 brethren together. In the second epistle He is the Yea and Amen of all God's promises, who had been here reconciling the world unto God, not reckoning to them their offences, but they would not; being rich, for our sakes had He become poor, that by His poverty we might be enriched, who was at length crucified in weakness, but lives by God's power.

Galatians states that He gave Himself for our sins to deliver us out of this present evil world, which was the will of God our Father; speaking personally, Paul says, "the Son of God, who has loved me, and given himself for me." Ephesians, beginning with Him as dead, speaks of the transcendent power put forth by God, according to the working of the might of His strength (and which is to us-ward who believe) when He raised up Christ from the dead, and set Him down at His right hand in the heavenlies. It will be observed that here, in a remarkable way, we have resurrection and rapture into glory regarded as one combined and crowning act of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory; not resurrection and ascension as distinct actions, with a 40 day's interval between, but rather as the rehearsal and the pledge of that magnificent act of sovereign grace and divine power which shall in one mighty swoop lift every saint of God, whether buried in the grave or in the sea, or moving in the world, and deposit them in the Father's house, eternally attired in the beauty and perfection of Christ! The cross comes before us, too, in a striking way in this epistle as the occasion of razing the Jewish wall of enclosure, annulling the enmity embodied in the law, and expressed in its ordinances, forming Jew and Gentile into one new man.

Philippians, of all the epistolary writings, supplies the finest and fullest testimony to Christ in His humiliation, in the following incomparable verses; "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form, taking His place in the likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and granted Him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, and earthly, and infernal things and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory." (J. N. D.'s. New Trans.)

Passing over Colossians, where it is rather the exalted Christ, Head over everything; and Thessalonians, occupied mainly with His return for His saints and His manifestation with them, all based, however, upon the alone foundation "that Jesus died and rose again", we come to the apostle's letters to Timothy and Titus.

Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, giving Himself a ransom for all, having first witnessed before Pontius Pilate a good confession. God had manifested His purpose and grace by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who annulled death, and brought to light life and incorruptibility, being raised from the dead, of the seed of David, according to Paul's glad tidings. Thus had he given Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Hebrews, in its wonderful combination of the earthly and heavenly glory of Christ, records His having

by Himself made purification for sins, being made somewhat inferior to angels, on account of the suffering of death, which by the grace of God He tasted for everything, for it became God, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. The children being partakers of flesh and blood, He took part in the same, that through death Satan's power might be broken, and those who were a prey to the fear of death set free. For He had taken up no angels by the hand, but the seed of Abraham, having been made like unto His brethren, and having suffered and been tempted, that He might be to us all that He is. In the days of His flesh He had known the anguish of Gethsemane, when, however, He was heard (in contrast with the cross, when He was not heard, Psa. 22, 2), and was delivered when the time came, not from, but out of, the death into which He had gone. Thus had He obtained eternal redemption for us, in being once offered to bear the sins of many, and in the same act, laid the basis on which, in another day, the sin of the world shall at length be taken away. To this end had He come, as written of in the volume of the book, to do God's will in the body of His preparing, through the offering up of that body once for all. Leader and Finisher in the path of faith, He had endured the cross, despising the shame, undergoing the terrible contradiction of sinners against Himself, resisting unto blood to sanctify the people, by which He suffered without the gate.

Peter reminds us of the redemptive value of that "precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but who has been manifested at the end of the times for your sakes, who by Him do believe in God, who has raised Him up from among the dead, and given Him glory, that your faith

and hope should be in God." Nor less beautifully does he present Him as our example: "For Christ also has suffered for you, leaving you a model that ye should follow in His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when reviled, reviled not again; when suffering threatened not; but gave Himself over into the hands of Him who judged righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree in order that, being dead to sins, we may live to righteousness; by whose stripes ye have been healed." Again, "For Christ indeed has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God: being put to death in flesh, but made alive in the Spirit." And in the Second Epistle, being an eyewitness of His majesty, he says, "He received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to Him by the excellent glory; This is my beloved Son in whom I have found my delight; and this voice we heard uttered from heaven, being with Him on the holy mount."

John, in consonance with his personal intimacy with the Lord, says, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; that which we contemplated, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life; (and the life has been manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you the eternal life which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us:) that which we have seen and heard we report to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." Again, "Hereby we have known love, because he has laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." So also as to God's love, "Herein, as to us, has been manifested the love of God, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him—a propitiation for our sins." Adding this also, "and we have

seen, and testify, that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world."

In Revelation He is the One, "who loves us and has washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father: to him be the glory and the strength to the ages of ages. Amen." Beautifully and fervently does this language breathe forth what He is to us now, while the scene in chap. 5, reveals what He will be personally to us for ever; for however many the crowns which now or then shall bedeck His brow: whatever be the glories with which He is now invested, which he shall assume when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, or which He shall resign when He delivers up the kingdom to God and the Father, those who have redemption through His blood, of whatever age be they, and whatever clime, will have in everlasting remembrance that He glorified God on the earth, and finished the work He gave him to do, since they will never cease to see in Him "the Lamb as it had been slain"—*the Christ of the Gospels!*

In concluding this review, we may remark how strikingly the Holy Ghost, in all these scriptures, reproduces the salient facts of the Lord's life, death and resurrection. Wonderful the variety of thought and of language employed, but without repetition and without monotony, the Spirit of God presents unweariedly before our hearts, in ever-renewed freshness and heavenly power, **THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS!** R.

THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL.

The gospel of the grace of God does not consist in pressing the duty defined by the words, "Give your heart to Christ," although that is often unwisely pressed upon

enquirers after salvation as if it were the gospel. The very essence of the gospel is contained in the words, "Having liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh; and, having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

"Give your heart to Christ" is rather law than Gospel. It is most proper that it should be done, for God Himself demands it; but merely urging the doing of it is far short of the Gospel. The true Gospel is, accept the free gift of salvation from sin and wrath, by receiving Jesus Himself, and all He purchased with "His own blood," and your heart will be His in a moment, being given to Him, not as a matter of law, but of love: for if you have the love of His heart poured into yours by His blessed Spirit, you will feel under the constraining influence of a spontaneous spiritual impulse to give Him in return your heart, and all that you possess. It is right to give Him your heart, but unless you first receive His, you will never give Him yours.

W. Reid 1890.

GOD'S CHOICE.

The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart. 1 Samuel. 13, 14.

This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Matt. 3, 17.

Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably. Heb. 12, 28.

The world's ideal man is one who is sufficient in himself for any and every eventuality, a strong and

forceful personality, but such qualifications are not found amongst the posessions of those whom God sets forth as His chosen ones. David's thanksgiving related in 2 Sam. 22, evidently records the result of his life acquaintance with God and the blessedness of allowing God to lead the way. In it he speaks of God as his lamp, to shew him the way when surrounded with darkness; his strength and shield in time of war and the source of wisdom to confound his enemies. But in nothing does David shine more brightly than in waiting God's time and way for the accomplishment of His purposes, and in which he stands in direct contrast with the man of the people's choice, Saul, who showed both impatience and independence. David said, "Thy gentleness hath made me great," and who like him could recall how on two occasions and against the advice of his closest friends, he had spared his worst enemy when it was in his power to slay him and thereby exchange the life of an exile for that of a king. God had promised him the throne; then why not take it? God's time had not come for him, so he preferred to wait, and when at last that time did come it was not with any sense of joy at Saul's downfall that he heard the news, for we find him delivering to death the man who claimed to have been his slayer and commanding those at Jabesh Gilead who had buried him.

In Christ Jesus our Lord we find the perfect example of the dependant man, the One who, without command, would not quench the smoking flax or break the bruised reed; who when persecuted in one city advocated going to another. Peter, in the night of the Lord's arrest had the opportunity to observe His reaction to all the malicious acts of men towards Him: yet of Him he writes, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His month: Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to

Him that judgeth righteously." Like David before Him, He knew that dominion was to be His, but neither in the wilderness nor on the mountain, would He lift a finger to obtain it before the time of God's appointment.

Today it is just as possible to find the path well pleasing to God, the path of simple trust and confidence for it is still true that they that wait for Him shall not be ashamed. We can seem still to hear the voice of our Lord saying, Seek not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12, 29-32. Yes, the kingdom! But as co-heritors with Christ. Let us then be imitators of Him, that as He still waits the time when God shall make His foes the footstool of His feet we may wait with Him, and whilst waiting, also serve. May the Lord direct our hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ (2 Thess. 3, 5, marg.), remembering that the former paved the way for the gospel of His grace and the latter allows still time for repentance and remission of sins for those who have hitherto refused.

A.T.

WITH PURPOSE OF HEART.

Be not soon shaken in mind. 2. Thess. 2-2. I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 1 Cor. 2-2. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. 2-3.

But we preach Christ crucified . . . : the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. 1 Cor. 1, 6-23.

Oh my dear Saviour, enable me to rest humbly and quietly in Thee, avoiding all such novelties as might breed

presumption, distract my thoughts, and cause my heart to swerve from Thee. Whoever has tasted the sweet-ness of thy word will be satisfied with it; and better it is to improve in the life of faith, and power of godliness, than in new words, forms and professions. May the Lord quicken me by the old truths, and humble my heart evermore, so as to receive them better, and to abide in that which I have heard from the beginning. Novelty is the bane of souls, by which we are often grievously tormented and distracted. It is work enough for a meek and quiet soul to keep within the bounds of a settled mind, and effectually to centre in God. How can such enjoy true rest, who, from a vain curiosity to know everything, are ever running after new doctrines, or prying into every man's business? Lord save me from this unsettled mind, and make me determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and to have His testimony confirmed in my heart.

O that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep His statutes still;
O that my God would grant me grace
To know and do His will!

Golden Treasury.

DAY BY DAY—Num. 28.

Every morning the priests of old were to be seen offering up the burnt offering on God's altar, and again in the evening repeating the same. Day by day throughout the week they were to go on, until, on the seventh day, the day of rest, far from ceasing from such labours, they were to offer up double as much, two lambs in the morning and two more at even. With the burnt offering, was to be offered the meat or meal offering, consisting of a small quantity of fine flour mingled with oil and

consumed on the altar. Both the burnt and meat offerings are particularly described as of sweet savour to God. For feast days instructions were given for special offerings *in addition* to these, but these it seems were to be *the daily basis*.

Of all the offerings put upon God's altar in those days there was none that spoke so sweetly of the perfections of Christ in death as the burnt offering. All of it was consumed on the altar and although it was so divided up before being placed there, the fire found nothing but what could ascend as a sweet savour to God.

Likewise the meat offering was the one which, before all others told of the sweetness to God of the perfect life of the man Christ Jesus. In the figurative language of Scripture the ears of grain represent the fruit produced for God by man and in the fine flour we get set forth the perfection of that emanating from God's beloved Son, no matter how searching the process of examination.

Like the sons of Aaron, may we be found, *day by day, morning and evening*, occupied with the perfection of Christ in life and death, and so much the more on the first day of the week, when our circumstances are such as to allow us more than the ordinary amount of freedom.

ANOTHER HOME CALL.

The news has just come to hand of the passing away of our aged brother Mr. John Portsmouth, of Warminster, Wilts. Our sympathies are with his sister Miss Hester Portsmouth, who lived with him, and we trust she may be truly sustained by the God of all grace, while the example of the departed one spurs on the younger generation who remain, to carry on the work still to be done.

FORGIVENESS; WHAT IS IT?

"Oh! the blessedness; transgression forgiven; sin covered." This truly is blessedness, and without this, blessedness must be unknown. To have the full assurance that my sins are all forgiven, is the only foundation of true happiness. To be happy without this, is to be happy on the brink of a yawning gulf into which I may, at any moment, be dashed for ever. It is utterly impossible that any one can enjoy solid happiness until he is possessed of the Divine assurance that all his guilt has been cancelled by the Blood of the Cross. Uncertainty as to this, must be the fruitful source of mental anguish to any soul who has ever been led to feel the burden of sin. To be in doubt as to whether my guilt was all borne by Jesus or is yet on my conscience, is to be miserable.

It is of the very last importance that the anxious reader should understand this cardinal point. It is quite impossible that a divinely convicted conscience can enjoy true repose until the ground of forgiveness is clearly seen. There may be certain vague thoughts respecting the mercy and goodness of God, His readiness to receive sinners and pardon their sins, His unwillingness to enter the place of judgement, and His promptness to enter the place of mercy. All this there may be; but until the convicted soul is led to see how God can be just and yet the justifier—how He can be a just God and yet a Saviour God—how He has been glorified with respect to sin—how all the Divine attributes have been harmonized, it must be a stranger to the peace of God which truly passeth all understanding. A conscience on which the light of Divine truth has poured itself in convicting power, feels and owns that sin can never enter into the presence of God—that sin, wherever it is found, can only be met by the just judgement of a sin hating God. Hence,

until the Divine method of dealing with sin is understood and believed, there must be intense anxiety. Sin is a reality, God's holiness is a reality, conscience is a reality, judgement to come is a reality. All these things must be looked at and duly considered. Justice must be satisfied—conscience purged—Satan silenced. How is all this to be done? Only by the cross of Jesus.

Here then we have the true ground of Divine forgiveness. The precious atonement of Christ forms the base of that platform on which a just God and a justified sinner meet in sweet communion. In that atonement I see sin condemned, justice satisfied, the law magnified, the sinner saved, the adversary confounded. Creation never exhibited aught like this. There the creature enjoyed the manifestation of power, wisdom and goodness; but the fairest fields of the old creation presented nothing like "grace reigning through righteousness"—nothing like a glorious combination of "righteousness and peace, mercy and truth." It was reserved for Calvary to display all this. There that grand and all-important question, "How can God be just and the justifier?" received a glorious reply. The death of Christ furnishes the answer, A just God dealt with sin at the cross, in order that a justifying God might deal with the sinner on the new and everlasting ground of resurrection. God could not tolerate or pass over a single jot or tittle of sin; but He could put it away. He has condemned sin. He has poured out His righteous wrath upon sin, in order that He might pour the everlasting beams of His favour upon the believing sinner.

"On Jesu's Cross this record's graved,
Let sin be judged and sinners saved."

Precious record! may every anxious sinner read it with the eye of faith. It is a record that must impart settled peace to the heart. God has been satisfied as to sin. This is enough for me. Here my guilty, troubled

conscience, finds repose. I have seen my sins rising like a dark mountain before me, threatening me with eternal wrath; but the blood of Jesus has blotted them all out from God's view. They are gone and gone for ever—Sunk as lead into the mighty waters of Divine forgetfulness, and I am free,—as free as the one who was nailed to the cross for my sins, but who is now on the throne without them.

Such, then, is the ground of Divine forgiveness. What a solid ground. Who or what can touch it? Justice *has owned* it. The troubled conscience *may rest* in it. Satan *must acknowledge* it. God has revealed Himself as a Justifier, and faith walks in the light and power of that revelation. Nothing can be simpler, nothing clearer, nothing more satisfactory. If God reveals Himself as a Justifier, then I am justified through faith in the revelation. When the moral glories of the cross shine upon the sinner, he sees and knows, believes and owns, that the One who has judged his sins in death, has justified him in resurrection.

C.H.M.

THE GROUND OF THE CHURCH OF GOD AND WHAT IT INVOLVES.

(Cont. from page 48)

Let us now look at the other question—what is the Scriptural unity of the Church of God, and how far is it attainable in a time of confusion such as is the present?

For manifestly the church of God—that which, as Christ's body, consists of all that are His members, *and of none else*—is not in practical visible unity, as it once was. It was once together; it is now broken up into multitudinous divisions, and mingled with a mass of mere untrue profession. Corporate discipline has thus

been rendered impossible; corporate testimony to Christ is gone; the church is not together to act as one.

Is power for discipline lost then to any two or three, who desire to walk according to the word now? and how are they to do so, who are "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?"

As to the first we have already seen that separation from evil, is a matter in which we are individually responsible to the Lord, whether others act or no; so that it would not be possible for one with a good conscience towards Him to remain in connection with any people by whom these rules were violated. The other is answered by that gracious assurance of Him who from the beginning foreknew and provided for the end; "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (or "unto my name" J.N.D's New Trans.) To be gathered *in* His name means necessarily no more than by His authority. To be gathered *to* His name means that His name constitutes the centre of union. What unites us is the truth of what He is; and where He finds a people for whom this bond suffices, there He promises the blessing of His own personal presence in the midst.

This presence must be distinguished from the presence of the Holy Ghost in the saints or in the church as the house of God at large. The Holy Ghost is always in the saints and in the church at large, unconditionally as to any principle of gathering whatever; and His presence therefore does not sanction the gathering as such. This should be as plain as it is important; for it shows how God can work in His grace amid all the confusion of Christendom, without sanctioning the discordant and sectarian principles which prevail, in the least. *Christ's* presence in the midst, on the other hand, is

sanction; "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," is connected with it.

If it be asked, how can He who is corporeally in heaven be (other than by His Spirit) now on earth? this is answered by another question, how could He who was corporeally upon earth speak of Himself then as "the Son of man which is in heaven?" A spiritual not corporeal, presence in the midst it surely is, not the less real on that account; and Himself really, not representatively by another.

If, then, we are gathered to His name, nothing less is implied than the absence of all sectarian terms of fellowship; what unites is the true confession of a true Christ, and this involves the exercise of effective discipline, for that would be no true confession of His name which allowed His dishonour. With this proviso, such a principle necessitates a door being open for all that are really Christ's, and if only two or three be on it, it is yet the common ground for all, the ground of the church of God; though the immense proportion of the church be elsewhere. And the two or three there, however few, have the assurance of the Lord's presence with them, and of His sanction of the place they are taking. For binding or loosing, the exercise of discipline, or as one near in living power for all they call upon Him for, they have Christ with them, and such is the force of this precious scripture as to the simple prayer meeting of two or three.

Thus encouraged, we may turn to some other scriptures relating to the church of God, and note what we find as to its practical order.

Let us mark, then, first, that it is the assembly of God which is Christ's body—of course no local thing, and but one body. The body is the organism, the only one; of right the only visible community into which we are

baptised (by the Spirit, not water), and in which we are members.

Thus, although there are necessarily assemblies, local gatherings, because the members of Christ are scattered over the earth, yet they are never members of any local assembly; the body with which alone they are connected is the body of Christ. The local assembly is not the divine organisation at all. It is (if you take scripture) the mere result of our circumstances. At the Lord's supper we shew that we are "one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." The one body is not an association of many bodies, but a fellowship of many members.

On the ground of the Church of God, then, we cannot be local bodies, whether confederated or independent, nor refuse to own in the fullest and most practical way the two or three on the same ground anywhere, nor to accept their binding and lording as what has Christ's sanction. Infallibility, whether on our part or theirs, is not pretended to: nay, as of old, so surely still, saints anywhere may decline from God so far, and be so unfaithful to Christ, as to lose claim to be owned as His. But until there is proof of this, we must remember the Lord's words which we have just been considering. The true and living Head of the church is yet faithful, let the weakness and folly of His people be what they may; what He sanctions we may not disavow.

I have entered into no discussion of the facts to which these principles apply. If any child of God should come to see that they are scriptural, and should be led to apply them honestly to his ecclesiastical associations the Lord will not fail him in the endeavour, and he will surely find in the simple consciousness of doing his Master's will, a sufficient compensation for the reproach.

F.W.G.

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

I have put off writing this paper for some time. I cannot tell you why. Perhaps it was because I was afraid to obey God's orders; afraid of what you, my reader, would say: afraid.....

But no matter, for all the time, those words spoken so long ago to the suffering yet spirit-filled, prisoner of Patmos, "Write the things which thou hast seen"—these words have been ringing down through the ages, and have at last subdued the worldly clamour in my life and have entered my heart with the force of an irresistible command from Christ Himself.

"I John.....was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." That is a disturbing statement. It makes me wonder if I could say, "I, Edward.....was in the Spirit" at all, on Monday or Tuesday, on the "Lord's Day" or when. Have I ever been or am I likely to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day? When we meet to remember Him in His death do I even catch the spirit of the thing; do I even feel like it? "Let a man examine himself."

But the Spirit, the Comforter, who "shall receive of mine and show it unto you," is He real to me? Does He bring all things to my remembrance, what soever my Master has said to me? O, Lord, may Thy Holy Spirit speak to me. Grant that I may be filled with the Spirit. Help me to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, every day, always.

This is too personal—let's get back to John as quickly as possible.

He was in the Spirit: he had a vision: he worshipped. "The disciple that Jesus loved" met his Master again. How lovely! Jesus loves us—do we meet our Master again on the Lord's Day?

"John fell at His feet as dead"—and no wonder. Before those flame-like eyes; before that countenance beaming as the sun shineth in his strength, at the sound of that voice "like the voice of the Almighty (Ezek I. 24), John's soul was laid bare, he was pierced to the very depths of his being—he fell at His feet as dead, emptied of himself. And again I ask myself, "Have I met my Master again"? Have the pettiness, the shallowness, the filth, the hatred, the countless disgusting traits of my life, fled at His presence? So again I need to pray,

"Cleanse me from my sin Lord
Put Thy power within Lord."

and that takes us back to John. When he had lost all strength of his own, all feeling, all life of his own—then "He laid His right hand upon" him. Life was given to John—life abundant. "Perfect love casteth out fear." "Fear not", said John's Master. Then when John was no longer afraid, he was given a job to do. "Write the things which thou hast seen." John did as he was told and he did it well. But this seems to worry me: does it worry you? I wonder if my fear has been conquered; did He lay His hand upon me? Was there some work He wanted me to do for Him? Have I done it? Satisfactorily? Fears like these begin to rise as thick clouds blot out the glory of the sun—do they come to you? But all the time the sun still shines. Let us think this out, you and I. Did we say that we were in the Spirit on the Lord's Day? Were we able to catch the spirit of that hour? If not, how can we expect to see such a vision as John saw, or worship as he did or receive strength for the task He gave us? It is impossible—Lord together we pray to Thee that we may

"Turn our eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face."

and that Thy Holy Spirit may teach us all things and bring

all things to our remembrance. We ask that we may be filled with Thy Spirit, strengthened with Thy power, so that we may serve Thee more faithfully. Amen!

We have missed a very important point. John saw a vision of his Master standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks. It was revealed to him that the seven candlesticks are the seven churches. The Lord Jesus stands in the churches with His sin-dispelling power, His humiliating purity, His love so strong. He is there with His strengthening, "Fear not;" His arm is still ready to support—but His work still waits to be done. Are you ready to do it?

At last John is given a vision of the history of the church—Saints, martyrs, missionaries and teachers; keen Christians and Christians not so keen; Churchmen and Nonconformists all types, everybody, even those who are my readers! He could see the evil triumphant, the good weak and sluggish, but whatever the weakness, the breakdown, he was given one great message to send to every Church—"To him that overcometh!" Shout it aloud for everybody to hear. Overcome in God-given power! Advance! Conquer! This paper was written by a young fellow—he calls to young people. Overcome! Overcome! Triumph is sure through power given by the Saviour. Thrilled by a vision of Him we can advance; with strength from God and the guidance of His Holy Spirit we can overcome,

"Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God
With the Cross of Jesus
Going on before."

M.E.J.H.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

The disciple whom *Jesus loved* (Jn 21. 20)

The disciple who *Testified of Jesus* (Jn 21. 24)

- (1) Stood by the cross (Jn 19. 26)
 - (2) Went to the Sepulchre (Jn 20. 2)
 - (3) Followed Jesus (Jn 21. 20)
 - (4) Leaned on Jesus, and (Jn 21. 20)
 - (5) Communed with Him (Jn 21. 20)
-

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS.

The cross of Christ is an object of such transcendent brightness, that it spreads a glory round it to all the nations of the earth, all the corners of the universe, all the generations of time, and all the ages of eternity. The greatest actions or events that ever happened on earth filled with their splendour and influence but a moment of time, and a point of space, but the splendour of this great object fills immensity and eternity. If we take a right view of its glory, we shall see it spreading influence and attracting regards from times past, present, and to come—heaven, earth, and hell,—angels, saints and devils. We shall see it to be both the object of the deepest admiration of the creature, and the perfect approbation of the infinite Creator. We shall see the best part of mankind for four thousand years looking forward to it before it happened, and new generations yet unborn rising up to admire and honour it in continual succession till time shall be no more. We shall see innumerable multitudes of angels and saints looking back to it with holy transport to the remotest ages of eternity. Other glories decay by length of time. If the splendour of this object change, it will be only by increasing. The

visible sun will spend his beams in process of time, and, as it were, grow dim with age; this object hath a rich store of beams which eternity cannot exhaust. If saints and angels grow in knowledge, the splendour of this object will be still increasing. 'Tis unbelief that intercepts its beams. Unbelief takes place only on earth. There is no such thing in heaven or in hell. It will be a great part of future blessedness to remember the object that purchased it; and of future punishment to remember the object that offered deliverance from it. It will add life to the beams of love in heaven, and make the flames of hell burn fiercer. Its rays will not only adorn the regions of light, but pierce the regions of darkness. It will be the desire of the saints in light, and the great eye-sore of the prince of darkness and his subjects.

MacLaurin.

EXTRACT.

“THE LIVING GOD”—(I Tim. 4. 10.)

“The Living God” was the source and strength of the apostle in his work and suffering. No power of evil can prevail against the one whose “hope”—not trust, as in the text—is set on “the Living God.” Here is an answer to every personal, family, or church trouble. Here is strength for weakness. Why fear or dread a seemingly coming storm? Let but Jehovah speak, and instantly the wild proud waves roll back humbled and broken. Ah! We are only slowly waking up to the blessed, real fact that “the living God” in that very character, is our strength and resource all along the way, till we see Christ’s face in glory. W.S.

WHEN THOU PASSEST THROUGH THE WATERS.

(Isa 43. 2.)

Is there any heart discouraged as it journeys on its way?
Does there seem to be more darkness than there is of sunny day?
Oh, its hard to learn the lesson, as we pass beneath the rod,
That the sunshine and the shadow serve alike the will of God;
But there comes a word of promise like the promise in the bow
That however deep the waters they shall never overflow.
When the flesh is worn and weary, and the spirit is depressed,
And temptation sweep upon it like a storm on ocean's breast,
Their's a haven ever open for the tempest-driven bird,
There's shelter for the tempted in the promise of the Word;
For the standard of the Spirit shall be raised against the foe
And however deep the waters they shall never overflow.
When a sorrow comes upon you that no other soul can share,
And the burden seems too heavy for the human heart to bear,
There is One whose grace can comfort if you'll give Him an abode ;
There's a Burden-bearer ready if you'll trust Him with your load.
For the precious promise reaches to the depths of human woe,
That however deep the waters, they shall never overflow.

"WHEN I'M AFRAID."

"*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.*"—
Psalm lvi. 3.

When I'm afraid of times before,
What coming days will bring,
When life's omissions I deplore,
And earth-mists round me cling;
O Lord of love, my weakness see,—
When I'm afraid I'll trust in Thee.

When I'm afraid of wily foes,
Their flattery and hate,—
Who seek my progress to oppose,—
My joys to dissipate;
O Lord of hosts, my weakness see,—
When I'm afraid I'll trust in Thee.

When I'm afraid of dangers near,
Foreboding future ills;
When rocks, and shoals, and deeps I fear,
And gloom my spirit fills;
O Lord of might, my weakness see,—
When I'm afraid I'll trust in Thee.

When I'm afraid of crushing loss,
Parting from loved ones dear,—
Lest I shall murmur at my cross,
And yield to faithless fear;
O Lord of peace, my weakness see,—
When I'm afraid I'll trust in Thee.

When I'm afraid of failing health,
Sore weaknesses I know,—
And illness steals o'er me by stealth
And sickness lays me low;
O Lord of power, my weakness see,—
When I'm afraid I'll trust in Thee.

When I'm afraid of drear old age,
As nature's powers decay,—
Mortality's dread heritage,
Increaseing day by day;
O Lord of grace, my weakness see,—
When I'm afraid I'll trust in Thee.

A.G.

FAMILY RELIGION: Gen. II.

This is a history which will be found, I believe, to suggest much occasion for the searching of the heart. I desire grace to handle it wisely and to profit.

Shem, among the sons of Noah, was the sacred branch. Religion was connected with him rather than with his brothers, and from him came the separated people.

In the progress of a few generations, however, this religious family became corrupt; for in less than 300 years, and we know not how much earlier, we find them serving other gods. (Josh. 24, 2.)

This is a common history even to this day. Families as well as churches are seen in a sadly degenerate and corrupt condition, though once they were known for their zeal and service.

The Spirit of God, however, in the sovereignty of grace, visits a son of Terah, who was removed eight generations from Shem. The call of the God of glory came to Abram and separated him from those corruptions, and from country, and from kindred, and from father's house, to fashion him as a new piece of workmanship for the Lord. (Acts 7, 2.) Abram, it appears, made this call known to his family, and as is often seen to this day among ourselves, this communication has a certain influence among them. Family religion springs

from this. The power of the gospel is known at first by one member, and from thence it spreads. And the Lord would have it so. It is a bad symptom, as we may see presently, where it does not take place.

So here. Terah the father gets ready. Nahor, one of his sons, from the whole narrative, we may presume, was not much under this influence: for he, his wife, and children, all abide where they were. But Abram, and Abram's wife, and Lot, the son of Terah's deceased son Haran, set out on the divinely appointed journey, and Terah the father apparently takes the lead. (Chap 11.)

But ere I go further with this narrative I would ask, was *all* this entirely right on Abram's part? The call had been to *him*. On him the energy of the Spirit had come. Within the range of that energy or influence the family, it is true, may be brought; but still, did it not belong to Abram to fill that place which this energy had manifestly assigned him? Was there not some conferring with flesh and blood on Abram's part ere Terah could have been allowed to take the lead in this great movement under the Spirit of God? There may have been; and I rather judge that there was, and that this has to account for the delay at Haran and for the death of Terah there, and for the putting forth of a second energy from the Lord in calling Abram from Haran. (chap 11, 31 to 12, 1.)

This is all admonitory to us. Family religion is beautiful; but family order or human claims are not to assume the rights of the Spirit. Beautiful to see Cornelius, or any other in like circumstances, bringing his friends and kindred within that influence which was visiting the house; but if flesh and blood, or human relationship, disturb the sovereign progress of the Spirit, we may expect a halt at Haran or at the half-way house again, and the

need of a second call (in some sense a second) to set the soul in the path of God afresh.

We may mark and distinguish these things for profit and admonition. However, under this renewed energy of the Spirit Abram renews his journey, and Sarah his wife and Lot his orphan nephew accompany him. It is a scene of family religion still. And in Lot we see one who was within the verge of the general or family influence. We read of no distinct call on him, or of any sacrifice from him. Not that he represents a mere professor, or one who attaches himself for some end to the people of God. No; he was a righteous man that could be and was vexed with the wickedness of the wicked (2 Pt. 2.) But his entrance into the household of faith expresses no energy. It was effected in a *family* way, as I have been observing—as a thousand cases in our own day. And good such things are. Happy when Sarah the wife, or Terah the father, or Lot the nephew, of these latter days will go along with our Abrams. This would not be, we know, without the drawing and teaching of the Father. And Lot was as surely an elect one as Abram: but the energy of the call of God is not manifested in him as in Abram—distinctions which we cannot fail to mark continually. It was a *personal* thing characteristically with Abram; it was a *family* thing characteristically with Lot. And according to all this, in the very first scene in which Lot was called to act in an independant way we see his weakness.

Abram gives him the choice of the land. And he makes a choice. Now it is not merely in his choosing the goodliest that our hearts condemn him, but in his making a choice at all. In every respect Abram had title to have the first choice, as we speak. He was the elder both in years and relationship. He was principal in all that action which had drawn them to this distant land,

and Lot was but, as it were attached to him. He was noble and generous in surrendering his right to his younger; but Lot was insensible to all this, and he undertakes to make the choice, and then (naturally in the course of such a beginning) he chooses on an entirely worldly principle. He takes the well watered plain for his flocks and herds, though that took himself near the defiled city. (chap. 13.)

This first trial of Lot is thus a painful witness against him. It argues the weakness in which faith or the kingdom of God had been brought forth in his soul. Abram's way was very different, for the voice of the God of glory had been powerfully heard by him, detaching him from that world to which Lot was still adhering. And all this has language in our ears.

It is soon discovered what a disappointing world Lot was choosing. The well watered plain soon becomes a field of battle; and had it not been for Abram, or Abram's God, Lot would have lost his liberty there, and all his possessions.

But it is still more sad to have to tell it, that this first disappointment does not free his heart from its unholy attachment. He takes up Sodom a second time till he is forced to remove by the hand of God Himself. If when the water plain became a field of slaughter Lot refused to learn its character and to leave it, he shall learn it by its becoming burning heaps in the day of the Lord.

Melancholy catastrophe! shameful end of an earthly minded believer! What a voice for us all this has! Here was a saving so as by fire, a running out of a house in flames, an inglorious departure from the world! We may lay the admonition to heart and watch against the first look towards the watered plains of Sodom. (chps. 13, 19).

In the whole of this, indeed, we get great lessons, whether of comfort or of warning. It tells us that family religion is a beautiful thing, and that true godliness may begin in that way as in Abram's house. But it admonishes us that each one in the scene should take good care to cultivate the power of godliness in a very personal way, lest our religion betray the weakness of a mere general or family influence, and in a little season leave not a trace behind it.

Under Abram family religion, as I was observing, did spread, but not under Lot; for his wife continued with the mind of Sodom in her and is made a beacon-light to warn passengers on their way to this hour. His two daughters defile themselves and become the parents of two such corrupt seeds as are denied, under special prohibition (Dent. 23, 2), any place in God's house; and his sons-in-law, when he spoke to them of judgement, profanely thought that he was a trifler or a fool.

Here surely is serious matter for our souls to deal with! If our religion or profession of Christ have sprung up under the influence of a family atmosphere, we have warning here to watch and cultivate a deep and personal power of godliness, in holy fear and suspicion of the weakness of the root of such a plant.

But again, if our profession of Christ have not more or less, as in the case of Abram, spread an influence in the family, we have great reason to be humbled and fear that it is so because like Lot, we have not in our own persons exhibited faith in its separating and victorious power.

Lessons of serious and holy importance on the subject of family religion are in that way read to us by this little history. It tells us, as I have said, that we

ought to be the means of spreading it, but that if we ourselves are the subject of its influence, we should watch specially as those who have special reason to suspect their weakness. For it is equally said by the same unerring Spirit, "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another;" and again, "ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Family religion is thus honoured by the Lord, but the thorough and the personal power of it is also insisted. The fathers to the children are to make known the truth (Isa 38), but each man must be born again or he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Beautiful to see the "unfeigned faith" dwelling in one generation after another of the same family, as in the grandmother Lois, the mother Eunice, and the child Timothy; but it is beautiful also to read in the third of those family generations the tears and the affections which draw up the full persuasions that their religion is not imitative or educational, or the mere catching of a family influence, but the precious in wrought power of a kingdom which God Himself has set up in the soul.

"What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." (Psa. 78, 3, 4.)

J.G.B.

ONE OFFERING.

"For by One Offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Hebs. 10, 14.

"*One offering*," the sole accomplishment of the will of God in this world as to sin wrought by one so able,

that being "made sin," He there ended it judicially, and rendered to God immeasurable glory in its place.

"*One offering*," utterly excluding all assistance, all comparison, all repetition, and all the capacity of man to measure it.

"*One offering*," admitting no rival, no supplement, no exhaustion, no decay. E.C.P.

AT THE CROSS ROADS.

It is recorded of Israel that they served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived him, who had known all the works of the Lord on behalf of Israel (Josh. 24, 31). It is very significant that the statement finishes there and that the next book in the sacred volume reveals a time immediately following in which every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 21, 25.)

Consideration of such a record cannot fail to have a special voice today for every thoughtful Christian. One by one the older ones amongst us are coming to the end of the journey and when the call comes the spirit returns to God who gave it and the body is laid to rest to await the coming of the Lord. In the light of such undeniable facts, comes with irresistible force the enquiry, what next? Ah, indeed! what next? for nothing is so plain in the inspired record as the gradual degeneration of everything committed to man's hand. Yet, just as after Joshua, were the surviving elders; and as in early Christian days, men like Timothy outlived the Apostles; why should not now those who belong to the present generation, prove themselves to be worthy successors of those who are passing away?

Nothing is said in the terse statement quoted above, about the generation which Moses represented. That was a time of setting up and regulating forms of service, and was with the exception of certain lapses, which met suitable retribution, a period of serving the Lord. Joshua and his elders followed in the same path and then came the break. Nowadays, as we look back say, to the early part of last century we see how God graciously stirred up His people and by diligent searching into the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, much precious truth which had lain buried and forgotten, was once more brought to light and a time of Spiritual revival and blessing resulted. Those now reaching old age are amongst those who like the elders of Joshua's day had first hand knowledge of the wonderful ways of God in grace or grew up with those who were directly concerned in the blessings of a hundred years ago. Shall we who follow them allow the record of faithfulness to end there like it did in the days of Israel's judges?

In those days the service was that of the tabernacle and those appointed thereto were Levites between the ages of 30 and 50 years (Num. 4), but no such restrictions are today in force for Christians, for all alike may serve under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and the whole world is the sphere in which to work. We cannot say, I am too old or not old enough, or I am not called upon to serve. Timothy was so young that he was in danger of being despised on that account (I Tim. 4, 12) and Paul was still in harness though speaking of himself as aged (Philemon 9). Surely then, we of the present generation can easily find a place to fit into, indeed if we wait upon God it cannot fail to be revealed to us what we should do. In Gideon, who came shortly after Joshua, we find a man who was ready to be used of God and one withal who had not seen, but longed to see, the power of God

put forth as in the days of the deliverance from Egypt. In him as we know God found just the man for the deliverance that divine providence had planned. And may not we, young and weak as we may be, be used thus of God for the blessing of His people? Or shall it be said that the present is a generation of Laodicean luke-warmness where everything must be sacrificed to ease and convenience? Gideon was weak and fearful, so much so that he began work under cover of darkness, but in the end God showed him that strength to do His service could not come from man at all.

We may ask what was the secret of the former generations of stalwarts? for if we are to match them so that the tale of faithfulness does not end with them, this is of vital importance. Certainly the day in which we live is more difficult than theirs. This we learn from the inspired record—evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, and also the most casual observer cannot be blind to the fact that the power of evil in the world both compelling and seductive, hourly gains in force, so that we need to be doubly fortified. Joshua himself can give us one good word of advice., He said, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve Him.....now therefore, put away the strange gods that are among you." (Josh. 24, 22-23) Singleness of heart is essential to success: "ye cannot serve God and Mammon." If there is anything which in any measure displaces God from the first place in our hearts let us get rid of it, otherwise it will sap our strength, and service will either not exist or be half hearted.

Paul completes and supplements this advice and shows in no uncertain manner that he is quite aware what his readers will have to combat.

The stronghold of faith would be attacked both from within and without. "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves *enter in* among you, not sparing the flock; also *of your own selves* shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Here again lies revealed that inveterate capacity for going wrong which showed itself after the time of Joshua and the elders who outlived him, but here it seems if anything, more alert and insistent, showing itself much earlier, but in so doing giving an opportunity for instructions for combating it to be included in the sacred canon.

To obtain an earthly crown men will strive perseveringly, rising often many times from defeat to try again, and this is what is required of the Christian who has a desire for the progress of what is of God. Many of us, thank God, had a start like Timothy, and can take word for word Paul's exhortation to him in an evil day. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; but *continue thou* in the things that thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing *of whom* thou hast learned them: and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3, 13-15). Those who have not learned these things from childhood have other consolations, not the least of which may be that sturdiness of growth which is the outcome of opposition. The method of attack suggested to Timothy in Paul's first letter is open to all of us and is unassailable. First read, then meditate, and finally live out what you learn. No matter how young or obscure we may be, no one can find fault with this, and depend upon it, the power of godly lives in an assembly will be felt as surely as the opposite, even to the eventual exposure of evil. The two epistles to Timothy abound in good sound advice

for the young, and anyone desiring to make success of the Christian pathway cannot do better than study them closely. "Meditate on these things: give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine: *continue in them*; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Here is the one and only way, for there is no royal road, and there are no short cuts, but the end is sure to be such as God will approve. Timothy was told that the time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine. Never mind; CONTINUE THOU.....This is the secret, if such it may be called, of the past worthies and their success in divine things — "patient *continuance* in well doing." Let us who follow on, draw from the same spring and then the history of faithful service will not close with the passing generation. Private, prayerful, persistent study of the Word gave them a firm foundation to rest upon and a sure guide in every time of doubt or difficulty. By the same means may we also be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. The path may sometimes be intensely individual, but if we have cultivated individual communion with God and reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will make no difference to the character of our walk, whether we go alone or with ten thousand more. Neither will the numbers of those who associate with us add to our assurance of the correctness of our pathway, but through grace, if any should walk with us, we may be able to assure them concerning it.

If we neglect to read His Holy Word,
If by Himself our voice is seldom heard,
If we to others turn for strength and aid,
Or trust in idols which our hands have made—
Shall not God search this out?

A.T.

OUR JOY IN HEAVEN.

Luke ix, 28-36.

Let us look a little at this Scripture, as shewing what our joy in the glory will consist of. We have the warrant of 2 Peter i. 16 for saying that the scene represents to us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what we wait for. Our souls are not in a healthy state unless we are waiting for God's Son from heaven (Phil. iii. 20, 21). And this passage (Luke ix.) as disclosing to us specially what will be our portion when He comes, is important to us in this respect. There are many other things in the passage, such as the mutual relations of the earthly and the heavenly people in the kingdom. These it may be very instructive to consider; but this is not our present purpose, which is to consider what light is here afforded on the nature of that joy which we shall inherit at and from the coming of the Lord. Other Scriptures, such as the promises to those who overcome in Rev. xxi, xxii., give us instructions on the same subject; but let us now particularly look at the scene on the holy mount.

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and James and John, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." It was when Jesus was in the acknowledgment of dependence—"as he prayed"—that this change took place. This, then, is the first thing we have here—a change such as will pass upon the living saints when Jesus comes.

"And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias." They were with Him. And this will be our joy; we shall be with Jesus. In I. Thess. iv., after stating the order in which the resurrection of the sleeping, and the change of the living,

saints will take place, and that we shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, all that the apostle says as to what shall ensue is, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

But in this passage there is not only the being with Christ, but there is also familiar intercourse with Him. "There talked with Him two men." It is not that He talked with them, though this was no doubt true; but this might have been, and they be at a distance. But when we read that they talked with Him, we get the idea of the most free and familiar intercourse. Peter and the others knew what it was to have such intercourse with Jesus in humiliation; and what joy it must have been to have the proof that such intercourse with Him would be enjoyed with Him in glory!

And then it is said by Luke that "they appeared in glory." But this is secondary to what we have been considering. We are told that they were with Him and then that they appeared in glory. They share in the same glory as that in which He was manifested. And so as to us. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." "The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me."

But there is another thing still. We are not only told that they were with Him, that they talked with Him and appeared in glory with Him, but we are also privileged to know the subject of their conversation. They "spake of His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." It was the cross which was the theme of their conversation in glory—the sufferings of Christ

which He had to accomplish at Jerusalem. And surely this will be our joy throughout eternity, when in glory with Christ,—to dwell upon this theme, His decease accomplished at Jerusalem.

We next read that Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep. It shews us what the flesh is in the presence of the glory of God. Peter made a great mistake; but I pass on.

“ While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved son; hear him.” Peter tells us that this voice came from the excellent glory. “ For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Now Peter and the others had entered into the cloud; and thus we get the wonderful fact that in the glory, from which the voice comes, saints are privileged to stand, and there, in that glory, share the delight of the Father in His beloved Son. Not only are we called to the fellowship of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, we are called to have fellowship with the Father. We are admitted of God the Father to partake of His satisfaction in His beloved Son.

“ And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.” The vision all gone—the cloud, the voice, the glory, Moses and Elias, but Jesus was left, and they were left to go on their way with Jesus, knowing Him now in the light of those scenes of glory which they had beheld. And this is the use to us of those vivid apprehensions of spiritual things which we may sometimes realise. It is not that we can be always enjoying them and nothing else. But when for the season they have passed away,

like this vision on the holy mount, they leave us alone with Jesus, to pursue the path of our pilgrimage with Him in spirit now, and with Him in the light and power of that deepened acquaintance with Him, and fellowship of the Father's joy in Him, that we have got on the mount; and then to wait for the moment of His return, when all this, and more than our hearts can think of, shall be fulfilled to us for ever.

J.N.D.

AS IS THE HEAVENLY...

(I. Cor. 15, 48.)

Not only was Jesus heavenly in his nature, but as Son of man, He lived in heaven—"The Son of man which is in heaven." (John 3, 13). The whole spirit of His mind, the tone of all His feelings and thoughts, was heavenly. If there is any motive in my heart which I could not have if I were in heaven, I am not like Christ.

FAILURE.

Rev. iii. 19, 20.

Everything placed in the hands of man has failed, from Adam downwards; but this failure does not touch the source of Divine grace—God's goodness. Failure and the evil of man have been made the opportunity by God of showing out His grace in a fuller and richer way. He judges the failure, and then presents the Object of hope. When Adam sinned, "the seed of the woman" was promised. When the law was broken, and Israel failed, prophetic testimony came in, and the promises of

the Messiah. *Promise* is that on which faith can rest when everything else fails.

Declension and unfaithfulness in the *body* give occasion for brighter manifestations of grace in individuals, who thereby are brought into the enjoyment of more close and blessed communion with God Himself. See Elijah, Moses, etc. Moses, because of the golden calf, had to leave the camp and go outside; but in doing this, he got into a place of greater nearness to God. "The Lord talked to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend."

The energy of the Holy Ghost was so manifest in the Church at the beginning of the gospel dispensation, that man was nothing, God everything; but before the epistles to the Churches were given, things had sadly changed. In the place where righteousness should have been, behold there was iniquity. It is therefore necessary that judgment should begin at the house of God. The Lord takes notice of every circumstance or shade of difference in the Church, and of individuals in it. His love is not a careless love. God is not indifferent about the character of the saint here: such a thing is impossible to love. A parent (if he loved his child) would not be satisfied with knowing that he would be sure eventually of the inheritance. He would anxiously train him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties,—ordering and regulating everything so as best to fit him for his future career. How much more, then, does our Father act towards His children in this way in love. There is wonderful comfort in seeing it to be the spring of all God's dealing with us; but, at the same time, it should act strongly on our consciences.

Every individual saint is set in the place of direct conflict with Satan, and although it is quite certain that

he "shall be bruised under our feet shortly," yet the certainty of Christ's final victory with the Church should not lessen our sense of the power of the enemy in the meantime. Indeed it is so great, that constant watchfulness is necessary on our part; without it we shall be giving Satan vantage, and he will not fail to direct his power against us—yea, take advantage of our very prayers. *Watch*, therefore, and pray. The flesh, by which he works, is still present; and we need also to mortify (put to death) our members which are upon the earth. Have we not often been astonished when we (or individual saints) grievously fall? but is it not a sure consequence of our failing in some way to watch against the flesh?

It is therefore really not at all surprising such should be the result; and I believe that habitual unfaithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of our falling. But who is sufficient for these things? There can be but one answer—"My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." It has ever been in times of *general* failure that the promises of God have been most graciously brought out, and His *faithful ones* have had increased communion in being thrown thereby more entirely upon Himself. If through any measure of faithfulness, God's people find themselves in trial and exercise of soul because of corporate general declension, that is just the very time they should look for more intimate disclosures of the grace of God, and of His love to their hearts; giving them not only a clear and firm apprehension of the promises of God, but also a fuller knowledge of everything in Christ suitable to be drawn out by their need. He that is faithful may ever count upon this. It is very sad to see the mass, whether in Israel, the Church, or in any other relation, always failing; nevertheless the

faithful ones in the midst of the failure find a fuller and deeper discovery of the grace of God than when all is going on well. This is most blessed. Let, us therefore, "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." (Rev. 3, 2.) "Take ye heed, watch and pray; and what I say unto you, you, I say unto all, *watch*" (Mark 13, 33-37). "Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might ... Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. 6, 10, 18.)

W.J.

WISDOM.

Our wisdom is to hold fast by the Word of the Lord, come what will. Outward trials are but instruments of purification, and of trying the heart as to faith. The Word is the test of all for the soul, the inward measure of its condition before God, and the infallible ground of confidence.

J.N.D.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

Mar. 11, 22.

And she (the Shunammite woman) answered, "It is well," (2 Kings 4, 26). This is faith's estimate of God's power to restore all things. The Lord had given and He had taken away; yet faith could say, "It is His way." His way is perfect (Psa. 18, 30), and hers was also as being in His, so—"It is well." What beautiful submission was here shown to God's will, yet faith would not judge the end before seeking God for aid. What

wisdom she showed in her attitude, all obstacles put on one side, only one end in view, only a few words to say, God's help sought, and faith became a great conqueror, so—"It *shall* be well." When she saw the end of the matter, she could pass judgment upon it. Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord, (Psa. 107, 43). Faith was in haste to get to God's channel of restoration; let us haste that way. Not as David whose haste might have cost him dearly, when he said all men are liars (Psa. 116, 11); Samuel and all are liars, I shall never obtain the kingdom, I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul. It was well God took him not at his word.

God works often above means, sometimes without them, and sometimes contrary to them, but whichever way He uses, He leads forth by the right way. There may appear to be some flaws in it at present, but there will be none at the end, if we humble ourselves, He will lift us up (James 4, 10). Humbling times are the sweetest in the end, for they bring a man to the end of himself, and until that is done, he cannot importune God as he ought. What though God bereave us of children, substance, friends or health—all *is* well. There is no empty, void space, but what He himself fills up, when all else fails; hope in God will bring forth a song in the night—God is my eternal refuge, underneath are the everlasting arms; it is well.

God is eternally the same, hence faith can always draw upon, and rest in, an unchangeable God. Say not in haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes (Psa. 31, 22). Many a dear child of God has had to retract through being in haste to judge God's chastening before the end. Hasty actions are so seldom right ones. It is well to bring God and His promises together, whatever the

promise may be for He is faithful that promised, and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. What is that? Why! all things are yours! A promise of full provision (I. Cor. 3. 21).

It is well when we see we need our crosses as well as our comforts. Are we not through many tribulations to enter the kingdom of God? Then we must have *them* before we possess *it*. Following in His footsteps can never be a path of roses; with the roses will be the thorns, but if His grace be our sufficiency, it is well. Abram staggered not at the promise through unbelief: he against hope, believed in hope, he left out all 'buts' and 'whys' and 'ifs'; he had God's word; he knew God's arm of power; he knew God's faithfulness; that was enough. He brought God and His promise together and all was well. Consider the grace and order of God's covenant with David. He hath made me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure (2 Sam. 23, 5). All is wisely adjusted, both the trials and their removal, for my covenant, says God, will I not break, nor alter the thing which is gone out of my lips (Psa. 89, 34). The covenant stands sure, everlasting love runs through all that befalls us; so let us praise God for the grace and order of His covenant; let faith be active. A child, a husband, a friend, or a wife may be lost to us, but not so our God. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul (Psa. 94, 19). Confusion there may be within, but comfort from above gives us life, light and love. It is well. Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in Me. (Jer. 49, 11). Being in God's care they are well provided for, He feeds the ravens, clothes the lilies, He will do no less for me. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. (Psa. 24, 1). Every heart is at God's

disposal, and rather than that they should starve, He will feed them from the table of their enemies. God has given His word, and there is no exception to it, "Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed. (Psa. 37, 3.)

Let us then have faith *today*, not waiting to see the end; that is to *know* and not to *trust*. Faith brings down His promise to meet the need, for has He not said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee? Heb. 13, 5. Lord I trust thee: all Thy saints of old have borne witness to Thy faithfulness, and shall I be an exception? No, never! It is well. My cup is sweetened by Thy presence and love, Thou strengthenest me with Thy strength in my soul. Lord I believe, help Thou my unbelief.

Prayer calls in God's help; let us pray. God can never be defeated; this was David's first and last refuge, let it be ours. In the day when I cried, said he, Thou answeredst me. (Psa. 138, 3). He will answer us. He will deliver us out of all our fears. Jacob prayed and was blessed. How? By great wrestlings; he wept and made supplication unto Him. (Hosea 12, 4). One plea after another he used until he had power over Him and prevailed. So can we. Prayer sets all in a sweet light for it carries to God all that would beset and hinder us. May we leave it there and all will be well. You may rest from your labours soon; there is heaven above and the hope of it comforts us here. In Thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand pleasures for ever more. (Psa. 16, 11). Heaven will compensate for all things; Paul made this blessed reckoning (Rom. 8, 18), and we can too. We walk by faith, but faith is often weak. Thank God, though we fall we shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth us with His hand. (Psa. 37, 24). May we always be enabled by His

Holy Spirit to say in truth, "It is well" and "He hath done all things well." G.G.

THE WILL OF THE LORD BE DONE.

O Lord! I can and will do nothing still
But with intelligence obey Thy will:
And so I'll joy in Thee—in what Thou art—
To God in all the largeness of Thy worth.
Thy matchless worth! Fain would I oft recount
Thy beauties and perfections as the Man—
The Man once slain ! and yet th' Almighty God !
Th' ascended Man on high ! fain would I know
More of Thyself, Thou meek and lowly One !

Oh ! that I never, never might forget,
Let slip, neglect, disparage, overlook
Thy present occupation—all Thy care,
Thy pleadings now before Thy Father's Face—
My oneness with Thee there, my heaps of peace,
My future joy, th' eternal weight of bliss.

So should I keep me clear of my own thoughts,
And get concerned with Thee. So might I rest
Undaunted ! undismay'd, behind my shield,
And welcome every trial of my faith
That serves to keep me mindful of Thy death—
Thy precious death and power to rise again.
So must I overcome ! so will I soar,
Unhindered in my joy, around that throne
Whereon Thou art, th' ascended Christ of God !
My lover ! my deliverer ! my all !

AM I A BABE.

"For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." Heb. 5, 13.

The Apostle with some severity of expression, tells the Hebrews, or converted Jews, to whom he wrote, that instead of being capable of strong meat, or attaining to the perfection of Christian doctrine, and being skilful in the word of righteousness, they chose to continue babes in knowledge: and like children, had all their work to begin again. It is therefore, a matter of the greatest importance to know what that word of righteousness is, in which they were unskilful, having their senses exercised to discern between good and evil: truth and error. Let it only be observed that they were 'looking back' to the law, and consequently in danger of returning to it for justification, and thus falling from the 'doctrine of grace.' The design of this epistle was to keep them stedfast in the faith! and it will appear at once, that the righteousness which they were ignorant of, or ready to reject, is that of Christ, "Who by one offering" i.e. the finishing act of his obedience, "hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified:" (Heb. 10, 14).

How many at all times who have the 'name and appearance' of 'well-grown Christians,' are just such 'babes' as the Hebrews were? and have the same need to be told that they are unskilful in the Word, reason or ground of a justifying righteousness and exhorted to go on to perfection in Christian doctrine as well as to 'further degrees of Christian Holiness !

B.

SONGS AND GROANS.

In reading recently the 16th of Acts concerning the time when Paul and Silas, in prison prayed and sang so that the prisoners heard them, (or as the margin puts it, "they listened to them.") I was much impressed. What a contrast to the groans and sighs usually associated with such places ! And are there not times in our lives when it seems that *we* are imprisoned, and may take to ourselves the words of Jeremiah, " He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out, He hath made my chain heavy." (Lam. 3, 7). Both the Old Testament prophet, and the New Testament Apostles, were in prison for faithfulness to the Lord and His service. Jeremiah lived at a time when the spiritual condition of Israel was at a very low level, so that he had to endure affliction from His own people as well as from Babylon. Paul and Silas were afflicted for the testimony of the gospel as well as by the Jews. With them it was truly a night of darkness: they were hampered and shut in, yet there spirits were free to yield notes of praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *others heard them.*

It is noticeable through all the prison-epistles of Paul, that the prominent note is that of thanksgiving and joy: triumph over circumstances. Take just two or three instances. "Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. (Phil. 1, 18.) "I joy and rejoice with you all ... do ye joy and rejoice with me." (Phil. 2, 17-18). "Rejoice in the Lord alway and again I say rejoice." (Phil. 4, 4). "Who now rejoice in my sufferings." (Col. 1, 24). Peter is likewise no whit behind as we see in the Acts and his epistles.

What a commendation it is to others when they see and hear a child of God taking all trials and afflictions

as being in the path of faith (for we walk by faith, not by sight) and allowed of God for his or her good. Jeremiah was cared for and nurtured by the Lord through his trying experiences whilst he faithfully ministered to and remained with, the poor remnant. All the great and skilled ones had been taken away, but he was the vessel or instrument through whom God worked and even when shut up in prison God spoke to him, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty (hidden) things, which thou knowest not," (Jer. 33, 3), just as years later the same Lord stood by Paul and encouraged him (Acts 23, 11). Again, the word of the Lord was sent forth from prison by the hand of Baruch, even as Paul sent forth his epistles by the hand of others. Then again Jeremiah was assured that his life would be spared because he had put his trust in the Lord (Jer. 15, 19-21), and likewise neither could Paul be harmed until the Lord's purposes in him were fulfilled. (Acts 27, 21-25). He believed God. The remnant in Jeremiah's day were brought at last to realize that he had their interests at heart far more than his own. He just wanted to serve his God in the sphere wherein He had placed him ; truly a vessel fit for the Master's use, like Paul who counted all else but dross that he might *win, live and serve, Christ*. In trials and difficulties he could say, none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy ... (Acts 20-24). Thus was it too with David's mighty men, who broke through the ranks of the Philistines to get their beloved leader a drink from the well.

And so we could go on, enumerating from Scripture history and even up to the present day, those who are living rejoicing lives, triumphant over walls and troops

of difficulties and varying circumstances and saying in spirit like David, by thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall. (Psa. 18, 29). We have the wonderful list of worthies in Heb. 11, followed in chapter 12 by the exhortation to run with patience the race set before *us*, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith. Consider Him who endured... lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

With Paul and Silas, their demeanour commended to others, the Lord whom they served, and the result was that prison walls, doors and gates could not hold them and precious souls were delivered from nature's darkness and brought into light. May it be so also with both writer and reader so that in deed and truth we might say with Paul, most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me (2. Cor. 12, 9). There are the times for groaning, for we are told to weep with those who weep as well as to rejoice with the joyful. The Lord Himself groaned when coming to the home of Lazarus ; groaned in the spirit (Jn. 11, 33); groaned in himself (ver. 38). The children of Israel groaned in bondage, but God heard and delivered them. He truly sets the prisoner free, it be a sinner in bondage to Satan, or a saint under the power of the "flesh." If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. The prison of the saint is seen in Romans 7; and liberty in chapter 6 and chapter 8, 1-13 and 28-39. Then in chap. 8, 18-25, we see that the whole creation groans and will be delivered when the Millenium is set up; but before this the saints will be delivered from the very presence of sin at the coming of the Lord for the church. Paul says, "in this (i.e. our earthly tabernacle, the body) we groan, but he was willing to stay or to go to be with Christ, which ever should be well pleasing to Him.

Then we see that in the meantime the Spirit helps our infirmities ... making intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered or expressed. (Rom, 8, 26-27). So then *our groans and secret exercises* are known to and heard by, the Lord, whilst both our notes of thanksgiving and of praise are known to and heard by Him *and by others*, to His glory. The Lord Jesus put it thus; but thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. (Matt. 6, 16-18). Elijah, Jeremiah and Daniel with his companions are further examples of this same thing: groans may be quite legitimate, but unto God only, if we are to be of use to Him, in helping to strengthen the things that remain. (Rev. 3, 2). Let others hear the songs of praise, for this is comely, being fruitful and heavenly in character. We shall ultimately, and perhaps soon, be in that changed state with and like our blessed Lord and free to give full praise. Even so come Lord Jesus.

To Thee, e'en now, our song we raise,
Though sure the tribute mean must prove;
No mortal tongue can tell Thy ways,
So full of life, and light, and love.

Yet, Saviour ! Thou shalt have *full* praise :
We soon shall meet Thee on the cloud,
We soon shall see Thee face to face,
In glory praising as we would.

A.R.C.

II. CHRONICLES XX.

Circumstances of outward trial and difficulty are what we have here. It is not a question of internal conflict, which is often really unbelief and the unjudged power of the flesh. This is not the proper warfare of the Christian. Conflict in Scripture is the power of evil against us, because we are with God and know it. It is either the aggression of the saint in taking further possession of blessing and making advances for the Lord; or it is the violence of the enemy's assaults upon us, because we are on the Lord's side. But proper Christian conflict is never the mere experience of the working of sin within us, though the latter may have been painfully realized also. We have all of us been so much under the law that it is often with great difficulty we are recovered from its effects; it is apt constantly to come in.

Where we understand the ways of God more simply according to His mind and word, we have an immense show of Satan's force brought out to attack the people of God and drive them from their place of blessing. Thus, we find Israel here surrounded by enemies; but they were seeking the Lord, and the way in which ~~He~~ used these very circumstances for good was what chiefly pressed on my mind, and leads me to say these few words. For we are entitled, because we know what God is, to be quite sure that there is never an assault of the devil upon us, but what, if our eye is towards the Lord, we shall be more blessed than we ever were. "Believe in the Lord your God," Jehoshaphat says, "so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." Blessing would come, through the goodness of God, even if there were not the quiet confidence which is due to Him. But it is clear that as

His children this is not what we desire. It should not be merely the Lord to make up for and cover our cowardice. We ought to desire to enjoy what God gives us for that purpose. This scene is intended to teach us a great truth. When there is a mustering strong of the adversary, and we see no loophole of escape, nor any thought of how they are to be defeated, if our eye is only simple in the confidence of His love, we are entitled to go into what seems to be the battle with songs of joy. And this not merely like Israel after crossing the Red Sea, when their enemies were gone altogether, but we are privileged even when we are about to begin the battle, to sing as if the victory were won. The battle that we have here is one of the few where they did not strike a blow. This is exceedingly sweet to have God so manifestly taking up our cause, that there is not the need for a single stroke on our part. It is a painful thing personally to have to wound anyone, and it is a great mercy where God far more than answers the confidence He inspires, and the enemy is defeated without our fighting. God intends that the first taste should be that of the trial; but that the best thought should be *what God is for us*, and what He feels about those who join in all their strength, to crush, if it were possible, the glory of the Lord in the poor one of His choice. May our hearts be towards Him ! The valley through which we have sung before the battle, is the valley through which we shall return singing again, and enriched with more than we can carry.

Bible Treasury, 1861.

IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE.

Luke 7, 36, 50.

In the previous verses the Lord bears testimony to John the Baptist the captive one. He was Jehovah's messenger, sent before His face to prepare His way. But it was really Jehovah who was come. But He who mourned to them, and He who piped to them, were alike rejected by that generation. One class alone received the Lord—the humble ones who had owned their sinfulness. These intelligently justified God's ways in both John and Christ. But it went far beyond a Messiah ; they had morally met God. They owned they needed repentance; they had deserved the axe. They owned the suitableness of grace. It was not merely Messiah they received. Perhaps, in some of the happiest cases, they are not much occupied with this, though they may have recognised Him as such. They wanted compassionate grace, and they had found it. They recognised the justice of God in condemning them and calling them to repentance. They acknowledged His sovereign goodness in having to do with and in receiving worthless sinners. They justified God. One who was self-righteous thought John and divine grace out of place. Repentance was all well for others; they were the heirs of the kingdom.

Now this is characteristic of Luke. The promised One was there no doubt. But it was in grace to men, grace bringing home to them their moral state. They were meeting God. His way such as He was in truth, John prepared; Him in His own person and ways Christ fully revealed; God manifest in flesh meeting sorrow, meeting Satan's power, meeting death, meeting sin in grace. They who felt all these found God in perfect grace there; the friend, indeed, not of the lame, and blind, and deaf merely, but, more wonderful still

of publicans and sinners. They—oh how willingly!—justified God in His ways, while they did so truly and righteously, in what led them to it, in the mourning testimony of John, who coming in the way of righteousness, went into the desert alone (for there was none righteous; no, not one) and, calling for good fruit, found only that which sinners could, through grace, come with—the confession that they had borne bad fruit. But this gave understanding. The conscience, recognizing the state he who has it is in, finds in the manifestation of God Himself in grace all it wants, and what infinitely attracts the heart. The knowledge of God is found through the conscience, not through the understanding.

The convicted sinner is wisdom's child; he knows himself—the hardest of knowledge to acquire. And God in grace meets his state exactly. But such a manifestation of God does not meet the Pharisee. Right and wrong he knows, and can judge of God's dealing in grace; but not the smallest ray of it enters his soul. Yet God can only be so revealed to man who is a sinner, if it be not in eternal judgment; and even so He is not known, for He is love; that is he does not know God at all. Intellect never knows grace ; self-righteousness does not want it. We learn to know God through the conscience, when grace has awakened to feel its need.

Here the child of wisdom is found. The history of the woman and the Pharisee is the example of this. The poor sinner was the child of wisdom, she judged her sins with God; she had found Him in grace for her sins. She did not know forgiveness, but she had tasted love. It had won her confidence, the true divinely-given confidence of an humbled heart. This was Christ's work in the world. At the beginning Satan had gained man to evil and lust by first producing distrust of God. Why had God kept back this one tree? Man would be like

Him if he had it. Confidence in God was gone; then lust came in. The blessed Redeemer, while coming indeed to put away sin, yet in his life as the manifestation of God, had come winning back the confidence of man's heart by perfect love—grace in the midst of sin; humbled to the lowest to bring it wherever there was a want; to win man by his wants, and sorrows, and even his sins, where by grace the true sense of them was, back to God; that he might trust in God, because He was God in love, when he could trust in none else and thus know Him as God in the fullest revelation of Him—a child of wisdom, true in heart, and knowing God. Such was this poor sinner; justly feeling her sins, but feeling that being such and feeling herself such there was One she could trust. Had He been less than God, she could not—had no right to do so—no profit in doing it. It would not meet her case. What God was had reached her heart. She could not have explained it. But it had met her case.

How lovely is this, and yet how humbling to man! In the Pharisee we have clear intellect—the perception of right and wrong, as far as natural conscience goes. All that was in Christ, all that was in God manifested in grace, he had had no perception of, he saw no beauty in it. His eye was blind as to God. "He was no prophet" to say nothing of the promised One. This the Lord shewed He was by exposing his heart, and noting to him what state he was in; He then leaves him, and the cavillers he was surrounded by.

His heart was with the sinner the humbled one. Her sins, He had declared to all, were forgiven; but to her He turns, to unfold all God's grace, to give rest to a weary heart—"Thy sins are forgiven thee." No concealing, no marring integrity by softening matters with her; though owning all that grace had wrought (she loved much) standing by her, with the heartless. When

He notices her sins, she would not have had it otherwise; we never would when grace really works. "Thy sins"—but He notices it as God, which He could, and could righteously, through His coming work—"Thy sins are forgiven thee." Man's cavills do not interrupt His work of grace; "Go in peace; thy faith hath saved thee."

What words from a divine Redeemer! Sins forgiven, faith in divine love owned, and salvation declared to be possessed by it! She had not trusted the heart of God in vain, peace—perfectly divinely given peace—for her! He had revealed Himself that she might trust the heart of God. Grace was greater than sin, though it allowed none of it. It wrought conviction confession, confidence; but it gave forgiveness, salvation, peace; for God, who had restored the soul, and more, by the revelation of Himself, was there. It seems to me besides this profoundly interesting individual case, instructive to see how, while manifesting clearly as the promised One, the Saviour in this gospel passes on, by the way in which He is manifested into His divine manifestation in grace. It is not followed here as in Matthew, which speaks of dealings with Israel with woes to Chorazin and Bethsaida, though even there it issues in grace; but in the manifestation of God in grace, and the picture of a poor sinner become the child of wisdom, as taught her souls need, and the grace of God to meet it. Observe here, too how love is known, and brokenness of heart trusts it, before the answer of peace is given by Him who could do so.

J.N.D.

Grace; we sing God's grace through Jesus.

Grace, the spring of peace to man;
Grace that from each sorrow frees us;

Grace too high for thought to scan.
Grace the theme of God's own love,
Grace the theme all themes above.

tracts and gospel magazines, bright and happy ready for a chat about her Saviour.

Her Bible was her companion and the Holy Spirit her guide, and as His will was revealed to her there was sweet obedience to it. Thus about three years ago she was baptised and took her place among us here around the Table of the Lord.

At one period she was deeply impressed with the need of the people of China and felt that possibly the Lord was calling her to serve him there. She was however hindered from doing so on medical grounds which was to her, both a disappointment and trial of faith.

And now that happy and useful life is over and we can indeed thank our God upon every remembrance of her and draw comfort from the fact that Nellie is now with her Lord and Saviour, which is "far better" and that for her there is no more pain, or sorrow, or crying, but rest, while waiting for the fulfilment of 1. Thess. 4. 15, 16, 17.

Brethren came from several other Assemblies to have fellowship with us in this time of sorrow. A meeting was held first, in the Meeting Room, where Bro. A. Monger of Sherbourne St. John, Bro. Barratt of Winstone, Bro. Campbell of Weston, and Bro. Coleman of Pamber, gave brief and suited ministry. Two of Nellie's favourite hymns were sung—No. 256 "Praise the Saviour ye who know him." No. 14 (append.) "Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep."

The interment took place at North Cerney where a brief service was conducted by Bro. Campbell, who gave a word of comfort and encouragement to believers from John 11, 25 & 26, coupled with a warning to any unsaved to be "ready to meet God," with reference to the tragic suddenness of the Home-call of our dear one, who through His grace was ready. The Sunday School

sang two verses of "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." This was followed by prayer, and so we left all that was mortal of our dear Nellie to await that blessed moment when "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (I Cor. 15, 52.)

"Even so come, Lord Jesus."

THOU KNOWEST THOU UNDERSTANDEST.

Psa. 139, 2.

O Saviour, I would trust Thee,
For Thou dost read the heart;
"Thou knowest," oh ! what comfort
These blessed words impart !

For man so oft' interprets,
With unenlightened mind,
The things he sees in others
In manner oft' unkind.

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?

*Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem ?
or have I no power to deliver ? Isa 50. 2.*

To any who may be discouraged by the lack of visible results in the Gospel field at home or abroad, the following extract from a recent letter of a Missionary in South America will come as a welcome tonic. Study of the Scriptures reveals how God works often-times unseen and unknown to man to accomplish His purposes, as for instance in the case of the wise men who came from the east at the time of the Lord's birth. How was it that these who were not numbered amongst Israel's tribes knew the things that concerned God's people? And how did the Ethiopian eunuch learn the

things that brought him to Jerusalem? Must we not joyfully conclude that although on occasions God associates us with Himself to work for the fulfilment of His purposes, He is by no means bounded by such an association, but being sovereign, He works unknown to us and in ways and to an extent undreamed of by us.

This Brother writes,

"We do not yet know how the people of the seemingly almost inaccessible province of Pataz, in the department of La Libertad, got hold of the name and address of this bookstore. But, towards the end of last year they started asking for Bibles, hymn books etc. Some months before that Sr. R.J.S., had started to read a very old Bible which had come into his possession (his letter did not say how). As he read, the Holy Spirit taught him the Truth which is in Jesus Christ. He and his children were thus converted and immediately destroyed the images which they had worshipped hitherto. He started out to preach the truth he had learned and experienced, his two brothers accompanying him. Congregations were thus formed in the province. He does not say how many, but later details reveal at least four. In Querros, for instance, the letters speak of twenty four faithful men who believe the Scriptures, who meet regularly to study them and who are building their own little place of worship.

The first letter I can find with the original request for Bibles etc., is 23rd Sept. 1936. The next is 4th Nov. thanking us for sending them, giving details of persecution and asking how to meet it. To our reply, they wrote on 2nd Feb. this year, following it up by a wire on 2nd March, telling us that the authorities were making things very difficult for them on political pretexts. Seven of them were thrown into prison on Mar. 5th, amongst them being an old person of eighty years of age, and their

Bibles were cruelly snatched away. We sent messages encouraging them from the Word of God, especially Acts 16, while telling them that we were unable to help except along the lines of Acts 12. The authorities abused them, delayed the necessary procedure and demanded money for their release. The prison might well be described by Psalm 40, 2. Their health is suffering through it, but their letters show that they have been joyous in tribulation. On May 1st they sent us a wire saying that they had been released; thanks to God.

That is not a bad bit of church history, is it? They have never seen or heard a preacher. They know nothing of the existence of a mission."

No. The hand of God alone appears to have been at work and with what, compared with our halting ways, appears to be miraculous results. In a period of something like six months, four congregations of Christian men have been formed one of which numbers at least twenty-four males presumably beside females, and that from amongst the ranks of idol worshippers. How much of this may be due to the labours of some nearby Christians and how much to the prayers of those both near and far we do not know, but we do know that all the results are founded upon the free grace of God shown forth in the death of Christ Jesus our Lord. May the same grace be effective to preserve and extend this wave of blessing against the power of Satan which has already shown itself and undoubtedly will do so again.

As we read the report do we say to ourselves, this sounds like a page from the story of the Apostles' days? It certainly does, but is there any reason why we should think in such terms? Why should we not expect similar showers of blessing today? We pray for them and this is a report of one and may we thereby be encouraged to pray for and expect, more to follow.

NEW BIRTH.

To many of the Lord's people it is to be feared that the proper understanding of the new birth is as foreign as it was to Nicodemus to whom the Lord Jesus unfolded it, yet really it is perfectly simple and when understood, is such a real source of joy and satisfaction that those who continue in ignorance of it are great losers. Just as no one can have natural life apart from ordinary birth, so likewise it is an impossibility to be spiritually alive without being born again, or experiencing new birth. It is quite probable in the nature of things, that this process may be passed through without the detailed appreciation of the one who is the subject of it, but the results of it are so definite and blessed that every believer should make a study of the matter.

ITS ORIGIN. Speaking of birth immediately suggests to the mind, the question of parentage, and here God's word makes very plain how the matter stands. By nature the Jews are children of Abraham, and both Jews and Gentiles are children of Adam. Morally the Jewish opposers of the Lord's own time were children of the devil (Jn. 8, 44,) but how beautiful to read the statement concerning as many as received Him; "to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*" (Jn. 1, 12-13). Here we have an indisputable statement regarding parentage—born of God. It is no question of flesh and blood such as secured the inheritance of the Jew to the children who followed after him, neither is it a question of the exercise of any kind of natural will power. It is entirely due, both in conception and execution, to God alone.

THE MEANS EMPLOYED. We may now enquire what means are brought into use to accomplish this wonderful thing, for it is obvious that something out of the normal course must be revealed. It was about this that Nicodemus had a difficulty, because the whole theme was so new to him that his mind did not rise above what was natural, so that the Lord had to distinguish for him, between the natural and the spiritual—that which is born of the flesh is *flesh*, that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*. He was a member of a community who had had a revelation from God and who had an inspired record of their national history preserved for their instruction. As a ruler in Israel he no doubt was well acquainted with this record, but not in such a way as God desired. His method of approach to Christ and the answer with which he was met, reveal that his ideas centred around the laws of natural inheritance, but the Lord had come to expose to view how much more was in God's mind. Why had the record of Israel's grumblings and of the visitation of the serpents amongst them, been kept for hundreds of years? Was it just for their amusement or as just an instance of the righteous judgment of God? True it was the latter, but had this student, this leader, seen anything more in it? Had this instance and many more like it led him to the conviction that man was incurably bad and that in spite of this, God in His grace provided a way by which he could be spared from judgment? Had it dawned on him that *his* heart was the same and that at that moment he was face to face with, not merely a teacher come from God, but the Lamb of God who would be lifted up like the brazen serpent, for the purpose of bearing away sin? His silence betokens his inward perplexity, but it shows too that the Lord had brought him to the point where he could receive further enlightenment. "Except a man be born of water and

of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." What is meant by the water is understood by reference to Eph. 5, 26, where the apostle Paul speaks of the church being sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the Word. There it is the word of God which the Holy Spirit uses to cleanse the child of God from all that should not characterise him and according to the Lord's own exposition to Nicodemus it is the special and proper application of that same Word by the same Spirit, that produces the spiritual birth of a soul. Nicodemus himself was an instance of this. Knowledge of the Word, he had; but its real import as applying to his own soul's need and its remedy, were brought to light that day under the instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Peter teaches the same thing in his first epistle: "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (I. Pt. I, 23-25). The Word is read or heard by natural means, but is made use of by the Spirit of God to produce in the individual that change of heart and understanding which the word speaks of as being "born again," and the person is spoken of as being "born of God."

QUALIFICATION NECESSARY. The question now arises, what amount of knowledge taught by the Spirit is required to mark one off as being born of God? If we turn to the first epistle of John we shall find a great deal about the characteristics of those born of God. In verse 1 of chapter 5, we read, "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." This of necessity supposes some knowledge of whom Jesus was and why He came, as also what He taught, but there is the simple foundation upon which the Holy Spirit can build up a full Christian growth.

The same writer closes his gospel in similar strain (see Jn. 20, 30-31). His object had been to record just such instances and words connected with the Lord Jesus, as should lead his readers to the belief that Jesus was the Christ, and that believing they might have life through His name. He declares that many other things might have been written about Him, but just those he records were set down for the express purpose of producing that necessary view of Christ Jesus the Lord under the Holy Spirit's guidance.

PROPER SUSTENANCE. Children need to be fed. Upon what can these be sustained who have arrived at this first stage of the spiritual progress? Peter gives us the clue and the diet is most natural. That which the Holy Spirit uses to produce new birth is also that which is required to sustain those born again. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby," (I. Pt. 2, 2). It is no use to begin on the word of God and continue on the word or advice of men. That which is of flesh is flesh and cannot be of any service either to promote or assist that which is spiritual. The two spheres are absolutely distinct and any attempt to mix them will only end in the downfall of that which is spiritual. We are, even when in our ordinary natural condition, complex creatures, but when born again as outlined above we inherit still another addition. As children of Adam, the Scriptures teach that we partake of a fallen nature, but by virtue of the new birth we are, to use the words of the apostle Peter, made "partakers of the divine nature" (2. Pt. 1, 4). Now just as these two exist within the complex entity of the believer at one and the same time, we may readily understand how easy it is to foster most, that which natural, to the detriment of that which is spiritual; but the advice to take

the milk of the Word to grow thereby will be found by experiment to be the best means of promoting proper spiritual growth. Just as the body demands proper food at regular intervals, so do we need regular and constant attention to reading and study of our Bibles if we would attain to the stature of full grown men in the things of God. Conversely nothing is easier than to allow this world's thorns and briars to choke the word imbibed and effectually prevent growth, even to the extent of hiding from view altogether, what may remain of the seed sown.

A.T.

ON WORSHIPPING THE FATHER.

The very A B C of worship as taught to a Samaritan woman just come to a knowledge of Christ, was, that "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (Jn. 4, 23-24). Can we say this first lesson in worship has been truly understood? Go where you will, in city, town, village, or hamlet, you find that what gives a feature to the architecture of a street, or the picturesqueness to a landscape, is one of the many so-called "places of worship" which have become the most numerous of all public buildings. But when are the worshippers in spirit and in truth gathered together, as such, to worship the Father who is seeking them? and where, or what is the worship that goes up within those walls? Will any round of ceremonial or celebrations, high or low, be accepted of God in place of that which he covets from His gathered saints, according to the revelation of His own mind? Can anything be allowed of Him to supersede our direct

approach to Himself in full-handed worship in spirit and in truth? God *wants* such worshippers, and the worship they are qualified of Him to render. What a parody upon this are "places of worship" without worshippers! So entirely has the true character of Christian worship been lost, that, as was said of one of the cities of ancient Greece, renowned for its idolatry, it was easier to find a god than a man, so may it be said of many a spot in Christendom today, that it is easier to find a "place of worship" than one intelligent worshipper!

Do we take this to heart as we ought, in humiliation before God? Do we acknowledge as we should, this sad departure from God's ways in those who bear His name? Alas, alas! we so live amongst it, and are so saturated by it, that we fail to mourn over it and to confess it, as we could scarcely fail to do if for the first time we witnessed such lamentable blindness of heart as to what is due to Him. That we have been brought into a wealthy place, none will deny; but if I have not possessed myself of it, in the length of it and in the breadth of it, the very riches around me which others are enjoying, only make more conspicuous that I am personally indigent; while, on the contrary, the more I appreciate and avail myself of the mine of wealth laid open to faith, the more am I enriched by it in an ever increasing ratio. "Unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance." No one having an adequate sense of what true Christian worship is, in its elevated divine character, but must often be painfully impressed with the poverty of it which marks many meetings, and is observable at one time or another in all. We need to be awakened to it, that our hearts may be stirred up to apprehend afresh, and to appreciate fittingly the wondrous privilege which is ours, of worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth.

The Lord put this lesson of John 4 before a poor Samaritan woman but just brought to know Himself—a babe of an hour old—and yet, alas ! how many are they who, having known the Lord for years, have never apprehended the true character of Christian worship ! That it flows from a sense of benefits received, may well be allowed; but the very fact of its flowing from it, shows plainly enough that worship, and the sense of benefits from which it flows, are not the same thing. And, happily, the further it flows, the more truly it gets its character expressed; like a river seeking the sea, which shapes its way in that given direction, and, oblivious of its feeble source, expends its acquired volume in dignity and power upon the object from which its elements were originally drawn, and by which it has ever been attracted.

However fully our souls may be impressed with the perfection of the work which has set us in cloudless favour before God for ever, and the blessedness of being in His presence who did that work, yet more is required to produce worship. This will be at once seen when we remember that, properly speaking, worship is now a tribute to the Father; the happy sense of a known, enjoyed, and eternal relationship of the highest order being an essential element in its character. Were we asked to define Christian worship, we could not answer better than by citing one of the prophetic verses of Psa. 22: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee:"—the Father's name declared unto His brethren, and Christ in their midst when assembled, leading their praises to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. It is based upon redemption accomplished by death and resurrection; for immediately that Christ can say, "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the

unicorns," He can give vent to His own personal joy in leading out the hearts of the redeemed in praise to the Father, in fellowship with Himself. Christian worship, then, is that of His brethren gathered as the assembly of God, having Christ in their midst leading their praises, and the Father the object of worship—as the Holy Ghost, it may be added, is the power. Now if this be seen, it precludes the thought of individual worship. The woman of Samaria learnt principles of worship from the lips of an infallible Teacher; and the man of John 9 had his eyes opened not only to see, but to see Him, the Son of God, and might well be down at His feet doing Him the homage of a grateful heart. But how much more was needed before Christian worship could be fittingly rendered! The very foundations had yet to be laid in the death and resurrection of Christ, in the anticipated value and virtue of which He could alone begin to reveal the Father; as He said, "I have declared Thy name;" adding, however (which is of such precious interest to us), "and will declare it." Accordingly, after being raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, the activity of His ardent love to His disciples is displayed in His instant presentation of His Father's name anew, binding them up with Himself in its power and plenitude and accrediting them now as His "brethren," thus fulfilling to the letter the first part of verse 22 in the psalm. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the assembly of God formed by the Holy Ghost's advent from a glorified Christ—gathered, as His brethren then were, unto His name as never before, and moreover baptized by Him with the same Spirit into union with Himself into one body—the latter part of the same verse was equally fulfilled; for He took His place "in the midst," according to Matt. 18, 20, to lead the praises of His saints to His Father and their

Father, to His God and their God. This was the inauguration of Christian worship; then for the first time was it expressed in its true spiritual significancy; and if this be understood, it sweeps away every thought of its possessing a formal or ceremonial character—every such observance of it doing violence to its very nature.

Drawn of the Holy Ghost, as the assembly of God, to the person of Christ, His brethren have (because of being gathered unto His name) His presence in their midst—a matter of deepest, yea, of paramount importance; and every note of praise or worship, if not what the Spirit of God draws out in direct address to the Lord Jesus, should be recognizable as that which He is Himself leading forth from His saints to gladden afresh the heart of the Father. As to this, how interesting and how seasonable is it to observe that Christ is now engaged in these three distinguished services to His Father—declaring the Father's name unto His brethren (Jn. 17, 26; Psa. 22, 22); glorifying the Father (Jn. 17, 1); and leading the praises of the assembly to and before the Father, as seen in the beautiful prophetic utterance of the psalm referred to. We ought indeed never to lose sight of the special and peculiar joy of the Son in glorifying, in whatever way, the Father who had sent Him, according to the precious import of that touching appeal in John 17: "Father glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee." The Father having glorified the Lord Jesus in response to this word, He is now glorifying the Father; and surely never more so than when He gathers us by His Spirit around Himself to concentrate our hearts' affections, and the praises of our lips (as His beloved brethren), upon His Father and ours, in that happy worship in spirit and in truth which it is His deepest joy as well to lead as to inspire.

May we, through grace, remember, that ever so deep a sense of benefits, and the most profound gratitude for them, may exist, and even in the presence of Christ, without one true note of praise or worship being sounded out from the heart. But our worship is that of *sons*, rendered in spirit and in truth, in the fellowship of the assembly of God, by the Lord Jesus Christ and His brethren, on the ground of His death and resurrection, which are so made good to our souls in the power of the Holy Ghost, that, undetained by any form of self-occupation, we are free to joy and delight ourselves, through Him, in His Father and our Father, His God and our God.

W.R. (abridged.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

Question—Not slothful in business. Rom. 12, 11. Is the word “business” in the original the same as that used in Luke 2, 49: “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” If the words are the same would not the passage in Romans apply to being late at meetings for prayer or worship, as these must be in a sense the Lord’s business?

Answer—Rom. 12, 11—the word translated business is “SPOUDE” and is used in several places in the New Test. being variously rendered in the Authorised Ver. as follows: Rom. 12, 11,—business: 2 Cor. 7, 11—carefulness: 2 Cor. 7, 12—care: Rom. 12, 8; 2 Cor. 8, 7; Heb. 6, 11; 2 Pt. 1, 5; Jude 3—diligence: 2 Cor. 8, 16—earnest care; 2 Cor. 8, 8—forwardness: Mark 6, 25; Luke 1, 39—haste. J.N.D’s New Trans. usually gives “diligent” or “diligence” as the equivalent. One use in classical Greek was to “make haste on a journey,”

surely a very needful reminder with reference to the Christian's character as a pilgrim.

Luke 2, 49—the Greek word is TA and just means “the things of.” It is really a relative pronoun and as such may vary in meaning according to the use. Such equivalents as “affairs, concerning, estate, for, of, business, state, etc.,” appear in the English.

In our authorised ver. the word “business” occurs five times in the New Test. In I Thess. 4, 11 the original has TA IDIA or “one's own things.” In Acts 6, 3 the word is CHREIA meaning “need or necessity;” whilst in Rom. 16, 2, the word PRAGMA, “deed or business” is used. The other two verses containing the word “business” are those in the question.

From the foregoing it will be seen that Rom. 12, 11 evidently suggests speed and earnestness. J.N.D. has, “as to diligent zealousness, not slothful.” In all probability if any ordinary business was referred to, one of the other words would have been used. In other epistles Paul connects our daily toil for an employer with service to the Lord; “not with eye-service as men-pleasers but.....as to the Lord and not to men,” so that even though we regard this as daily work in the ordinary sense, such must be done heartily as to the Lord. If however, we connect verse 11 with the previous verses especially verses 1 and 2, it becomes apparent that the business here referred to is that which is for the Lord, our bodies being presented to Him for that purpose. Slothfulness or half-heartedness in any shape or form, ill becomes the Christian, and if we are faithful imitators of the Lord Jesus we shall seek to be as diligent in all service as He was. Do we ever find Him avoiding anything in His pathway which was His to meet? “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Do we find Him behindhand at

any appointment? At the grave of Lazarus, He appeared to the disciples to be behind, but it turned out for greater glory to God. At the last Passover it is recorded that *when the hour was come* He sat down. And so we might continue to cull examples of faithful and accurately timed service from the divinely inspired records. May we be found in all things rendering similar service to the glory of God.

With special reference to the matter of punctuality at our various devotional meetings it should be unthinkable for believers to be slack as to it. To regard such appointments as mere matters of business would bring us under the stimulus of the various exhortations with regard to such, but surely no right minded Christian would regard them in such a light. To approach to worship should be to us such a holy and happy privilege that the very mention of it should thrill our hearts and the avoidance of being behind for such an exercise should be our diligent care. For prayer also all things should be done decently and in order. The object of a prayer meeting is to unite in our supplications to God, that as a body we may present our prayers. Such cannot be the case if half a company only are present at the beginning of the meeting. Here again too, if our hearts are duly exercised as to our needs and the way in which they may be met, we should not tolerate slothfulness in ourselves. Of course unavoidable delays do sometimes occur; against such it is not for others to dictate; they are individual matters. What has been said is only intended for general conditions.

FRUITS OF NEW BIRTH.

“ Exactly like his father ! ”—a statement at once natural and easy to understand; but has it occurred to my readers that it ought to be just as natural and easy of comprehension, as well as undeniably true, in a spiritual sense, when applied to those who are reckoned as children of God by faith, in relation to their heavenly Father? If, as Scripture asserts, we are born of God (Jn. 1, 13) and are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pt. 1, 4), should there not be apparent, moment by moment, the thoughts and actions which flow from that heavenly connection? Most assuredly there should. The Lord’s own words to His disciples were, “ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5, 48); not only when it suits us, but at all times, as is proved by the connection in which these words appear in the gospel. Amongst a series of general exhortations, the apostle Paul wrote in similar strain, “ be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children ” (Eph. 5, 1). Thus are we, in no uncertain terms, bidden to bear in this present life, the heavenly likeness. Our Christianity must not be allowed to be a dead or a hidden thing. Just as natural life shows itself and natural propensities appear in men’s lives, so must that which is spiritual also appear in the ways of the believer, if he is in a healthy spiritual state.

POWER OF SPIRITUAL LIFE. A word here as to the source of the ability to make such a display, may be opportune. Many have been the attempts to accomplish it by natural means, resulting in the production of, hermits, monks, convents etc., and all the attendant evils. One word from the Lord’s own lips gives the direction to take past this bye-road. “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (Jn. 3, 6). To take the road to the flesh will only produce what is

fleshly. If we would produce the real thing for God's glory, we must allow Him to work in us, doing all in our power to foster that nature from God which we now possess. In the Galatian epistle we read, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; and again, they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts: if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit, (Gal. 5, 16, 24-25). Thus are we taught that our conversion is to produce something tangible *now* on earth, and not bring merely a hope of *future* glory in heaven. A living reality now, evidenced everyday and always by the fact that self, as once known, has been crucified with Christ, and that our bodies are now entirely under new management: that God Himself is now in charge, and that in all our actions and words, those who observe us may find only that which comes from God. In other words, they should find enacted again before their very eyes, the life of Christ. Does someone say the standard is too high? Listen again to the Lord's words, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3, 6). Just as the road of fostering the flesh, the natural self, must lead to fleshly results, so the straight road of the Spirit must lead to spiritual results. Paul says, "walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5, 16). Again John writes, "we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 Jn. 5, 18). This does not mean to say that we shall ever reach a state of sinless perfection in this life; the opening chapter of John's first epistle denies that; but it *does* mean to say that our whole life should be modelled on heavenly lines.

GOD IS LIGHT. Let us now briefly consider on what lines we may manifest the divine characteristics. In the beginning when God set this earth in

order for man's dwelling the first command was, "Let there be light." Light is characteristic of God. It is written of those that do *evil*, that they hate the light; but of the God of whom it is testified that all His works are truth, (Dan. 4, 37), the idea of light only betokens and if possible accentuates, His holiness and righteousness. In a later scripture we read that God *is* light (I Jn. 1, 5), and, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

Now bearing in mind this idea of light and righteousness, we may ask ourselves the question what manner of persons ought we to be in all our conversation? Surely all thought of connection with anything which will not bear the searching light of God's presence, should be banished from our minds; in fact the consistent course to follow will be to allow only what is prompted by the divine nature within us, for this *can* produce, and can *only* produce, what is in accord with the Source whence it comes. Thus it is written, if ye know that He is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him : and again, whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin : for His seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin because he is born of God (I Jn. 2, 29; 3, 9). This then is the first principle for the child of God to attend to: holiness becomes the household of God and we are enjoined to maintain that absolute standard which is characteristic of God Himself.

GOD IS LOVE. We come now to the second and equally important point that our God is a God of love and in fact the same writer who tells us that God is light, also tells us twice in a few verses that God is love. It was the righteousness of God that forbade the continued presence of man in Eden after his disobedience, but the love of God has worked ever since to

bring man to an eternity of bliss. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It need not then surprise us to learn that everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God; or that, he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love, (I Jn. 4, 7-8). God has manifested His love to us in sending His Son to redeem us from our sins, and if God has so loved us, it is only fitting that we should display similar love to others. It was when we were in enmity of heart and wilful, that the knowledge of this love was brought to us: let us therefore be imitators of God in this and manifest such love for our fellows whoever they may be, and whatever their attitude may be towards us. We may be grieved by the treatment accorded to us by the very ones to whom we seek to show the love of God, but never mind; if God so loved us and sought us, should we not persist in a similar course for His glory? Especially towards our brethren in Christ Jesus we should show this love. Everyone that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him (I Jn. 5, 1). If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (I Jn. 4, 20.)

FAMILY LIKENESS. Thus the main features of the family likeness are easy to discover—light and love; absolute holiness, and unquenchable love. The fountain whence they spring is also equally clear; it is the blessed fact of a divine relationship. The result is a likeness to Christ which no human effort or ingenuity can copy, and, for the individual who is the subject of such divine grace, the indescribable joy of communion with God to the full. May all of us, writer and readers, learn more of this latter—communion which

not only springs from the joy of a known relationship, but one which leads us also to that joy which God has in manifesting Himself to poor lost sinners. A communion which will enable us to walk in the footsteps of our blessed Lord, who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. A communion which will enable us to walk worthy of that vocation wherewith we are called, and which will enable us to live in spirit in the presence of God, so as not to be swayed away from the path to which we are called, by any pressure exerted upon us from a lower sphere. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure. (1 Jn. 3, 1-3). May we all seek grace and strength from God to walk in this pathway of conscious relationship with God, that the testimony of our lives, even more than of our lips, may be for the glory of God.

A.T.

THE DIVINE SPRING IN WORSHIPPING.

It must be clear to every spiritual mind that what actuates any religious exercise, determines its real character in the sight of God, and inasmuch as He not only reads, but must needs read, the hearts of those who approach Him, every such thing is accurately, because divinely appraised by Him, and only by Him. Probably in nothing is there more defectiveness among saints than

in the worship they are privileged to render, and in which they love to engage. Almost necessarily, perhaps, is such worship practically incited by a combination of feelings not always easy to analyse. It ought not, however, to be uninteresting to us to enquire, nor impracticable to discover, by what we are controlled, when in liberty of spirit we draw near to Him in the Holy of holies. We doubtless all agree that we worship—properly speaking—only there. We have indefeasible title not only to enter but to *occupy* the Holiest; we belong to that scene if we belong to the new creation. Adam had no better title to Eden, than we to the most Holy place; nor had he a more valid claim to the tree of life and every lesser delight of paradise than have we to Him who is “the Beginning of the creation of God,” and to whatever lesser boon is ours by the same deed of conveyance. All that Eden contained (save one prohibited tree) was for Adam to appropriate and enjoy, as much as he would: his title to the whole was divinely perfect, but his enjoyment of it was measured by the extent to which he partook of what God had bestowed, since it is evident he could not have appreciated what he had failed to appropriate. The beauty and perfection of the scene, replete with every earthly endowment which wisdom, power and goodness could confer, invited himself and his help meet to enjoy what Jehovah Elohim had given him, and which was addressed not less to his moral, than to his sensuous nature, for everything, thereof be it observed, was as good as it was gratifying.

Now, notwithstanding he was so lavishly blessed of God, we read nothing of Adam as a *worshipper*; but in the book of Job where the Lord Himself gives a recital of His creation-work as to the earth, He speaks of the delight and the praise of another order of created beings who, beholding what He had wrought, were the

privileged spectators of this new exercise of creative skill, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!" So also when redemption's more beauteous work was about to be unfolded, the pledge of which was there "wrapped in swaddling clothes," an infant of days, but "seen of angels," we read of a "multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure (of God) in men!" (Luke 2, 13-14). And if we add to these a new-creation scene of glory, we find exactly the same principle obtains, "they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals, because thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation, and made them unto our God, kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth!" (J.N.D. New Translation).

The point is that in each of these three typical cases (creation, redemption, and glory), the joy or the worship which the scene indicates, is *purely unselfish*. Those higher intelligences who beheld the earth's foundations laid, and witnessed all its garnishing, saw also Adam constituted its richly endowed, its dignified and intelligent head, and being able to trace the significant and sublime character of it, they "shouted for joy!" These two causes surely were the spring of their joyous adoration—God was glorified and man was blessed; they looked upon a work neither done for them, nor one in which they were agents or instruments, but they had unalloyed joy, the purest of its kind, in beholding how God wrought in acquiring new glory to Himself and in what He did for him who was "the figure of him that was to come." And when God's blessed purposes of grace are about to be disclosed, the praises of the angelic host are of a kindred character. They celebrate

afresh His glory, and the delight of God in His eternal counsels, as to another family of His than themselves; for He took no "hold of angels (by the hand) but He takes hold of the seed of Abraham." So also, in Revelation, Old Testament saints and the church seen in heavenly glory, as represented by the elders, sing and celebrate the worthiness of the slain Lamb, and the blessing not of themselves (though they be included in that blessing no doubt) but of others. Thus is it in every case, blessing and praise to Him who has so wonderfully wrought for His own glory, and recording the value of each precious work, rather than the application of it to its objects.

The lesson I would deduce from this is, that as a worshipper I am so blessed that with a heart at leisure from itself, like the sons of God at the Adamic creation, the heavenly host at the Incarnation, and the crowned elders of the Apocalypse, I find a spiritual incentive to worship, as precious as it is powerful, not in my own blessing, but (1) in the discovery of *what God is*, now unfolded by the Holy Ghost, according to the revelation given us of Himself as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) in the joy and delight which my soul ever experiences in *what He has done*, not for us, though that is included, but *for the Son of His love* in exalting Him to the highest glory as the second Man and last Adam, "the Beginning of the creation of God." In the latter case our fellowship is "with the Father," as in the former our fellowship is "with his Son Jesus Christ."

There are few things that saints lay hold of less quickly and less clearly than these principles of worship, and there is nothing in which egotism plays a more disastrous part. It is true, as already remarked, that a combination of feelings may actuate the soul of a

worshipper, and probably this is, more or less always the case; yet, allowing this, it is well for us to observe that the value of the act must ever be determined by that which sways the heart. Taken as a spring of worship, my satisfaction in the deliverance never can come up to the immeasurable and profound satisfaction I am privileged to enjoy in the Deliverer! In the one case *I am before myself* as a delivered person, in the other I have before my soul the blessed person of the Deliverer! In the former case I measure the value of His work by my expectation of benefits it assures to me; in the other by Himself who has made that work the foundation of His acquired glories! How clearly is this latter and not the former implied in the word, "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life," apart from any reference to the beneficiaries. And again in John 17, "I have glorified thee on the earth"—though men had closed their eyes and their hearts against Him; and further, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world," though as we know, these dear disciples shewed but too plainly that as yet they knew not the Father. (John 14, 8.)

In each case there is propounded the full value of the work as before God, estimated upon grounds infinitely higher than any results present or prospective; and therefore it is a fair and indeed inevitable conclusion, that if we worship adequately, it is as having conscious fellowship by the Holy Ghost with the Father in His estimate of the worth and work of His Son, and by the same Spirit fellowship with the Son, as entering into His own blessed appreciation of all He knows and loves to declare, of the Father,—thus we "worship the Father!"

May the saints of God have such unbroken rest of heart *from self*, and *in Christ* the Beloved of the Father, that what enraptures our spirits when worshipping may

be those divine things alone which shall be preferred before our souls by the Holy Ghost as He conducts us into the eternal joy and blessedness which prevails only within the veil !

W.R.

EXTRACT.

How one discovers how little the heart can now concentrate itself to worship God. How little there is of that "looking up steadfastly"—that fixedness of soul. Worship is the character of the place to which you are wending your way; there it goes on for ever. Here we worship too—but how poor the measure—worship for what He has given; for what He is.

By an old brother.

WITH HIS FRIENDS.

In a London Mission School near a Settlement, the teacher asked, "Where does Jesus live?"

A small boy spoke up. "Some of His friends have come to live in our alley and I think He lives with them."

CORRESPONDENCE.

Question—It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again

unto repentance: Heb. 6, 4-6. Should we understand from this verse that a Christian may, through falling away, lose his salvation?

Answer—The answer to this question is a most decided negative, and such an idea could only be formed as the result of taking note of these verses by themselves, without any reference to their setting. To begin with the epistle from which they are taken was written to Hebrews or Israelites, and its whole line of argument is based upon the Mosaic ritual. It contains a series of comparisons and contrasts, which show how fully the events and spiritual teaching of the New Testament, fulfil the types and prophecies of the Old. Thus for instance chapter one tells how God in past days spoke by human messengers, but in "these last days," by no less a Person than His own Son, who fulfilled in detail what the Old Test. proclaimed of Him. Thus one by one Moses, Aaron, Melchisedec, and David are all brought in and the Aaronic priesthood is very fully dwelt upon, but all with the object of showing how that which earlier generations adhered to, had been replaced by that which was declared in and by the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the end of chapter 5 it will be noted that the writer breaks away from his line of argument for a moment to upbraid his readers for their backwardness as though they scarcely knew what the O.T. scriptures contained "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat..... Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age." ("perfect," marg). Instead of being so well versed in the types and figures as to be able to recognise the substance at the first glance and direct others also,

they themselves were backward. Chap. 6 opens with an exhortation to advance beyond these foundations (for all the things which he mentions are connected with the old order of things) and to reach on to perfection. There is thus a direct connection between the lack of perfection in the end of chap. 5 and the exhortation to attain to it in chap. 6.

It should now be apparent who these people are who are described in our question. They are simply those who have held the O.T. scriptures and usages and have been shown their fulfilment in the N.T. Instead of jumping at them and thanking God for the Gospel, they were in danger of receding again into the gloom of the shadows, to look in vain for some other fulfilment than that already pointed out. They had as it were been brought right into the blazing light of the Gospel, had examined it in detail, seen its effect upon others and were then about to turn from it; by so doing they would declare their adherence to the sentence passed upon the Lord Jesus by the Jews and forfeit all right to the deliverance which He had brought. Thus would they shut themselves out from the sphere of blessing by declaring by such actions that Christ was an imposter.

A note on the word "renew" appears in J.N.D.'s New Translation which helps to give the sense more clearly. He says "renew" here does not mean "a renewal of change" but "to make what is entirely new." For these people it would not be the re-establishment of a former state, but the setting up of a state which had never yet been theirs.