

Some
LANDMARKS
of the Faith

BEING
OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON
SCRIPTURAL SUBJECTS

THE FAITH—once delivered to the Saints.
—*Jude i, 3.*

Remove not the ancient landmark which thy
fathers have set.—*Prov. xxii, 28.*

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FOREWORD.

THE reader will find in the following pages many thoughts concerning the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. No subject could be of greater importance. Here is truly a *Landmark* of the faith, one that shall never be removed nor forgotten!

The gospel of John brings before us Christ as the Word become flesh, dwelling in our midst, wondrous theme! Yet, ponder it, dear reader, *He came to die*. The work given Him to do by His Father was only completed in His death.

The first three chapters of this gospel concern the earliest days of our Lord's ministry, before John was imprisoned. Yet, in them, there are already three references to His death. From His own lips we hear the momentous words "*The Son of Man must be lifted up.*" And already had He given to the Jews the sign of His death and resurrection in the words "*Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.*" And even earlier than that when the Baptist first saw Him coming unto him by the waters of Jordan, he exclaimed "*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*"

Thus in Him were the scriptures fulfilled. Abraham had said to Isaac "*God will provide Himself a lamb.*"—Christ is the Lamb of God. Moses had lifted up the serpent before the dying Israelites—Christ is the uplifted One for a perishing world. Yet man, to his shame, should

have his part in that death “*Destroy this temple.*” So also was that scripture fulfilled “*They hated Me without a cause.*” But thank God even there where *sin* abounded *grace* did much more abound.

EDITOR.

Seven Reasons for the Death of Christ.

THE subject of the death of Christ is a vast one and has many aspects. We must not limit it to meeting our need, but enter more into its fulness, although not in eternity itself shall we be able to do this completely.

“*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*” 1 Cor. xv. v. 3. Here we may begin. How important to know that the death of Christ was in the mind of God before time ! He was the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world, was the subject of promise in Eden, was set forth in type in Abel’s lamb and continued through the offerings of the patriarchs and the Mosaic economy.

“*When we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly.*” Rom. V, v. 6. What a long time man is in learning that he is not only a sinner, but helpless ! He was proved so in the garden, also before the flood, after the flood, under law and now under grace. He cannot get back to God by his own efforts. But Christ died for the helpless sinner.

“ Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.” Gal. I, v. 4. It would not be like the Lord Jesus just to settle the question of our sins and leave us in the system of things of which Satan is the head and yet there is a danger for us as Christians to become ensnared in that for which He died to deliver us.

“ Christ—suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” I Peter iii, v. 19. Man had got away from God; Cain went out from the presence of the Lord; and in our Lord's parables the prodigal went into the far country; the man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. So Christ has died to bring us home like the prodigal, graced in the best robe and happy in the presence of God.

“ Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living.” Rom. xiv, v. 9. God has decreed that every knee should bow to Him. How blessed for those who have done so in this day of grace. The believer, too, is happy to bring the Lord into all his daily circumstances.

“ Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus ii, v. 14. Thus He would have us like Himself for He was holy, harmless, undefiled. He went about doing good. Are we afraid of being spoken of as peculiar people because we are not of the world? But why be troubled at this, if we have His approval?

“ *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*”
I Thess. v, v. 10. What a prospect is before the believer to live in the sunshine of His love for eternal ages, in those mansions that He has gone to prepare in His Father’s house ! And He has died for us for this very purpose ! Whether we wake or sleep the voice of Christ and the trump of God will call us up together to meet Him in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Well may we sing :—

O Lord, Thy love’s unbounded !

So full, so vast, so free !

Our thoughts are all confounded

Whene’er we think of Thee.

Scarborough.

C.S.

The Cross.

“ *AND he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha : where they crucified him.*” St. John xix, 17, 18.

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ lies at the foundation of all our knowledge of God. It is the central point of Divine revelation ; love, holiness, goodness, truth ; all were manifested there, and serve to fill up the whole circle of grace and glory which centres in that supreme reality. The Son of God has come, but only to be crucified by the wicked hands of men. The

greatest expression of the love of God, the sending of His Son, has only brought out the greatest expression of man's sin; both met at the Cross, Divine grace overbounding, the love of God triumphing in Him who had been its supreme Object from all eternity.

Hence a right apprehension of the Cross is essential to the soul. And, indeed, defective and erroneous views concerning Christianity invariably owe their existence to failure to understand the Cross. And on the positive side, this fact can be seen actually demonstrated in the lives of men of God. For there can be little doubt that the spiritual greatness of Augustine, M. Luther, and J. N. Darby lay in their recognition of the Cross, and their apprehension of its deep meaning. Few men have ever lived, and certainly no one else in his day, who realised the offence of the Cross more than Luther. So he writes, "Some are offended because we sometimes say in the pulpit that Christ was a carpenter (*Zimmergesell*). But it is a far greater offence that He was nailed to the Cross, as one guilty of blasphemy and insurrection, between two malefactors."

Further, not only does the Cross stand alone, supreme, in the history, both of time and of eternity, not only do the mightiest moral forces in the universe range themselves around it in an unparalleled conflict of light and darkness; but it is so much the power of Divine grace that it enters into the heart of a child, and its meaning becomes part of its little life. In a word—it

sums up all the suffering love and tender compassions of that precious and only Saviour, Jesus the Son of God. The symbol of man's wickedness, cruelty and shame, has become the symbol of God's love, goodness, and compassion. Yet that Cross is wondrous and blessed *only* because of Him who was the crucified One there. All, all depends on Christ. *It is Christ's cross*, and we glory in it just because it was His.

So J. N. Darby writes, "To the first of these conditions, our being under judgment and condemnation for sin, Christ's death upon the cross is the divine answer in expiation. All that God was in His nature, He was necessarily against sin; for, though He was love, love has no place in wrath against sin, and the withdrawal of the sense of it, consciousness in the soul of the privation of God, is the most dreadful of all sufferings—the most terrible horror to him who knows it: but Christ knew it infinitely. But God's divine majesty, His holiness, His righteousness, His truth, all in their very nature bore against Christ as made sin for us. All that God was, was against sin, and Christ was made sin. No comfort of love enfeebled wrath there. Never was the obedient Christ so precious; but His soul was to be made an offering for sin, and to bear our sins judicially before God. At the end of the three hours of darkness, this is expressed by the Lord in the words of Psalm xxii. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The result, and that to the end of time, and indeed for an endless

eternity of unmingled grace for us, has been already touched on, and I will advert to it again in connection with remarkable facts as to the expressions of the Lord Himself . . . All other sorrows pressed Him onward with accumulating power to this, and merged in it, in that darkness which hid all but what He was enduring in the forsaking of God."

The cross of Christ thus stands alone as the hour of our accomplished

REDEMPTION.

Every question regarding sin and our sins, and God's holiness and righteousness, was settled there. God was glorified in that Cross and in those sufferings, in regard of all man's evil; yea, more glorified than He had been dishonoured. And from that Cross grace flows to the guilty. The vilest sinner on earth can flee to-day to the Saviour who hung there, and find his refuge in that Cross. For, on account of it, the very glory of God which he fears stands engaged to the blessing of him who takes his place before Him as a guilty sinner. As John Bunyan wrote centuries ago,

"Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that was there put to shame for
me!"

But the cross of Christ bears upon man as well as upon his sins. We welcome what saves us from judgment, but we shun what brings judgment upon all our pride, greatness and self-sufficiency. So Paul writes to the Corinthians,
"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to

preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God . . . For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I Cor. i, 17-31.

Now man naturally boasts in all that constitutes his greatness in the world of his own glory; but when God intervenes in Christ, He does so not only in grace justifying the ungodly, but He intervenes also in judgment setting aside the wisdom and glory of man. These Corinthians, however, though saved, did not understand the preaching of the Cross. They did not realise that in the cross of Christ God had confounded all the wisdom, power, and greatness of this world. Where was its wisdom when its princes crucified the Lord of Glory? There is neither aristocracy of birth, intellect, or power, which has not come under the unsparing judgment of God at the Cross. Man's utmost wisdom, all the philosophy of the Greeks, is food only for judgment. God does not judge man's sins in order to spare the very wisdom that sanctioned them. And whilst we are glad to part with our sins, we would like to retain our wisdom or our

might, our birth or our breeding, in order to add to the work of God, to ornament it with human glory. But God sets all this aside in judgment, and the Cross no more spares *self* than it spares *sin*.

This is a hard lesson, often a bitter one, and often learnt in sorrow. Religious flesh, too, represented by the Jew, suffers the same utter condemnation. Flesh, whether religious or profane, noble or wise, must go in judgment. Christ went to the Cross, not only to die for our sins, but to close up in judgment for ever the history of man after the flesh. God has no further word to say to that man. And all the sorrow at Corinth and in Galatia was the result of allowing that man. Hence in his letters to both these Churches St. Paul introduces the Cross.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

“ 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 . ” And further, *“ But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ , by whom the world is crucified unto me , and I unto the world . ”* Galatians ii, 20 ; vi, 14.

Every doctrine in Christianity possesses its Divine counterpart in the history of the soul. Christianity is not a system of *ethics*, but of *immense realities*. Hence the Apostle did not

preach the Cross merely to shew the end of man, but also to shew every Divine thought as to man already attained in Christ. God has brought in Christ, Man after another order, and Divine resources are there. He is God's power and God's wisdom, and this in resurrection where that power and wisdom both operate and are fully displayed. And we have all in Him : God has made Him unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Hence no nobility, wisdom or power of man is needed in the Assembly. Christ is all. And if a man thinks that his own wisdom or any one else's will embellish God's Assembly, then he has not begun to understand Christianity.

Therefore it was no mere phrase to the Apostle, " I am crucified with Christ," he knew what it meant ; and the Spirit of God in Paul's own inspired letters has preserved the record of what the Cross meant to him, and what conformity to Christ's death cost him. And true Christian life is measured by that cost for each individual soul. The gateway to blessing for the believer is the acceptance of the Cross. Many speak of the *via crucis* ; but unless it be Christ's cross it will mean no more than self-repression and self-mortification. True self-abnegation results only from the acceptance of the Cross.

But the Apostle does not stop there, he adds, " Nevertheless I live." That is the triumph of God, not only that He causes men to live, but to live in the life of Christ. So he continues,

“ Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” If the Cross was for Paul the termination of the old life, as a man seeking the favour of God according to the flesh, it was also the commencement of a new life, for Christ was life to him now. He had accepted the Cross, and in result Christ lived in him. And the love of the Son of God, by faith in Whom he lived in the flesh, energized him in all that devotedness which marked his unselfish life of service for those who belonged to Him.

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS.

“ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage . . . And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution ? then is the offence of the cross ceased.” Galatians v, 1-11.

The Galatians had gone back to seek a justification by works of law, the very thing the work of Christ had delivered them from (Romans iii, 19-31). They were fallen from grace in so doing, whosoever of them was thus justified. But Paul was being persecuted meanwhile : because he preached circumcision ? Surely not. The offence of the Cross had not ceased for Paul. He preached grace, free grace, and justification by grace, and consequent liberty from the yoke of legal bondage. Therefore he preached the Cross, and suffered the offence of the Cross. It could not be otherwise. For the Cross is an offence to man in the flesh,

seeking a righteousness of his own by human works. And he who preaches that Cross, thus setting aside all man's efforts and shewing their true meanness, discovers the offence of the Cross. So did Luther discover it, when he attacked the whole evil system of works and papal indulgence in the Romish body. Because Rome had deprived the Cross of its offence, making it a fashionable symbol of fleshy mortification, and the sign of a lifeless sacerdotalism. Luther's preaching of grace brought back the offence of the Cross. And so it is to-day; we may speak rightly of the *via crucis* yet know nothing of the offence of the Cross. The preaching of the Cross never yet gathered a multitude, except indeed it were to pour contumely on the preacher.

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION.

“ *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 in earth, or things in heaven.*” Colossians i, 20.

“ *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.*” Ephesians ii, 16.

I do not dwell upon this great subject; but only call attention to it as resting upon the Cross. All peace, whether the eternal rest of God and of His saints, or the peace with God of the individual soul, or peace between Jew and Gentile reconciled in one body, all depends upon the Cross of Christ. Sin had brought in every character of distance possible; and that

enmity can only be abolished in the judgment of sin. The Cross is the only true, because Divinely perfect, judgment of sin. So that no enmity can reign when sin is judged. For we are not only assured of the love that God has toward us, but we are at rest ourselves in the presence of His glory, every claim having been met at the Cross. Jew and Gentile put Christ to death there; and there came the judgment of God on both Jew and Gentile. In Christ Divine judgment has spared none, for how could it spare when He, the only perfect One, was suffering for us there? We are reconciled to God; we have peace, for peace is made; and Christ is our peace. "The blood of His cross" answers every question for us, because it has met all the nature and glory of God. Eternal glory and blessing for the believer result from it. And to Him who was the crucified One there, and to God by Him, will be the glory for ever.

V. W. J. H. L.

Bath.

The Offering of Christ.

Leviticus i and iv.

HOW helpful are the types in the Old Testament to illustrate and to give some instructive details of the *doctrine* in the New. In the Old Testament, there are, among other sacrifices, the Burnt Offering and the Sin-offering, setting forth typically the Death of the Lord

Jesus Christ with wonderful detail. It is the *one* death, but Scripture gives us various aspects of that death of our Lord.

If a sinner places his hands (in faith) on the head of the Sin offering, that is, Christ viewed as the Sin offering; the Victim (Christ) *stands charged* with his sins, and answers for them to God; and the sinner through faith in this blessed Sacrifice, has an *eternal clearance* of his sins, which are gone for ever before God; the Lord Jesus Christ having borne the judgment of God due to him. Therefore he can now say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. i, v. 5).

If we put the hand of faith on the Burnt-Offering, that is, Christ in this light, we stand before God in His Son's acceptance, "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians). His acceptance is ours also. So on the one hand sins are put away by His blood-shedding and we stand in righteousness, as to our sins, before God, through the Sin offering, and on the other hand we are before God in the fragrance (sweet savour) of Christ Himself, that is taken into favour in the Beloved through the Burnt-offering.

The Burnt-offering shews God's delight in Christ's death in which He has been glorified in His nature—His love; glorified too in regard to what has come in through sin. We are thus before God, in what God *delights* in.

The offerer in faith is *identified* with the offering and gets the value of it before God.

“As he is, so are we in this world.” (I John iv). God has in Christ accomplished a perfect and complete Work of Redemption, for His own glory and for the Salvation of man. Those who through grace, receive His Son are thus able to approach God and worship Him, the Father, in spirit and truth.

A. N. McDONALD.

Sydney.

The Songs of the Redeemed.

THE SONG OF THE SEA.

“*I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously.*” Ex. xv, v. 1.

Moses gave intelligent expression to the praises of a redeemed people in the song recorded here. Miriam answered to it, leading the refrain of the women of Israel. The song set forth God's thoughts of that which He had wrought in the deliverance of His people; Miriam's answer was the expression of the joy of the people in that redemption. But the wilderness grew long through the wanderings of the people, and the daughters of music were brought low. “*Miriam died at Kadesh.*” The trials, testing and breakdown of the wilderness hush the song of redemption. It is a blessed thing to be redeemed to God, and what heart that knows it responds not in song? But it is a serious thing to be tried under the hand of God in this world, and who has gone through it without feeling the

sorrow connected with it? One and another falls by our side, and a hush comes upon the spirit.

THE SONG OF THE SPRING.

“ *Then Israel sang this song, Spring up O well; sing ye unto it.*” Num. xxi, v. 17.

Now another aspect of the death of Christ is presented—the uplifted serpent. In it we learn that God has condemned sin in the flesh, withal glorifying Himself in regard to it. And now He leads His people into life beyond death. Life and incorruptibility have been brought to light. Our eyes are no longer suffered to dwell upon failing and dying men, but upon Him who is out of death living to God in His deep affections, and in never-fading glory. *Our place is with Him there*, and we have received the Spirit as an inward fountain of water springing up into eternal life. (John iv, 14). Again the song arises; not now the song of the joy of redemption, but that which is connected with our present entrance into the purpose of God, and we set forward toward the sunrising.

Some seek to live only in the remembrance of the song of the sea, but may it be ours also to sing the song of the spring which connects us with the unfailing purpose of the love of God.

JOSEPH REVELL.

Songs in the Night.

“ God my maker, Who giveth songs in the night.” Job xxxv, 10.

“ Songs in the night ”
Thou hast promised us Lord,
Though darkness enfolds us
We joy in this word—
How once in the prison,
Fast fettered with chains,
Thy faithful apostles
Sang praise to Thy Name.
So now would our voices
A note sweetly raise,
To Jesus in glory,
To whom is our praise.
While waiting the day-break,
The hope of our soul—
Thyself, Oh Lord Jesus—
Our way and our goal.

H. L.

Bath.

A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ.

MILITARY matters are to-day occupying a large place in the politics of this world, and man seems to be forging a weapon that may turn in the end to his own destruction.

Military metaphor is often used in Scripture and the Apostle Paul's exhortation to Timothy seems particularly applicable to-day. *“ Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth*

himself with the affairs of this life : that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier' (II Tim. ii, 3-4). The Apostle, writing perhaps his last letter from the loneliness of his prison, had experimental knowledge of hardness. The list of things in II Cor. xi, 24-28, indicate that here was no soldier in ceremonial array, but one in reproach and despising, yet standing fast in the certain knowledge of his Captain's will and carrying it out unflinchingly.

So, to-day there is need of the Shammah's (II Sam. xxiii, 11-12) who will stand their ground, maybe alone, in defence of the Truth. As he was concerned as to his inheritance, so we too, dear reader, have a glorious heritage to defend.

Our weapons, however, are "*not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of Strongholds*" (II Cor. x, 4), and if we do betake ourselves to carnal weapons, this is surely displeasing to Him who hath chosen us to be soldiers, and leads only to failure and disgrace.

A true patriot in this world is perhaps hard to find, that is, one who has only one wish, namely; to please the King or Leader of his country and is prepared to suffer for it.

So the true Shammah's to-day are very few; ease and lack of concern for the Truth seem to be more or less characteristic of the mass, yet surely the heart touched by the Lord Jesus will be prepared to stand and contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

This will probably lead to reproach and lone-

liness, but if these lines should reach any in such circumstances, let him remember that at the end of our Lord's earthly pathway they all forsook Him and fled—that the Apostle Paul, too, in the solitariness of his prison had to say, “ *Only Luke is with me* ” (II Tim. iv, 11). John also said “ *I was in the Isle called Patmos for the Testimony of Jesus* ” (Rev. i, 9), and we recall that the last state of the professing Church is with the Lord outside, knocking, and calling “ *If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.* ” (Rev. iii, 20).

Let us take courage then, the Captain of our salvation is coming, and those who stand in the outposts shall soon be relieved. Let us hear His word—“ *Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown* ” (Rev. iii, 11).

The day of display is yet future and our place is not now like the Soldier on full dress parade but doing our Captain's will in the piece of territory where He has placed us, surrounded perhaps by enemies and maybe the active opposition of those who should be helpers, yet we may have the inward conscious knowledge that we are doing our Captain's will in the position that He has given us to hold for Him.

The weariness of conflict will soon be exchanged for the rest of Home and the tattered garments of faithful service for the unfading Crown and robes of Glory and Beauty in the Palace of the King—the Father's House.

Birmingham.

E. F. G.

Encouragement in the Midst of Departure.

OUR God is the God who comforts and encourages His people as He leads them homeward. The path of life is beset with many difficulties (II Cor. chs. i-v). This affords us opportunities for proving the sufficiency of our Lord, and of having the consciousness of His approval even in a day of departure from the truth. The second epistle to Timothy is very encouraging to any individual whose desire is to be "*meet for the master's use.*" Many things that are quite right in their proper place may be used to divert from this important purpose. The need of souls, the desire to be used or to be more useful, even the longing for Christian companionship may divert us; and we have to judge ourselves as to the lack of each of these important features. But the essential thing in a day of general decline is to be ready for the use of the Master, and the enemy would seek to prevent us from being thus prepared by displacing this all-important characteristic by some other right and proper feature of Christian life.

This epistle reminds us of some experienced and successful warrior who is certain of final victory, though he is fully aware that many severe conflicts will take place before the complete triumph can be celebrated, and that the courage and endurance of the faithful will be sorely tested by the unfaithfulness and departure of the masses. So he earnestly seeks to encourage his companion in the conflict to neither be discour-

aged nor to surrender, but to continue in “ *the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them* ” (II Tim. iii, 14).

Timothy was called to serve a Master in whom the purpose of God concerning men was fully accomplished, and in Whom there were all the resources of grace for the fulfilment of that purpose in the “ called ” ones. He was the One who “ *abideth faithful,* ” Who “ cannot deny Himself.” Therefore Timothy was to make no compromise, to seek no middle path, but at all costs to follow the directions of his Master (ch. ii, 5). The great strength of the adversary was not underestimated, but the resources available were inexhaustible, and in due time not one foe would remain unsubdued. Meanwhile the enemy *appeared* to be gaining, and this would be increasingly true as the end approached, but at the triumphant revelation of the faithful One with His faithful ones the righteous Judge would give a crown of righteousness to all that love His appearing (ch. iv, 8). The God who had revealed Himself to Abraham as the Almighty, and now in the Son by the name Father had, “ before the world began,” purposed vast blessing which was to fill heaven and earth for His own glory and delight. The spiritual universe will be a manifestation of Christ, for the Spirit of Christ will animate and pervade it. It will therefore not only be impregnable but, being gathered together in one in Christ, will remain untarnished to the glory of God throughout

eternity. The first man seduced by Satan had filled the earth with corruption and violence, but the second Man will fill heaven and earth with holiness and love. This vast scene of blessing will be entirely God's handiwork, formed by the grace in Christ Jesus before the world began, and therefore will remain for ever to His praise and glory.

It should be carefully weighed that the directions to the *individual* to purge himself and follow with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart are given to him as a vessel in the vast Christian profession which is likened to those used in a great house. If this is overlooked the truth relating to *local* responsibility and that resulting from being one of the *universal* assembly cannot be maintained. Hence, though these directions will guide the individual locally, they are given everywhere for his guidance in relation to *all* that call on the Name of the Lord.

A wicked person can only be put away by those locally gathered to the Name of the Lord in one town or district, for it says "from among yourselves." An individual guided by the injunctions in II Tim. ii could not therefore associate with that person, nor with any who received him, unless he had repented of his sin, even if he removed to the other side of the globe, and on the other hand the companionship of any individual calling on the Lord out of a pure heart should be sought and kept regardless of where he resides. Many have made the mistake of thinking that the "with them" is a company

instead of the class or kind of persons with whom the faithful individual is privileged to associate, and this leads to spiritual pride and the practical denial of the fact that "There is one body."

There is also another difficulty in these days of confusion. Many erect a barrier to companionship through associating with those that, for various reasons, continue to act on principles contrary to the Word of the Lord. It should be clear to all if an individual is forced to be apart from certain saints in one town on account of wrong doctrine or because principles taught in the Word are not acted upon, then he is obliged to be apart from all everywhere who have companionship with those saints from whom locally he has separated. The injunction to depart from iniquity directs the individual in regard to all who confess the Name of the Lord throughout the world. It is not a direction to judge persons but to be apart from what is a departure from the directions of the Lord, and should lead the individual to judge himself for having been connected with what is contrary to the Lord's will. Some plead the need and opening for service, but it must be remembered that we are never off duty and always "under the law to Christ," and if the Lord directs the servant to depart from iniquity could He lead him to go into it? Division is sin, a very grievous sin, but if error is taught, or principles not taught in the Word of God are introduced, the faithful are forced to depart from the evil. It is *departure* from the truth that causes division, for the truth *unites*,

and leads to “ *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* ” (Eph. iv, 3). Therefore it becomes all to see that they are contending only for the faith once delivered to the saints, and not for deductions drawn from the words of the Holy Scriptures. The Divine injunctions must be maintained; deductions drawn from them can easily be abandoned, unless there is self-will working. It is not the actual words the Holy Spirit uses which cause disturbance amongst those who desire to please the Lord, but contending for the acceptance of additions and deductions drawn from them. Hence let each earnestly contend for THE FAITH, and at the same time be ready to yield, and not to press any *thought* not expressed by the actual words of the Divine Writings.

Paul’s very trying circumstances when he wrote this epistle should be called to mind. He had been arrested the second time; all in Asia had turned away from him, only Luke was with him. He realized the sad condition of the saints everywhere and knew things would wax worse and worse, and he had even to exhort his beloved Timothy twice to “ *Do thy diligence to come,* ” and yet there is not a sign of being cast down, nor any thought of surrendering any part of the truth or introducing things of the earth or world to obtain a hearing, but on the other hand he has many words of encouragement for his beloved son in the faith to walk in the truth and refuse all departure from it.

London.

J. S. G.

The Flock of the Lord.

*“ Ye my flock, the flock of my pasture . . .
saith the Lord.”*

EZEKIEL xxxiv, 31.

Oh day dark and cloudy,
Oh sorrow so deep,
Oh flock of His pasture—
His suffering sheep !
Oh Shepherds unfaithful
Midst gathering woes,
The sheep, torn and harassed,
Surrounded by foes.

Jehovah will gather,
Jehovah will bless ;
Himself is the Shepherd—
Our help in distress.
If man is unfaithful
Shall Satan prevail ?
Jehovah hath purposed,
He never can fail.

Then comfort His people,
The hour draweth nigh—
The hour of His glory,
His triumph and joy.
We'll live in that love,
We'll gaze on that face,
Rejoicing for ever
In riches of Grace.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.

J. Turnbull.

The Sower.

MATT. xiii, LUKE viii.

A REMARKABLE moment has dawned in the ways of God! The nation of Israel is in a state of barrenness and decrepitude when suddenly there arises in the midst of it One who takes the character of a SOWER.

“*A Sower went forth to sow.*” God in former times had raised up Judges, Saviours, Prophets, Kings, but never a Sower. Christ had seed to sow, not only in Israel, but in the hearts of all men.

“*A Sower went forth.*” Christ was not a Reformer like a Samuel or a Josiah, but an Inaugurator. He had not come to reform, but to supersede, the old, and to establish something new. Light had come—new Light. It had come to be “sown for the righteous,” Psa. xcvii, v. 11. A beautiful and wonderful sight is this Sower, sowing seeds of light! This is *productive* activity, for seed-sowing is in view of production. The Light had come of a new order of things, a Kingdom quite distinct and apart from Judaism, quite distinct and apart also, from the Kingdom that the law and the prophets announce, namely, the age to come; but nevertheless, a Kingdom of indefinite duration, a moral, heavenly, spiritual and invisible Kingdom. It is a Kingdom moreover, which circles

around Christ *as He is*, risen and glorified, for it is present with us to-day.

Out of the three Kingdoms in Creation—Animal, Vegetable, Mineral—two have the power of reproduction, and the vegetable by seed-sowing. This is a wonderful expression of the power and wisdom of God. Man is an agriculturist, he has divinely given wisdom to utilise the vegetable Kingdom by seed-sowing, thus he can produce and increase. No doubt the Creation was formed in view of the coming of Christ, so that He might be furnished with suitable typical and parabolical teaching; also that the mind of man might be formed and enriched so as to be capable of being receptive of such teaching. The Lord's parables retain their naturalness. Seed is sown in prepared ground, but when sown broadcast is apt to fall on unprepared ground. This is unavoidable. Such seed is of course wasted. The Jews were familiar with a parabolic form of teaching. The conditions of seed-sowing in the east would be rather different from those in this country. The ground less perfectly cleared; the road passing across the field; the rock, often jutting out or lying under a few inches of soil; the good ground, prepared more by nature than artificially.

The order taken by the parable is—the Sower, the Seed, the Ground, and the effect of the sowing.

The seed is the Word of God (Luke) or the

word of the Kingdom (Matt.). The Law and the Prophets are the Word of God, but are not said to be the word of the Kingdom. The Parables are the similitudes of the Kingdom, and there are ten similitudes in Matthew. This number shews to us the importance of the Kingdom. It is helpful to apprehend the character of the Word of the Kingdom; there is nothing *legal* in it, for *Grace* is its character. The Lord's utterances were seeds of light, but they were not only utterances, but expressions of a perfect and distinct revelation, and if God's word, also Christ's word—" *My Word* "; parts of a distinct and complete whole. The Parable of the Sower although complete in itself, was one of many, the whole group of ten parables presenting a perfect picture, " *The Kingdom of the heavens.* "

The Lord's object was thus to sow a parabolic description of this Kingdom in the hearts and minds of those who had ears to hear. This is evidently a new kind of acting, different from all that preceded. The Sower is therefore a teacher rather than a preacher, and the Kingdom lay in all its perfection in the Lord's mind. There the conception of it was, of course, perfect; a distinct part of the truth that He had come to declare.

His delight was in it! He greatly desired to sow this seed, this Word of God, He knew its value, and He knew how to sow it. He knew also the kind of ground that would not only receive, but retain it, and finally He knew what

would be the effects of the sowing. It was not exactly the gospel He wished men to receive intelligently, it was that and more, it was a system, a new system of things connected with Himself risen and glorified.

This Sower well knew the ground into which He wished to deposit this treasure, this glorious system of light and truth ! It was the heart of man. The parable speaks of four classes. One out of the four only is good ground. But the seed is sown broadcast into four classes of hearers : Wayside, stony ground, thorny ground, and good ground. How the Lord knew the heart of man ! What a test to the heart that loves concealment to be so brought under a perfect spiritual surveillance ! Man can not only deceive, but himself is easily deceived, but here is the One who can neither deceive nor be deceived, for He sees every heart as it is, and sees every heart in the perfect spiritual light of God's presence, for God is light.

First the wayside hearer. He is one whose heart has been hardened by the world, like the hardened road lying across the field. The wayside hearer does not understand, for there is no moral and spiritual intelligence to take in what is said. It is clearly a question of incapability—certain words or sentences lie on the surface of the mind, like seeds of grain on a hardened road. These words are simply beyond the capacity of the wayside hearer. It is not that he lacks natural intelligence, but he has no *spiritual* perception, and what is uttered is spiritual. Satan,

like the birds of the air, is on the alert. He can catch away the seed from the memory as easily as the birds pick up the grain on the wayside. It is not that Satan loves these grains of light, no; but he loves to catch them away from the heart of man, for he knows too well their wonder-working power. He dreads that Christ should gain a soul, and the enemy does not willingly relinquish his influence over the souls of men.

This introduction of Satan into the Lord's exposition of the Parable of the Sower is very suggestive, for the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ is in order that men may have a resource, a place of refuge, from the Kingdom of Satan. The existence of the Kingdom of Satan in the world makes the Kingdom of God a necessity if men are to be saved. So the exposition in Luke gives an important addition here—"lest they should believe and be saved," and thus shews how the gospel and the Kingdom are intertwined.

The stony ground hearers are a second and different class, characterised by emotion, excitement and ardency. The heart of man is not only hardened by the world, but it is hard naturally—like the rock. This hardness may not appear on the surface, it is more the underlying selfish substratum of the heart, like the rock covered but slightly with soil. The word is received with joy, but this reception is superficial, there is no depth, conscience is not reached, there are no inward underlying exercises, no solemnity of

heart, repentance is not present, nor faith, but natural belief only. Time is the great test of all things, and here in this class there is no continuity.

The thorny ground hearer is a third class—a worldly class. The Word is received mentally, but the heart is full of the cares, riches, and pleasures of life. With those who live luxuriously the Word has little or no place. We may learn from these cases that word is powerful enough to affect the heart of man naturally. It produces a certain moral and religious effect. But this is not *conversion*. The natural heart lacks retentiveness, there is no love of truth, only *Love* retains the truth.

The good ground comes last. We know that in agriculture that ground prior to the reception of seed needs preparation. The plough must first be used, and afterwards the harrow. We are sure also that this Parable assumes what it does not directly state, that the heart of man needs preparation, for naturally neither the heart of man, nor a class, can ever be described as good. But such preparation does not lie within the scope of the Parable of the Sower. That God has perfect power over the heart of man other scriptures teach, for the Scriptures have a very great deal to say concerning the heart. They speak of God taking away the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh. They speak of a broken and a contrite heart. How the heart becomes in a state of brokenness and contrition, or in a softened, fleshy state, is not given here. We

read that God gave Saul another heart when he became a King, and we may feel almost certain that the good ground in this Parable is descriptive of a state of heart which is produced by new birth—that spoken of by the Lord to Nicodemus. The heart certainly needs to be in a broken and contrite condition, it needs to be made so by grace, and we may add that it needs more, it needs in some degree to be spiritualised, or at least to be given a certain spiritual capacity for the reception and retention of what is spiritual. There must be a certain apprehension, delight, and appreciation of what is spiritual, if fruit, spiritual fruit, is to be borne. This involves that the Spirit of God must be given, for all fruit is “*the fruit of the Spirit*” (Gal. v, 22). Further, a fruitful heart is an exercised one. Paul said, “*I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men,*” Acts xxiv, v. 16. A blessed exercise is this!

We may be sure then that the good ground class have believing hearts, and are thus in possession of the blessings of the Kingdom which are forgiveness, salvation, and life. The continual exercise of such is very blessed, for they are bent upon gaining an ever-increasing and more perfect conception of the Kingdom in mystery, and all that these Kingdom Parables contain and involve.

H. S.

Where God Rests I Rest.

My God, what perfect rest is Thine,
Thy rest is in Thy Son ;
'Tis all unspeakable, divine—
Thy rest and mine are one,
Within the circle of Thy love
Joined to His life, I am above ;
How sweet with Thee, my God, to share
The joy which is Thy portion there.

O Jesus, Lord, in Thee I rest,—
Thou bidst me rest in Thee ;
A welcome to Thy loving breast
Is Thy dear thought for me.
The peace which thus I have above,
Rests in Thy deep unchanging love ;
Then, ah, my soul, but rest the more,
Nor yield to sin nor Satan's power.

God finds, Thou spotless One, in Thee
Where all perfections dwell,
All that His heart could wish for me,
And all that tongue could tell.
He finds me ransomed, righteous, fair
Where all His joys transcendent are—
He finds me perfect, for His praise,
His glory through eternal days.

Oh, strange that I should ever leave
Such place of rest in Thee,
That I should e'er Thy Spirit grieve,
Or from Thy presence flee,

To turn to creature joys for rest
Is but to wander from Thy breast ;
Yielding to sin's enticing snare
But robs my sweet abidance there.

Oh, keep me then, most blessed Lord
Abiding in Thee still,
In deep communion through Thy word,
Thy life in me fulfil.
Dark shadows here are all around ;
I'm only safe as in Thee found ;—
Soon, and for ever on Thy breast,
Shall be my sweet eternal rest.

J. B. S. (About 1865).

Extract.

“**T**HE man who is there is still the Son.
Blessed Son of God. Even the same
adorable Person ; Only-begotten Son with the
Father before the worlds, in eternity ; Only
begotten, as come into this world in time ; Only
begotten Son, too, in the first and chief sense for
eternity. Though as man raised from the dead,
by the glory of the Father, He is now also
First begotten.”

As the term “ Only begotten ” shows that
He is alone in the glorious relationship, so that
of “ First Begotten ” indicates that there are
other begotten ones out of that place of death,
from which he came as victor.

J. B. S.

(From *Food for the Faithful*, Vol. 1.).

The Only-Begotten and The First Begotten.

“WE beheld His glory, not of the Son as such, but as of the only-begotten Son of the Father. He had all the title of that excellency and value in everything. All that that was to the Father was with Him. It is His personal glory made visible in flesh. . . .

“ The difference between only begotten, and first-born, is that the first is His relationship to God eternally; the second is His relationship to other things. Thus *‘I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.’* (Psa. lxxxix). This is not what He is essentially.” (Notes on John, Coll. Writings, J. N. D., vol. xxv. p. 334).

A comparison of the texts that speak of the Lord as the first-born, and as the only-begotten Son of the Father, will abundantly confirm the above.

We only find the highest title of the Son in John, when the church had failed as a testimony on earth; then the Spirit by John, brings out the glory of the eternal Son, as the only-begotten of the Father.

“ *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.*” (John i, 14). “ *No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son,*

which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (Ver. 18). "*God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son.*" (John iii, 16). "*He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.*" (Ver. 18). "*In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.*" (1 John iv, 9). We can only worship and adore Him. He was in this ineffable relation to the Father in the beginning. Such was the eternal Son whom the Father gave to die for our sins. Amazing grace !

The word first-born, on the other hand, is used by the same Spirit when speaking of His pre-eminence since, and over creation, in reference to persons or things. "*Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created,*" etc. "*And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*" (Col. i, 15-18).

So Psalm lxxxix, 27 as above, "*Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*" This does not speak of His eternal relationship, but His position on or over the earth. And again, "*That he might be the first-born among many brethren.*" Thus the scripture is perfectly uniform in the use of these two distinctive aspects of His glory. It would be a sad mistake to confound them.

There remains another scripture (Ps. ii, 7) which foretells the incarnation of the Son, "*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*" The term only-begotten is not used here. Neither in the quotation of this in Hebrews i, 5, but "*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*" "*And again when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world,*" etc. How careful the Holy Ghost has been to keep the varied glories of the Son distinct. Whether His eternal relationship as the only-begotten of the Father—the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and as such sent that we might have eternal life; or as having the first-born pre-eminence over all creation, or as the incarnate Son. May our hearts receive each of those relationships and glories with adoring gratitude and worship.

C. S.

(From *Things New and Old*, 1886).

Principles of Revival according to God.

(1 Sam. vii).

Unrevised summary of Bible Reading at
Cheltenham, May 17th, 1937.

THIS chapter deals with a moment of supreme importance in the history of God's ancient people. It is a moment of revival and returning

to Jehovah after a time of sorrowful departure from Him. The silver thread of attachment between Jehovah and his people had become very slender but it had not snapped. " Ere the lamp of God went out " God spoke to Samuel. The light was very dim but through the mercy of Jehovah it had not been wholly extinguished.

We get presented to us in our chapter certain outstanding principles which are characteristic of any true revival of God's work in the earth at any period—namely :

- (1) its weakness and insignificance outwardly,
- (2) its individual character,
- (3) the fact that it has its origin from within and not from any outside influence,
- (4) the power of prayer in connection with it.

But before we go on to consider the chapter in detail it would be well to go back to ch. i which is really the foundation of all that follows. There we see the revival starting with the exercises of one woman—Hannah. She was a woman of a sorrowful spirit. She felt the reproach of her own childless state; surely an indication of the state of the people of Israel at that time—without any fruit for God; and her desire was for a man child whom she vowed to the Lord for the service of God's house all his life. She made her request with anguish of heart and with tears. That is the state of soul that brings in revival, and it is open to every individual however humble who has real desires according to God.

Elkanah and his family were not important people in the eyes of others in Israel. They were just simple Israelites going up to the yearly feasts that God had enjoined in Shiloh. But out of this exercise of soul of Hannah springs Samuel, and he is the prophet who brings in David—God's anointed king. The fact that the exercise is with a woman indicates the conditions of weakness that had come in; and the fact that Elkanah and Hannah were of God's people shews that the exercise had its origin within that circle. This stamps its character to be of God.

The revival that man would stage would be the result of powerful pressure brought to bear from outside—a great show of activity and large numbers gathered together, but such is not the way when God begins to work. Man's revivals begin with much noise and show and dwindle to nothing at last; while God's revivals begin in obscurity and weakness but continue and become great until the whole earth is included in the blessing.

Hannah had much opposition to encounter. She had an enemy who provoked her, but this only furthered her exercise and was used to bring matters to a crisis. She is entirely shut up to God and her exercise finds outlet in earnest crying to God. This is another mark of true revival. It has no resource outside of God, and opposition only deepens and strengthens the exercise. So to-day we may surely pray "Revive thy work O Lord," but we are abso-

lutely shut up to Him for the power for such revival.

Then again Eli, the priest, misjudges Hannah. This is indicative of the lack of perception and the blind state of the one who was set in the position of representative of the people before God. Eli's eyes had become dim. So the official element in any formal religious system is blind to what God is doing and is always ready to criticise the truly exercised soul. Passing on we see how God answers Hannah's desire and in process of time Samuel is brought in. Then we get Hannah's song, and what an outpouring of the soul to God is in it! It is all the greatness of Jehovah and what He does. It would take a reading in itself to explore its fulness. But it ends with the bringing in of God's King, the blessings of whose rule are to extend far beyond Israel to the ends of the earth.

Then in ch. iii, God speaks to the child Samuel, but Samuel does not yet know the Lord's voice. He runs to Eli, who instructs him how to reply when the call is heard again. It is solemn to contemplate when the message came it was one solely of overwhelming judgment against the priest and his house who had been Samuel's instructors. And it may well be that the prophetic word for us at the present moment is concerned with utter condemnation of those who have previously been our instructors, but have now given up God's truth. For if we depart one iota from the revelation of the Lord

Jesus, the Son of God, in His eternal sonship and relationship with the Father we lose the whole of the Christian testimony. That is the position of many to-day and we cannot ignore it.

It is remarkable that it is said that the faithful priest should walk before God's Anointed for ever—when as yet there was no King. Henceforth the King took precedence of the Priest—looking on to Christ, God's King. This comes out in the Melchisidek priesthood of Christ. He who is King of Righteousness and King of Peace is also Great Priest over the House of God. His kingly glory comes first.

It is most important also that the judgment on the priestly family makes room for the prophetic word. This does not necessarily mean foretelling the future. It is the communication of the present mind of God for His people. It is not outside the Scripture or different from it. It is the application of it. There must be and there is the present mind of the Spirit in regard to the broken state of things to-day. Can we say we know what that mind is? That is the prophetic word and it would be in power. All Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

From the end of ch. vii we see that Samuel dwelt at Ramah and returned there, having his altar there. It was a high place. This meant he was superior himself morally to the ruin, even though he felt it. His circuit also was significant—Bethel being the House of God, Gilgal

the place of circumcision of the flesh, and Mizpeh the bond of fellowship.

But this is anticipating the chapter, though Samuel's position gives the key to the chapter. It is right to mourn over the breakdown that has come in. We have had our part in it. We have failed as much as any "And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." They drew water and poured it out on the ground. That is where every true revival begins. All recovery must start there—utter nothingness on our part. We have no right to be here together to-day, except on the ground of having individually poured out water. They were gathered on that ground. Two or three may be together on this ground, and the Lord has vouchsafed His company to such. Do we really believe in His presence with the two or three? Some will say "it is by the Spirit He is present." He says "There am I." Surely that is emphatic enough. We, however, are often looking to men for something. It is most important to realize that with Him we have everything. The grace, the power, the strength, the joy are all with Him, and all on our behalf, in His presence.

What Samuel did in this chapter was to bring in what was Christ typically—the sucking-lamb. But first we must have the putting away of idols. In one of her last letters our late beloved sister, Miss Stoney, wrote that she had almost resented the last verse of 1 John v. after the marvellous

unfoldings of divine relationships in that chapter —“ Little children keep yourselves from idols.” It proved what insight the Apostle who lay on the Lord’s bosom had into the human heart. What are the idols to-day? They may be a variety of things or persons, but they displace Christ in the affections of His own. All such must be put away out of each heart individually, then we can pour out water in unison. The result is remarkable.

The Philistines hear of this gathering and at once come out to battle. The people are not armed, nor in battle array, but the Philistines are afraid. The pouring out of water causes trouble to the Philistines. They represent the greatness of religious flesh. The Philistines were a people in the land who had never gone through the exercises of the wilderness. They had not had the experience of the Red Sea or Jordan. They represent any who may have things in a formal way in terms but without exercise of heart—and they are the greatest enemies of the people of God. Even in the days of Abraham and Isaac they stopped up the wells. All they can do is to put stones in your bucket. They would choke the necessary supplies of refreshment for the Lord’s people. We need to be on our guard against this element not only around but in our own hearts, for if allowed its own way it will bring to ruin all that is of God amongst His own.

The Philistine had never passed through the wilderness nor learned the truth of that lesson—

“the flesh profiteth nothing.” We see later how Saul, though anointed King, was powerless to deal with them and he and Jonathan fell before them on Mount Gilboa. Samuel brought in David—the man after God’s own heart—and he could and did deal with these enemies for he slew their champion in the Valley of Elah.

As a result of the mourning and soul-exercise in our chapter the power of the Philistine receives a set-back. But first Samuel offers up the sucking-lamb as a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah. The sucking-lamb is the perfect reply to the greatness of the Philistine. It portrays all the meekness and lowliness and the utter dependence of the place the Lord took as man here, and in this place His absolute perfection under the eye of His God and Father. One might have expected, considering the condition of the people, a sin-offering: ~~No, it is a burnt-offering.~~ This character of offering typifies the death of Christ as a perfect sweet-savour to God.

The burnt-offering was for the acceptance of the one bringing it. Christ in death, tried by the fire of God’s judgment, was wholly pleasurable to God—nothing but a sweet-savour of obedience and devotedness and faithfulness to God was there manifested. All His perfect acceptability to God is seen in burnt-offering, i.e., sacrificially—that we might have part in it. It was a whole burnt-offering. Everything connected with Christ was absolutely delightful to God. That is the measure of our eternal acceptance

before God. The importance of its place in this chapter is that we should take account of all saints in the infinite value of the sweet-savour of Christ to God. This elevates above all the failure because of its unchangeable perfectness. The apprehension that all saints are before God in the value of the burnt-offering enables us to possess the mind of God for them all in the presence of the greatest ruin. Eph. v. and 2 gives us this aspect of things and the result of this apprehension is that we "walk in love." And it is our business to show people that we love them. In days of brokenness such as these the practical display of this may be difficult. We may find those who take very lofty spiritual ground passing their brethren by on the other side of the street or shutting their doors on them. This is not love in activity. Scripture never contemplates dormant affection. If it is not active it isn't there.

"And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering the Lord thundered with a great thunder." God always answers the burnt-offering. It was so with Elijah on Mount Carmel, and with Manoah and his wife, and with Gideon. The offering up of the holy perfections of Christ always brings an answer from on high. The enemy was discomfited and the cities which they had taken were restored. The enemy has been making terrible in-roads into God's testimony of late years. What a wonderful thing it would be if, in answer to conditions such as have been considered this afternoon, a

revival might come in, the truth be recovered and maintained, and blessing flow throughout the Church of God. May it be so for His Name's sake !

Perfection.

A PERFECT WORK. John xix, 30.

A PERFECT WILL. Rom. xii, 2.

A PERFECT TABERNACLE. Heb. ix, 11.

A PERFECT HOME. 1 Cor. xiii, 10.

THE works of man cannot be described in an unqualified sense, as perfect. A watch, for instance, may be beautifully made and possess a high degree of accuracy, but as we know, cannot be absolutely perfect.

The works of God in Creation are beyond man's skill to produce. Who has not plucked a rose and admired its form, colour and beauty, and inhaled its perfume? Yet even Creation has become marred by the entrance of sin into it.

We may observe also that when a thing is perfect, nothing can be added to it, on the one hand, or taken from it, on the other. Who would think of adding more colour to the rose or even taking away a wheel from the watch? What is perfect cannot be added to nor taken from, without spoiling it.

The four things mentioned above, are without qualification, perfect. The first is—

A PERFECT WORK, for our salvation.
“ *It is finished.*” Such is the work of Christ

on the cross. None but He could undertake to glorify God in respect of sin and provide a perfect redemption for man. In other passages in the New Testament we meet with the words "*It is done*" (Luke xiv, 22. Rev. xxi, 6) where the literal reading would be "it has come to pass." But the word "*It is finished*" speaks of something brought to completion—a work perfected. Can anything then, be added to the work of Christ, or taken from it? Nothing at all. May the reader be resting simply and firmly on the finished work of Christ. Next we have

A PERFECT WILL, for our guidance. "*The—perfect will of God*" (Rom. xii, 2). He who has trusted in the perfect work of Christ will now desire to do the will of God. So the apostle Peter writes "The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles" and exhorts us to live the rest of our time to the will of God. Christ ever did the will of God and has called us into the same path. A child is brought up in, instructed and guided by the will of his earthy parents; "*shall we not much rather,*" says the writer to the Hebrews, "*be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?*" Then we have

A PERFECT TABERNACLE, for our worship. "*A greater and more perfect tabernacle*" (Heb. ix, 11). After calling His people Israel out of Egypt God commanded them to build a tabernacle—a moveable temple, that they might draw nigh to Him in worship. In

it were the ark, the censor, the candlestick, the shewbread and other things, and with it instructions as to suitable offerings, all "figures of the true." To-day there is for us a greater and more perfect tabernacle which the Lord has pitched, not man. It is not visible to the natural eye nor tangible to our bodily senses, but it is none the less real. Our Great Priest is Christ Himself who having offered Himself without spot to God, has entered in within the vail. Every believer is of the priestly family, and we are exhorted to draw near with boldness. Finally we have

A PERFECT HOME, at the end. "*When that which is perfect is come*" (1 Cor. xiii, 10). We are surrounded by imperfection while in this world of sin and death. And we ourselves are in the child state, our knowledge is in part, our understanding feeble. But the perfect will come. God will bring it to pass. Then the child state will have passed, the imperfect laid aside, we shall know as we are known, and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

At length—the state eternal,
No bound, no end possessing :
When heaven and earth—
God all in all
Shall fill with largest blessing,
All root of evil banished,
No breath of sin to wither,
On earth—on high—
Nought else but joy,
And blissful peace for ever.

EDITOR.

“There Am I.”

THOSE who know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour often quote Matt. xviii, 20, though perhaps not understanding its real import and its great spiritual value. Some may repeat it incorrectly, and thus show *how* they understand it; others even use it to excuse what is contrary to the Word of the Lord. Now alas! those whom the Lord calls “My brethren” are divided into over 2,000 sects and parties, and as each section claims the support of this verse, it is clear that its real meaning is little apprehended. There are those who say—“The Lord is with us,” inferring that they alone have His presence while others boldly assert that they are *the* company who have the Lord in the midst of their assemblies. This solemn condition should humble and exercise us all, for it proves that the reality of the Lord’s presence in the midst of those gathered to “His Name” is little known. Let us humbly and prayerfully examine what the verse states and see whether we know experimentally the reality of “there am I.” We must not overlook the fact that verses well known and often quoted may be misunderstood, and their spiritual power and blessing little known although the *words* may be *retained*.

The great importance of this verse is emphasised by the fact that it is the only one which distinctly teaches that the Lord Himself is in the midst of His saints when *locally*

gathered together in a particular town—"one place." (I Cor. xi, 20). Other Scriptures will enlarge our thoughts concerning it, while some illustrate the truth taught therein, but Matt. xviii, 20 is *the* verse that distinctly states that the Lord is in the midst of His own when they are gathered to "His Name."

This verse speaks of believers being gathered to "His Name." "His Name" is thus the attraction and draws them together. The Lord Himself has been rejected, but those who love Him are rightly gathered together by that which is revealed in Him. At His coming all saints will be gathered to Him—to Him personally—but *now* we are privileged to be gathered to His Name. At His coming He will be the Centre, the true Leader for all the redeemed families, and will maintain eternally their praises to His God and Father. But *now* in the midst of those gathered to His Name He is the One in charge, the only Centre and Leader (Ps. xxii, 25; Heb. xiii, 15). His Name is *more excellent* than angels; it is a Name above every name, it is *as ointment poured forth*, speaking of the moral and spiritual grace and excellence of His Person. Hence the great question is:—Do we in the place where we reside know what it is to be gathered to His Name? Is it only the exuberance of the grace of His Person that gathers us together? The Lord does not say that He is in the midst of those who agree upon certain doctrines, nor in the midst of those who *affirm*

they are gathered, but of those who *are* gathered to "His Name."

The relation of "where" to "there" must be carefully observed, for "*WHERE* two or three are gathered together to my Name *THERE* am I in the midst of them." The Holy Spirit dwells in us, but this verse speaks of the *Lord Himself* being in the midst—"there am I." In Luke xxiv and John xx He was in the midst of His disciples in bodily form, but *now* it is in spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells with and in us, and besides this the Lord says—"there am I." The Lord is the Centre, the One in charge, and the One who guides by the Spirit. He is personally present but in spirit. It is clear that there can be no failure on His side, and He will always be true to His Word. The verse speaks of "two or three" being gathered together, and of Him in the midst. There can be no failure with Him, and if the reality is not known the failure must be on the part of those gathered.

Thus He is *personally* in the midst of two or three gathered together to His Name in each locality where they are gathered, and this is as true for faith as though there was only one gathering on earth. It is a blessed thing to know the Lord as a triumphant Saviour. We can also know Him as One who is always at hand, who is with us (Matt. xxviii, 20; Phil. iv, 5). But it is also our privilege to know Him in the midst of His gathered saints, as the One whose sufficiency we are privileged to prove in priestly service and in every difficulty that may arise.

It is well to test ourselves. Do we believe He is in the midst of His saints when gathered together? Once He was visibly with His own, and *now* it is true for faith though it is in spirit that He is present. In glory the Lamb in the midst will be the Centre for all heaven and earth, and for faith this can be known now while we are still actually where He has been rejected.

In the days of old when Israel desired to know the mind of God, the priest enquired of God for them by the Urim and Thummin. Now Christ, the true Priest, is the living Urim and Thummin, and no question can arise that cannot be solved for those who have faith in the Lord in the midst of two or three gathered to "His Name." The Lord, the great Priest, also gives power to the prayers of His own, for the sweet savour of His excellence gives fragrance to the prayers (Rev. viii, 3). Let us ponder these glorious realities. "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" in the midst of two or three gathered to "His Name," and yet, with such a resource, have we not often appealed to and used human means in a time of difficulty? The result has been increased difficulties because we have turned from the divine provision to some human device.

How little the privilege of coming together to pray is appreciated—that is to ask God definitely for things required, and yet if two or three have a heart to come together to pray, the Lord says "there am I in the midst of them." How the sense of His presence would hinder our merely

giving God information, but lead to earnest and fervent supplication. Let us remember that it is the *reality* of His presence that can alone correct and adjust the length and style of our prayers. We do well to carefully consider the fact that we cannot have "two or three gathered together" to His Name without the Lord being there; on the other hand the Lord only says that He is in the midst when and where there are "two or three gathered together" to His Name.

But there are still further privileges for those gathered to "His Name." The Lord Himself started the eternal song of praise in the midst of His brethren, and has now gone on high as the Priest to maintain the singing. He has commenced that song which will vibrate throughout the universe of God (Psalm xxii, 22; Heb. ii, 12; Rev. v, 8-14). Two or three locally gathered to "His Name" are therefore privileged to join in the song commenced by Christ in resurrection in the universal assembly (Heb. ii, 12).

In Luke xxiv when His own were *perplexed*, *afraid*, and when the announcement that He was risen *seemed to them as idle tales* the Lord began to gather His loved ones by drawing near to them, and by expounding to them the Scriptures concerning HIMSELF. Then directly they had Him before them as presented in the Holy Writings, Emmaus could not hold them, the difficulty of the day being far spent did not detain them, but to Jerusalem they must go where the

testimony that “ *The Lord is risen indeed* ” had gathered His own together. There was no thought now of being where they liked, nor of doing what they thought right, for having only Christ before them His presence in the midst would alone satisfy them. The Lord, having so gathered His own together, takes His place in their midst. They are made at home with Him, their understandings are opened *that they might understand the Scriptures*, and they are sent forth to proclaim the glorious Gospel, beginning with the most guilty city on earth. The Lord has thus secured a company of worshippers who are in the enjoyment of the blessing of the *One carried up into heaven*.

In John xx we have very precious instruction. Mary, to whom the earth has become an empty sepulchre, receives that most marvellous message to His brethren which makes known the greatest privileges that creatures can be brought into—“ *I ascend to My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.* ” No wonder this gathers them together, and the Son then takes His place with the many sons redeemed by His precious blood. Then in the epistles we have also the truth of Christianity unfolded, so that the saints (babes, young men and fathers) can be gathered together to “ *His Name* ” and enjoy His presence according to their measure as taught by the Holy Spirit.

London.

J. S. G.

Thy Name and Presence.

LORD let us *meet* with two or three,
Gathered by grace alone to Thee,
Where Thine own name and presence blest
Speaks life and love to every breast.

Lord may we *rest* where two or three,
Are gathered only unto thee,
Where Thine own name and presence blest
Speaks life and love to every breast.

True worshippers the Father sought,
True worshippers to Him are brought,
The Father's name in love so free
Declared Lord Jesus Christ by Thee.

Miss A. M. STONEY.

God's Princes.

NUMBERS VII.

THERE were four classes in Israel, *i.e.*,
Princes, Priests, Levites, and members of
the congregation. While we know something
about the three latter, we have perhaps over-
looked the Princes. They may be viewed as the
most important. They were the heads of the
people. Each class has its place, but God de-
sires to bring us up to the Princes. They stand
at the top and that may be why we have over-
looked them.

In I Samuel ii, 8, 9 and Psalm cxiii, 7, 8 we
see God's way is to lift us from the dunghill and

set us among the Princes. He wants us at the top. Christ is at the top. Hannah was in the current of God's thoughts when she said "*He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.*" . . . The longest chapter in the Bible is taken up with princes (Num. vii).

We get the idea of the prince brought out by contrast in I Cor. ii, 6-8—"*We speak wisdom among the perfect . . . which none of the princes of this world knew.*" The first thought in a prince is Wisdom. In Gen. xxxii, 27, 28 we get another mark of a prince—"*As a prince hast thou power with God.*" Wisdom and power are therefore the characteristics of a prince. Christ is pre-eminent as Prince. What characterises Him is Wisdom and power. "*Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*" (I Cor. i, 24).

In Numbers vii we see the princes were the first to bring their offering, and their offering was for the maintenance of the testimony, *i.e.*, the tabernacle, in its journey through the wilderness. The princes at this point were ahead of Moses, for he did not know what to do with their offerings. Wisdom is with the princes (see Prov. viii). Moses had to get a word from the Lord who said "*Take it of them*" (v. 4, 5). It was given to the sons of Merari and the sons of Gershom. The princes were intensely interested in the testimony of the Lord, and He set great value on it, for the Spirit of God repeats the details of

their offerings (which were identically the same) twelve times over, and as if that was not enough He goes over it all as a whole. The twelve offerers, twelve chargers, twelve bowls, twelve spoons, twelve bullocks, etc., etc. God never tires in telling us of any true appreciation of Christ. "*This also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her*" (Mark xiv, 9). Each offering was the same, which suggests fellowship, an equal appreciation of Christ (v. 12-17). We see what they offered. Silver speaks of redemption, the bowls and chargers were both full of fine flour mingled with oil—Christ as the man of God's pleasure here in this world. The fine flour speaks of His perfect humanity, the oil of the Spirit. The princes appreciate what Christ is to God's pleasure. The golden spoons speak of Divine righteousness. The princes bring the meat offering, the incense, the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the peace offering. In type they apprehended the breadth, length, depth and height (Eph. iii, 18). The spirit of wisdom was theirs. The eyes of their hearts were enlightened (Eph. i, 17-18). They were filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom . . . walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, fruitful in every good work (Col. i, 9-10). Paul was such a prince, and prayed that the saints might reach that ground in the experience of their souls.

The Lord exercise our hearts to go on to full growth (Heb. vi, 1) assured that *God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask*

or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen (Eph. iii, 20-21).

Pasadena, California.

T. RODWELL.

Anointed, Sealed, Earnest.

II COR. Ch. 1, Ver. 18-22.

AS every simple believer in the Lord Jesus knows, every desire in the heart of the Father finds its answer in His Own Beloved Son and every purpose of God will be brought to pass in that same Blessed One. “*The Son of God, Jesus Christ*” was therefore the theme of the apostle and those who laboured with him. The truths they announced were founded on this sure foundation and consequently no question as to “*Yea and nay*” could possibly arise and the Spirit could add “. . . *but in Him was yea.*” But not only is He the “*Yea*” but also the “*Amen.*” He could announce—“*I am Alpha and Omega.*” God made promises to Abraham and others mentioned in the Old Testament and also ratified them by oath. Centuries have come and gone and God has been pleased to postpone the bringing of the promises to full fruition. Yet in the interim God is revealing what He is in grace, by taking up poor guilty sinners to form in new creation, the Church, as the Body and Bride of Christ. Verse 20 avers that “*all the*

promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us." But while all God's glory is secured in that Blessed One, a doubt might be raised on the last two words of verse 20—" *by us.*" As to our side, "*by us,*" can there be any question of failure or doubt? No! Why? Because God has "*firmly attached*" (N.T.) the saints to Christ by an eternal and unchangeable bond which Divine love has forged. Further,

"AND HATH ANOINTED US "

or "*put Christ upon us.*" The Holy Spirit which was first upon the Head in heaven has been poured upon all the members on earth. Thus the mind and character of Christ has been imparted to every believer and is equally true of the "*babes*" as well as the fathers and young men. Each has "*an Unction from the Holy One*" and knows "*all things*" (I John ii, 14 and 20). As we noticed earlier, God ratified His promises by oath so as to make them doubly sure to faith. So in the case of believers to-day, God has not only anointed us but

"HATH ALSO SEALED US "

God the Father found all His delight in His Own Beloved Son and "*sealed*" Him. Now those who have been purchased with the precious blood of Christ are they upon whom the Divine Owner has put His seal. God the Father sealed Him *because* in Him is all His delight. But God could never seal that which had not His

approval ; how is it then, that the Word can say “ *hath also sealed us* ” ? Because we are “ *accepted in the Beloved* ”—being of Him—and God’s pleasure and approval now rests upon those who are of His Beloved Son. This is on the ground of Redemption and in view of the place given to them in Divine grace. Thus can the saints sing :—

“ And know that we are loved with that great
love
That rests on Thee in those bright courts
above.”

Moreover, for the satisfaction of His loving heart, He has

“ *GIVEN THE EARNEST OF THE
SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS* ”

so as to make known to us the position of favour in which God has set us, and, as we continue in the Father and in the Son, to give us to enjoy the foretaste of the light and love which are in the Fathers’ house and to joyfully anticipate now that glory which will eventually fill the whole scene.

In the firm attachment, the anointing and sealing we contemplate what God has wrought for His glory and that of our adorable Lord ; but it is for each of His beloved saints to be so living and enjoying the Earnest that out of his inner parts may flow forth rivers of living water (John vii, 39).

London.

J. E. F.

Sealed.

“ Set a mark upon the . . . men.”

—EZEK. ix, 4.

WHAT men are these? They were men of God, and proved themselves to be such by laying to heart the conduct of the wicked. This has ever been the distinguishing mark of the people of God. It was seen in David when he said *“ Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law,”* and *“ Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not Thy law.”* It was seen also in the prophet Jeremiah—*“ My soul shall weep in secret places for your pride ”*; and when referring to Lot in Sodom the apostle Peter said—*“ That righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.”*

But *“ the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly,”* and in the above scripture we see one of God's ways in delivering them. He was about to punish the transgressors in Jerusalem, but before doing so He said to Ezekiel—*“ Go through the midst of the city . . . and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.”*

God knows how to mark His chosen ones. In the Revelation we read of an angel crying *“ to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth . . . saying, Hurt not the earth . . .*

till we have sealed the servants of our God," and none were to be destroyed "*but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.*"

Extract.

The Works of Abraham.

(A Meditation.)

IN the gospel of John, ch. viii, we find the Lord Jesus meeting with great opposition from the Jews, and a climax is reached when He speaks to them of freedom through the Truth and by the Son.

They are piqued and answer, "*We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man,*" verse 33. What boastful ignorance, through sin, marks them ! Then the Lord draws a great distinction between Abraham's *seed* and Abraham's *children*.

Abraham's *seed* would no doubt take in all his seed (the Jews) according to nature, and according to the flesh. Abraham's *children*, on the other hand, seem to convey another thought, that such would through the work of God, display the moral character of Abraham and thus be his real children, according to this chapter.

Jesus says to them, "*If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me.*" In verse 37 He says, "*I know that ye are Abraham's seed;*

but ye seek to kill me." Again in verse 40—
"Ye seek to kill me . . . This did not Abraham."

This was the issue when the Testimony of God and the True Light in the Person of Jesus was presented to them; but alas, the Light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not (see ch. i, v. 5).

Now in II Chronicles ch. xx, v. 7 we read—
"Art not thou, our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend, for ever?" The marginal reading is, or *"who loved Thee."*

From this we perceive that Abraham is marked off as one who *"loved God,"* and had he been living when Jesus was here on earth, he would have *"loved Him,"* the One who testified of Himself at the end of the chapter as *"I am,"* the name of the Supreme God.

Thus, no doubt, we have indicated to us what the works of Abraham were; works of faith and love. Where do we find the greatest proof of Abraham's love for God? Surely in Genesis xxii, when God tried or tested him, in commanding him to offer up Isaac, his only son. God acknowledged it, as we read in verse 12—*"For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."* Note those two words *"from Me,"* for they indicated that God was supreme in Abraham's affections. It was a very real thing for

Abraham. Thus we have the fear of God, faith, spirituality and love for God, characterising the works of Abraham.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, ch. iv, v. 28, 29 we read, "*But we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*" "*But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit; even so it is now.*"

Christians are born according to the Spirit and are children of promise and are marked by faith, love and spirituality, and do the works of Abraham; for they love God, who first loved them (I John iv, 19). The R.V. puts it thus—"*We love, because he first loved us.*" The "He" refers to "God."

So to-day, conditions are somewhat similar, for we, too, are living at the end of a dispensation; and there are many *professed* Christians assembling with God's people in outward profession and fellowship, but the test is, "*If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema; Maran-atha*" (I Cor. xvi, 22). Love for the Lord Jesus Christ will mark a *real* believer.

To-day, while Israel is scattered through sin and unbelief, the thought is continued and taken up in those who love Christ, who are now Abraham's children morally and are those who do the works of Abraham, in faith, love and hope.

Guilford, N.S.W.,
Australia.

A. N. Mc D.

Jachin and Boaz.

UPHOLDING the Porch of Solomon's Temple were two immense pillars. Their names were Jachin and Boaz, the meaning of the one being '*He will establish*' and of the other '*In Him is Strength.*' The stability and strength of the kingdom was thus symbolised by these two pillars, which could not fail to meet the eye of any who came near to the Temple.

The Christian faith is in like manner raised up on two great pillars of truth, which we are sure every believer recognises and in which he thankfully rejoices.

The one truth is that GOD HAS COME OUT TO MAN, while the other, which is of equal importance, is that MAN HAS GONE IN TO GOD. And what is so blessed for the believer to remember, is that both of these thoughts meet and find their full expression in the Person of The Lord Himself.

GOD HAS COME OUT TO MAN. How true this is! "They shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is *God with us*" (Matt. I.-22). All partial disclosures of God in the Old Testament now give place to the full revelation of Himself in the New Testament.

"*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,*" writes the Apostle Paul. Another apostle writes 'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understand-

ing, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God*, and eternal life." Christ is therefore the true Boaz. In Him is Strength, and, like the mighty pillar of that name in Solomon's Temple, He sustains the revelation of God to our souls.

When here on earth, Thou wast alone,
Proclaimer of God's love to men;
Upon the cross 'twas fully known,
For God came forth to meet us then;
Rent from above, the parted veil
Announced to all that wondrous tale.

MAN HAS GONE IN TO GOD. In the Epistle of Peter, we read concerning Christ—"who is *gone into heaven*, and is on the right hand of God" (1 Peter III.-22). Yet we would emphasize the fact that MAN has gone in. Why is that? Because He has gone in representatively. He appears in the presence of God *for us* (Heb. IX.-24). And moreover we know that He gives to us His own place, as man, before God. This is the "grace (or favour) wherein we stand" mentioned in Rom. V.-2. And this is why we may be spoken of as "Accepted in the Beloved" (Ephes. I.-5). Here then is the second great pillar of the truth—Jachin—"He will establish." Man, in the Person of Christ, and we in Him, is eternally established before God, even before Him in love.

But ris'n, the Firstborn from the dead,
Triumphant hast Thou entered in;

The glorious Man, the living Head,
Thrice worthy Thou our hearts to win;
In Thy blest face all glories shine,
And there we gaze on love divine.

May our souls increasingly delight to dwell on these two great features of Christianity, both as we have said, meeting in Christ, for He is both the Apostle *and* the High Priest of our Confession. The true Moses and the true Aaron in one! Then we may read the gospels and see *God on earth*, and then turn to the epistles and see *Man in heaven*.

EDITOR.

The Love of God.

THE Love of God is a blessed theme. Love is the source of all God's activities. It is His nature. This may be affirmed from the statement of the three words "*God is Love*" found twice in the first Epistle of St. John.

We may safely conclude that if love is the divine nature it would therefore be the source and spring of all divine activities, whether in creation, in providence or in redemption. The presence, power and awful activity of evil might seem to deny this fact, but faith is able to penetrate the veil of external things and see God and His love at the source of everything. And if this be so, it is well for us to seek to interpret all things by the light of that love.

It is perfectly natural for every creature of God to express its nature. In every department of creation this is seen, both in things animate and things inanimate. We do not expect a lion to act the part of a lamb, nor a lamb the part of a lion. This would be contrary to the nature of both. Nor do we expect a man to act the part of an animal or vice-versa. We may be sure then that every creature will manifest its nature in its actions, for actions are the expression of nature.

This is fully demonstrated in regard to creation, and the principle holds good also in regard to God. If God is love all that He does or permits must be the expression of, or consistent with His love. His creational works, His providential acts and permissions, His judgments, both governmental and eternal, must all be consistent with love. Even the great expression of eternal Judgment—"The lake of fire" must be consistent with divine love; and it is impossible that it should be inconsistent. Man as man, that is, the natural mind, will never admit this, for the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. Nor do we expect the natural man to admit that God's eternal judgment is consistent with divine love. But the Christian admits it, for the Christian's sympathies are with God and he loves to vindicate God. This vindication of God is a great point. The Lord said to the young ruler "*None is good save one, that is, God.*" PAUL—"Let God be true, but

every man a liar.” JOHN—“*God is light.*” JAMES—“*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.*” In this manner the Christian loves to vindicate God in His nature and ways.

We shall find that the scriptures give a four-fold expression of the Love of God:—

God’s love to Israel. Deut. VII.—7 and 8.

God’s love to Christ. John III.—35.

God’s love to the World. John III.—14-16.

God’s love to His children. 1 John III.—1.

First in Deuteronomy we get a distinct and emphatic declaration of Jehovah’s love to Israel. How did Jehovah manifest that love? He sent Moses to that people, vested with supernatural power, in view of their redemption from Egypt, and from all the attendant miseries of Egyptian bondage. Then, He, with a marvellous miraculous display of power, brought them right out of Egypt. This was not all, He also sustained them for forty years supernaturally in the Sinaitic peninsular, and finally, by a third supernatural movement, planted them in a land flowing with milk and honey. Truly, He chastened them—but this chastisement came upon them as the fruit of their ways. “*Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.*” Has God any pleasure in judgment? No, not any, it is His strange work, but to allow a people to manifest evil without affliction would not be consistent with divine love. Evil would increase if not checked, and if not judged, would get the

upper hand and reign supreme. Love would not permit this and the love of Jehovah for Israel is an everlasting love. (Jer. XXXI.) But further—

God's love did not cease after Joshua departed. He gave them judges,—saviours,—time after time, when they cried to Him on account of the oppression of their enemies. Finally, He raised up to Israel David and Solomon. If Jehovah redeemed and saved His people in Moses, He exalted them in David and clothed them with glory in Solomon. . .

It might seem, if we think of the position and condition of Israel to-day, that Jehovah's love had ceased, but Jehovah's love is an everlasting love. What He did in the days of Moses and Solomon, He will yet repeat on a still grander scale, for Jehovah's love will not rest until the twelve tribed nation are planted in perfect order, according to their tribes, in the land of Israel. His love will give them back all that they have lost,—Land,—Temple.—City and King. And who will that King be? Christ. But is not Christ Jehovah Himself? "*They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced.*" Zech. XII.—10. Then, and not till then, will they understand, appreciate and appropriate that which was theirs from the beginning—the Love of God. They, like Thomas, will say "*My Lord and My God.*"

The Second expression we have of the Love of God is the Father's love to the Son,

in fact this is the first, for it rested on Christ before the foundation of the world. "*Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.*" John XVII.—24. In John III.—35, we read, "*The Father loveth the Son,*" and we know that the Father's love for the Son was reciprocated by the Son. "*That the world may know that I love the Father.*" John XIV.—31. Here we see that the only worthy object of God's love is *Christ*, and He, being worthy of it, answers to it perfectly. Israel and man on the other hand, though the objects of love, come into it unworthily, for all have sinned.

Here, then, we get the secret of God's love, for what moved the Father to become active in love? The love and glory of the Son. What moved the Son to become active in love manward? The love and glory of the Father. Thus the Godhead finds an object in *Itself* for its activity in love. The need and blessing of man was certainly an object in a secondary sense, but the supreme object was the Father's glory on the one hand and the Son's glory on the other. What is the secret of God's love to Israel? It lies in the fact that Christ is their King and that their King is their Redeemer.

It is a great point to see that all God's movements are governed by Christ's glory. The blessing of Israel, of Man, of the Assembly, is necessary for the glory of both God as God, and Christ as Christ—the blessing of each is a necessity for the coming glory of Christ. What

peace this gives ! What adoration it produces in our souls !

The third object of God's love, is His love for the World, "*God so loved the World.*" This is the love of compassion, Christ is the measure of this love, and it is immeasurable. This is the gospel. It is remarkable that the Lord should select in regard to His presentation of the gospel, the type of the Brazen Serpent. He does it thrice in the gospel of John, and in this chapter in order to bring out God's love to man. God, at a profound cost to Himself, would deliver man from perishing, on the principle of *giving*.

The fourth manifestation of divine love is God's love to His children. This is the love of relationship.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John, III.-1. How great is the blessing of being in relationship to God and to have His love resting upon us !

H.S.

Be Strong in the Lord.

EPHES. VI.—10.

BE strong in the Lord."—How could they stand in such a position—living members of a living Head—how could they stand down here where He had been, occupying a

place between Him and the enemy, and not be suffering? Impossible!—He, when in this world was the “man of sorrows.” In His grace He had left them down here, that it might be truly brought out that there was such a thing as a heavenly Christ. And all who are partakers of the heavenly portion are born to suffering—dare not expect exemption from it; far from that, they must be willing and ready to endure it. . .

You will often find yourself in a Pi-hahiroth; sit still and watch. Moses’ sister was in a very blessed position; the little ark had gone out among the bulrushes, she sits down and watches. It was a blessed place for faith to watch, and see what was done. If you cannot sit still and wait for God, you are not in the right position. Do you say: But we have given all up; now what will the end be? How will the Lord show Himself?—Sit down before God, and say: Thy ways are too great for me; what wilt *Thou* do?

There is a largeness about His ways that beggars our understanding. It goes *beyond* His people’s requests. Many of the restrictions the people of God suffer come from themselves, because there is not simplicity to say: What wilt *Thou* do? Abraham’s intercession stopped at ten; but God goes farther, and takes up the desire of His heart. If I leave God to act He will act much more munificently than if I say: Do this, or do that.—“He that spared not His

own Son, . . how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.”

All this teaches us forcibly the meaning of taking the sword of the Spirit Even if a bed-ridden saint, you will not be able to make good your position, and Satan will betray you to yield, if you are not skilful in using the sword of the Spirit.

G.V.W. (1874).

The Glad Tidings of Promise and the Gospel of God.

WE declare unto you Glad Tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again: as it is also written in the second Psalm ‘Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.’ Acts XIII. 32-33.

There is some difference of judgment in regard to this scripture. Some affirm that the word “raised up” refers to our Lord’s ministry on earth while others would connect it with His resurrection from the dead. It will be noticed that the Revised Version and some eminent

scholars omit the word "again." Then it should be observed that the word translated "raised up" does not *in itself* prove that it refers to Christ on earth as a "minister of the circumcision" nor to His resurrection. Hence the meaning must be found from its divine setting in the address. This, then, is the subject of our enquiry.

Jerusalem had been the centre of divine activities, but Barnabas and Paul commenced their mission from Antioch (Acts XIII. 1-3). Thus gradually all connections with Judaism were being set aside. They came to Paphos, and Sergius Paulus believed on the Lord, but Bar-jesus was smitten with blindness *for a season*—a striking figure of the Jewish nation. Vs. 6-12.

Paul, the chosen vessel to unfold the Gospel of God addressed to all men (Gentiles and Jews being both alike guilty sinners), becomes prominent amongst those that are *now* called "his company." They came to Antioch in Pisidia, and when invited by the rulers of the Synagogue to give a word of exhortation, Paul reminds the Jews and proselytes how God had delivered the nation of Israel out of Egypt; how He had borne with them in the wilderness; how He had destroyed the seven nations in possession of Canaan; how He had *given* them judges, Samuel the prophet, and Saul the king. Then after they had been tested in these various

ways, and when they with the king they had chosen were helpless in the presence of their enemies, God "raised up" David (Ver. 22). In the next verse we read—"Of this man's seed hath God according to promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." Paul also reminds them that John according to Isaiah XL. 1-11, had announced both His coming and His unique glory, but those at Jerusalem had rejected Him and slain Him.

We should carefully consider these two facts—God had raised (not raised Him from the dead) unto Israel a Saviour, but alas ! Israel had rejected Him. Was their guilty refusal of the One whom God had "raised up" concomitant with or a prelude to the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham and David (Gen. XVII 2; Sam. VII. 12-17)? It is clear that their sin is not the fulfilment or introduction to the promise, for the promise was of a Saviour, a King to reign over all the earth and to bring them into immense blessing after all their enemies had been cut off. By their rejection of Christ (which was foretold) they have forfeited all claim to the promise, for they have declared—"We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke XIX. 14).

Israel had rejected their King and in so doing had refused the fulfilment of the promise, but God had raised Him from the dead, and of this marvellous fact there were many witnesses. The apostle now declares glad tidings "how

that the *promise* which was made to the *fathers*, God hath fulfilled the same unto *us* their *children* in that He hath “raised up Jesus.” The words “promise to the fathers” and “us their children” proves that He is not speaking of the Gospel of God in which “righteousness of God” is seen to be favourable to both Gentiles and Jews, but of the glad tidings concerning the promise. In support of the fulfilment of the promise by God, the second Psalm is quoted—“*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*” This Psalm speaks of the rising up of Jew and Gentile against God’s King in the last days. The same *spirit* was manifested in the wicked act of nailing Christ to the cross, and the Psalm is therefore quoted to shew their refusal of Jesus, their King, raised up by God to fulfil the promise of a Messiah reigning on mount Zion. They having refused the King ordained of God, Psalm LXXXIX. is quoted to show the necessity of raising Him up from the dead. This Psalm plainly states—“*My covenant will I not break,*” but through their sin they had forced God to “*cast off*” and make void the covenant. The covenant could therefore only be fulfilled by the intervention of God in sovereign mercy and with almighty power, raising Christ from the dead, that His firstborn “*may be higher than the kings of the earth.*” Israel has lost all title to the fulfilment of the promise, but God will be true to His word and fulfil that promise in mercy through Christ raised from the dead.

Hitherto the address has been concerning the promise made to the fathers and Israel's refusal of Christ who came to fulfil that promise. But now he proclaims the Gospel which is addressed to Gentiles and Jews announcing the forgiveness of sins and justification from all things. Israel's sin had caused the postponement of the fulfilment of the promise until in repentance they say—"*Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord.*" Let Israelites beware lest through despising this message of grace sent to all men they wonder and perish as their fathers did when Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land! (Hab. I. 5).

The next sabbath the whole city attracted by this message of grace gathers "*to hear the Word of God.*" The Jews, who were glad to have Gentiles as Proselytes, are filled with envy to see so many attracted by the grace that meets needy sinners whether Jew or Gentile. Jews could boast of their promised Messiah, but they refuse the Gospel of God's grace to all men, and persecute its preachers because it sets aside their religious standing amongst the nations.

The difference between the *glad tidings of the fulfilment of promise* and "*The glorious Gospel of the Blessed God*" is of vital importance. The distinction is formally taught in the epistle to the Romans. The Gospel of God is addressed to Jew and Gentile, for there is no difference, for "*all have sinned.*" Then grace

recognizes no difference between the Jew and Greek : for the same Lord is rich *unto all* who call upon Him.” (Rom. III. 23 ; X. 12). After having unfolded the rich provision of God in grace in chapter I. to VIII. and the faithfulness of in His dealings with Jew and Gentile in chapter IX to XI, in chapter XV he unfolds the true character of the ministry of Christ which the nation had refused—“*Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.*” (verse 8). If Israel had received Christ they would have been the central nation on earth, and the Gentiles would have rejoiced—“*With His people.*” Through their rejection of Christ the Gospel of God announces richer blessing for ‘WHOSOEVER WILL.’ The glad tidings of the promise makes known the special place Israel will have with Christ reigning over them and Gentiles blessed with them, but the Gospel of God makes known the “*better thing.*” (Heb. XI. 40)—that which is better than the promises given to Abraham and David and which will not be fulfilled until Christ returns in His glory. The promise to Abraham was of great blessing *on earth* (Gen XVII. 7), and this was confirmed to Isaac who was a type of Christ (Gen. XXII. 17 ; Gal. III. 16). Then to David, God said—“*His throne shall be established for evermore*” (II. Chron. XXII. 17). But now during this present interval of grace God is gathering individuals from Jews and Gentiles and forming them into one

body in Christ and blessing them in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. I. to II. 10).

A more thorough examination of Psalm II. will confirm the interpretation we have given of Acts XIII. 33. The standpoint in all the Psalms is blessing for Israel and Gentiles *on earth* with the privileges of light from heaven. Then the thought of "*right hand*" is also connected with *the earth*, and is quite distinct from thoughts true to Christianity as expressed in Hebrews and "*sitting on the Father's throne*" (Rev. III. 21). The first three verses of Psalm II. shew the spirit which animates men in the last days, and this same spirit prompted the leaders to condemn our Lord. Verses 4-6 shew Jehovah watching their folly, and He declares *what He will do*. Then our Lord declares the eternal decree, and though incarnate He is not greeted as an inferior but as "*My Son.*" The relationship of Son was eternally true, and when on earth He ever walked in the consciousness of that relationship.

We therefore conclude from our enquiry into the context that Acts XIII. 33. speaks of Christ's ministry *on earth* as the minister of the circumcision, whilst verse 34 refers to His resurrection, and further that verses 38 and 39 state the testimony of divine grace which is preached in the gospel during this present interval.

LONDON.

J.S.G.

The Hidden Christ.

Ex. xxiv, v. 12-18 and xxxii 1-7.

Lev. xvi, v. 17 and 34.

II Kings xi, v. 1-3 and 12.

IN the above scriptures we have brought to our notice three men—Moses, Aaron and Joash. Also it is interesting to note that at the moment of which we read of them each of them has become hidden from view. Moses was hidden in the mount, Aaron was hidden in the tabernacle, and Joash was hidden in the bedchamber. The first, moreover, was a Prophet, the second a Priest and the last a King.

We suggest to our readers that these three men at such a moment are types to us of Christ, our hidden Saviour. He is the true Prophet, the true Priest and the true King, and He is at the present moment hidden from our view—hid in the heavens. Let us then look at these three incidents in their order.

THE HIDDEN PROPHET. At the invitation of the Lord Moses had gone up into the mount of God in the sight of all the people. He had said to the elders as he went from them, "*Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you*" (xxiv, 14).

But Moses was absent from them for 40 days and the delay of Moses was a test to the people. God had wrought great things by His servant

and now from his hand they were about to receive God's holy law. Moses therefore represented to them the *authority* of God. We all know, however, how lawlessness will raise its head when authority is absent. Let the school-master leave the room and let his absence be prolonged and the class will become unruly. Such is human nature.

See what ingratitude marks the children of Israel! "*As for this Moses,*" say they, "*the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him*" (xxxii, v. 1). The very memory of their deliverance is growing dim and they have no present or lively interest in their one-time deliverer. And soon in their idolatrous worship of the golden calf, all thought of Moses—past or present—has passed away from their minds. Solemn picture!

Now a greater than Moses has been into this world, even the Christ of God. And a greater deliverance has been wrought on behalf of men. He has overthrown not Pharaoh, but him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (see Heb. ii, v. 14 and 15). Then He, having accomplished all this for man's eternal blessing, has gone up on high, saying, ere He went, like Moses of old, "*I will come again.*" All power and authority, too, has been placed in His hand for "*He is Lord of all.*"

But let us look around us, dear reader ! How has Christendom stood the test of an absent Christ ? Alas ! the many are no better than Israel. Many bad servants there are who say, “ *My Lord delayeth his coming,* ” and fall into all kinds of excess. Many scoffers there are, as the apostle Peter foretold, who say, “ *Where is the promise of His coming ?* ” and walk in the way of evil. Thousands make a profession of Christianity but have no present link with Christ, they have not His Spirit and they wot not what is become of Him.

But on the other hand many are true to their absent Lord. They keep His word, they do not deny His Name and they await His speedy return. They shall truly have their reward ! In their hearts dwells the holy Spirit of God, by whose power alone can any measure of faithfulness to Christ be maintained. They gladly sing the song :

Great Prophet of our God !

Our tongues must bless Thy Name,
By whom the joyful news

Of free salvation came ;

The joyful news of sins forgiv’n,

Of hell subdued, of peace with heav’n.

THE HIDDEN PRIEST. A scene of a different character is before us here. The occasion is that of the great day of atonement, and all Israel is gathered together in solemn assembly before the tabernacle, for on this day the priest

makes an atonement for them to cleanse them from all their sins (v. 29-30).

In the sight of all the people Aaron passes into the holy place, within the veil, alone, and taking with him the blood that makes atonement to sprinkle it upon and before the mercy seat. "*And there shall be no man in the tabernacle . . . when he goeth in . . . until he come out, and have made an atonement*" (v. 17). Here we have then the hidden Priest, the waiting people, and the sprinkled blood which cleanses them from their sins before the Lord.

All this has now found a glorious fulfilment. "*But Christ being come,*" says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "*an high Priest of good things to come...by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption*" (Heb. ix, v. 11-12). And again, "*Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . but into heaven itself*" (chap. ix, v. 24). Here we have again the hidden Priest and the atoning blood. And not only so, but the waiting people also—"*Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation*" (verse 28). Nor will they have long to wait for "*Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry*" (chap. x, verse 37).

But here we must note an important difference between the waiting people in Aaron's day and those of to-day. Israel did not, nor could they,

know the result of the sprinkling of the blood, nor the consequent cleansing from their sins *until Aaron came out*. And one has only to read the Psalms, which in the main contemplate the time when God begins again to work in the hearts of His earthly people, to see that the godly Jew, while his Messiah is hidden from his sight in the heavens, does *not* know acceptance with God. He hopes and fears and trusts and casts himself upon his God, but yet must wait until Christ appears for the redemption of His people before he can live in the shining of God's face.

The Christian, on the other hand, already knows what it is to stand in the favour of God. He knows that God has been infinitely glorified by Christ's death and he enjoys a purged conscience through the blood. Yet, strange to say, many believers there are who have not this assurance. They say "We cannot be sure, we must wait, but we hope and trust that it will be well with us when He comes." But this will not do, this is not Christian, but Jewish ground, dear reader ! Some may answer "What scripture is there that would lead us to believe that such certainty of blessing is ours?" The scripture for such is found in Heb. x, v. 14 and 15. "*By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us.*"

The truth then is that now while our great Priest is hid in the heavens and before He comes

forth, His waiting people have the witness of the Holy Ghost who indwells them and who has come down from a glorified Christ to bring to them the certainty of an accomplished redemption and the enjoyment of a conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God. May all our readers be able to thank God for this ! We may well sing :

And though awhile He be
Hid from the eyes of men,
His people look to see
Their great High Priest again :
In brightest glory He will come,
And take His waiting people home.

THE HIDDEN KING. Our readers are no doubt acquainted with the strange and remarkable incidents surrounding the early days of the young king Joash. Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, puts to death all the seed royal and usurping the throne for herself, reigns over the land of Israel. But unknown to her and to those who support her in her wickedness, the young king Joash is yet alive, saved from among the king's sons and hidden with his nurse in the bed-chamber in the house of the Lord.

This goes on for six years, during which time to the public mind Athaliah is in honour, but nevertheless in the ways of God the time is drawing near when the hidden king is to be brought forth. Before this takes place, however, the captains of the guard are gathered together in the

house of the Lord by Jehoiada the priest, and as the divine record states, "*He shewed them the king's son*" (v. 4). There were those, therefore, who were let into the secret of the hidden king before his public manifestation and they received instructions with regard to his enthronement.

Joash is then brought forth, crowned, anointed and proclaimed king. The trumpets are sounded and the people shout "*God save the King.*" Athaliah would have resisted all this, but she is taken and put to death and the true king reigns in peace and quietness.

How simple and instructive is the application of all this to our hidden Saviour! In the early chapters of the Acts we read of "*Jesus Christ . . . whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things*" (chap. iii, v. 21-22). Consequently the believer is looking heavenward—looking for the Saviour, who has power to subdue all things to Himself (see Phil. iii, v. 20-21). In the meanwhile the god and prince of this age holds sway; many of the ruling powers of this world are definitely anti-Christian and lawlessness abounds.

For the Christian, however, all is well. He is in the secret of the hidden king, and he knows that the day of His manifestation is near. In the joy of this knowledge he can gladly sing:

The heavn's, which now conceal Him
In counsels deep and wise,

In glory shall reveal Him
To our rejoicing eyes ;
He, who with hands uplifted
Went from the earth below,
Shall come again all gifted
His blessing to bestow.

EDITOR.

The Day of Jesus Christ.

Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. i, v. 6).

THE Epistle to the Philippians is remarkable for its brightness. There is a radiance about it which characterizes it, whether we regard it in reference to the church at Philippi, or look at it in respect of the Apostle. It contrasts with other Epistles in that there is so little of rebuke or blame in it. Nearly all that is said of the Philippians tends to their credit. If we consider its tone, and bear in mind the circumstances of the Apostle, it will be at once evident that its brightness is not the result of mere buoyancy of spirits or of a happy environment and prosperous condition, but is supernatural. The Apostle is in prison at Rome, has laboured long and suffered much in the Master's cause, is not in the vigour of youth, but " Paul the aged," and therefore,

not to circumstances but to the working of the Holy Spirit, one of whose chief fruits is joy, is this pervading note of brightness to be ascribed.

It should be observed, too, that whilst the Apostle speaks so highly of the Philippian converts in this epistle, he is careful also to preserve them also in the grace of lowliness, for he reminds them that from first to last the work is not their own, but the work of God in them. We are at once reminded of the importance of the inner life. The outward life is nothing without the inward.

Further this work was a *Divine* work. The supernatural life is from God, and not the outcome of natural powers (Phil. ii, 13; I Cor. xv, 10). Also it is a *continuous* work. The Apostle points to its beginning, progress, and completion. It was begun by God, and not by themselves. Its continuance rests with God. It is not like a machine with a spring or force lodged within it, which will keep it working for a long time without accession of energy and without attention. Grace is the continual need of man. And lastly the work of God is to go on until the Day of Christ, that is, the day of His coming. The apostle thus puts the Day of Christ, rather than the hour of death, as the goal. Thus the beginning, the middle, and the end of the work in the soul is from God.

This divine work in the Philippians which was the ground of the apostle's confidence in them

manifested itself in a threefold way. First he speaks of their *liberality*. He mentions their fellowship toward the gospel seen in their pecuniary assistance and that not spasmodically but continuously (verse 5). Their sense of the value of the unseen found expression in their gifts to the Apostle in the hour of his need (ch. iv, 15-18).

Then also he speaks of the fact that they willingly became *partakers of his grace* (v. 7). Paul terms his sufferings his *grace* because suffering for Christ is a mark of Divine favour. Persecution is a test, and when endured patiently is like the assayer's mark upon the metal—it declares its genuineness.

Also he commends their *steadfastness* and that “*from the first day until now.*” The test of persecution and the test of time had proved them and from their courage and endurance in it the Apostle augured their perseverance to the end.

Let us examine ourselves as to these three grounds upon which the Apostle ventured to base his confidence. Have we been bold in witnessing for Christ, if not when threatened by persecution, yet when assaulted by the subtler weapon of ridicule? Have we endured like the Philippians, or been subject to relapse like the Galatians? All this should teach us to pray for the needed grace that the work of God may be perfected in us “*until the Day of Jesus Christ.*”

W. H. H.

The Day.

“ The night is far spent, and the day is near ”
—Rom. xiii, 12.

Dark are these last and closing hours,
That we have lived to see :
Above—the fierce, malignant powers,
Below—black anarchy !
Not of the darkness or the night,
All shade must pass away ;
Lift up the head, ye sons of light,
Sons of the coming day.

Behold a streak of ruddy tinge
Along those eastern hills !
It crowns them with a glowing fringe,
And the horizon fills ;
And through the higher gloom, from far
Descends a cheering ray,
It is the bright and morning star,
The herald of the day !

O come, thou long-expected King,
Lord of all power and might,
Thou surely wilt salvation bring,
The reign of Peace and Right !
The weary nations in distress
Await Thy gracious sway ;
O come, thou Sun of Righteousness,
And usher in the day.

E. L. B.

Victory.

“ Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

—John xvi, 33.

THESE were the Lord's last words spoken to His disciples, according to John's record. He was leaving them in this world, and in doing so He could promise them no portion in it but tribulation. They were the followers of One whom the world had rejected, and they were not to expect anything from that world of a different nature. The cheer He gives them lies in this—He has overcome the world.

Eighteen centuries have not changed the world's nature. It is still the same world that rejected the Lord, and in it His people must still expect tribulation. But the cheer left to us by Him abides the same; we know and follow the blessed Victor over the world.

The elements of the world were introduced at the beginning of man's history, when at the suggestion of Satan, the old serpent, man set up to be independent of God. Man's first sin was a small action, but it contained terrible elements, and was followed by awful consequences. The elements quickly gained development, and all the consequences have not deterred man from following the course of self-will which he begun. Cain, the first-born of man, was of the wicked one,

and slew his brother because he was righteous. Tubal-cain laboured in the fires to embellish the city, and Jubal filled it with sweet sounds of harp and pipe ; but the fact remained that the city was founded by one who had gone out from God, having shed his brother's blood. Science and art have wrought, hand in hand, from that day to this, but they can barely cover the corruption and violence which exist ; corruption and violence which found full expression in unbounded hatred of the Holy One, and the death of the Just. Only a little while and man will fully prove that he is the same as of old, by the exaltation and worship of Antichrist, and the wicked confederacy against God and His Christ. Such is the world through which we have to pass. How needful it is that our eyes should be upon Him whom we are called to follow, and our hearts cheered by His victory.

From the beginning faith has been in conflict with the elements of the world and has been victorious. If man abandoned God in self-will, Abel sought Him, and through his excellent sacrifice obtained witness that he was righteous. If man sought to be independent of God, building a system of things in which he could find gratification away from God, Enoch, in spirit outside it all, walked with God, and became the first witness to the blessed fact that God would set aside the power of death which had come in as the result of man's sin. Noah believed God in regard to the judgment which was

coming upon the world, and built his ark for the salvation of himself and his house; in so doing he condemned the world.

But now in the Lord Jesus we see One who has perfectly triumphed over the world in all its elements. It is not only that He has not in the least degree become in anything subject to those elements but also He has manifested a positive excellence in contrast to every deformity seen in the world. Amid man's independency He was ever the dependent One: "Thou art my God from my mother's belly." Amid man's insubjection and disobedience, He was the obedient One: "I do always those things that please him." Amid man's pride and boastfulness He was the lowly One: "I am come in my Father's name." Against all man's attempts to glorify himself He glorified the Father: "He that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." His faithfulness ended in death, but victoriously, for even death caused Him not to swerve from the will of God, and in death the Son of man was glorified, and in response is now glorified in God Himself.

As the soldier who first reaches the battlements of a besieged city cheers his comrades, so the blessed Lord cheers us by His perfect victory. He would fix our eyes on Himself, and lead us on in that path of victory. Let us then go forward with holy boldness after Him.

J. R.

Guided by the Word.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Ps. cxix, v. 105).

THE Word makes us wise unto salvation. The Word teaches us what it is to be wise. For the world often mistakes cleverness and prudence for wisdom, and sometimes calls unworldliness folly. But Scripture teaches us that wisdom is from above, that Christ is our wisdom, and that the end of wisdom is salvation.

Yet this wisdom embraces true prudence in all earthly duties and relationships. And if we are guided by the Word, if we seek God's kingdom and righteousness, if we have our eye fixed on His promise, and our affections set on the things above, if we walk with Him in humility and faith, our minds will be clear and calm, our words sober, truthful, and kind, our actions straightforward and prudent; in our intercourse with our fellow-men we shall commend and adorn the doctrine of the Gospel.

What true wisdom would he possess and manifest who thus followed the Scripture rule! In his heart he loves God and hopes for heaven, loving and forgiving his brother and thinking no evil; his speech is yea, yea, and nay, nay; his words are in truth and kindness; in dress simple, as becometh one whose body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and who knoweth what is the true ornament; in his behaviour taking the lowest

place until he is bidden to go up higher ; in business not slothful, yet not making haste to be rich, and not anxious about to-morrow ; in sorrow not overwhelmed, in prosperity not elated ; a man who instead of asking “ Who is my neighbour ? ” always asks “ To whom may I be a helpful neighbour ? ” A lover of solitude, but ready to exhort and comfort the brethren as he has opportunity, and to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction ; solemn and earnest, yet anointing his face when his soul is fasting before the Lord ; a man faithful in that which is least, just and benevolent to all, fervent in love to the disciples of Jesus ; a man whose heart is in heaven and in whose heart is heaven, who learns daily of Jesus to be like Him who is the Wisdom from above.

ADOLPH SAPHIR.

Endurance.

THERE will be no enduring unless Christ has possession of the soul ; but if He has, there will be an abiding motive, and people will go on, and “ *bring forth fruit with patience.* ” Trouble may come in, in the church ; disappointment may arise, even from the brethren ; but they go on just the same, because they have got Christ before them ; for the word they have heard and keep connects them with Christ, and He is more than anything else.

J. N. D.