



ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

*“Hold Fast till
I Come”*

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GRACE SUFFICIENT

II CORINTHIANS 12 : 8

In every changing phase of life,
His grace is sufficient for me,
Amid the tempest and the strife,
His grace is sufficient for me,
When my way is dark and dim,
I follow, meekly, close to Him,
By His help the crown I'll win,
His grace is sufficient for me.

When Satan doth my soul engage,
His grace is sufficient for me.
He turns away in all his rage,
His grace is sufficient for me,
The flesh it is so prone to sin,
I know there is no good within,
I will triumph over all in Him,
His grace is sufficient for me.

If my friends fail and forsake,
His grace is sufficient for me,
His promise He will never break,
His grace is sufficient for me,
On His Word I will rely,
Lifting faith's eye towards the sky,
He will my every need supply,
His grace is sufficient for me.

The theme of my song shall ever be,
His grace is sufficient for me,
Till above His face I see,
His grace is sufficient for me,
There above, heaven's praise I'll swell,
My Saviour hath done all things well,
This story I shall ever tell,
His grace is sufficient for me.

J. G. Good

THE TRINITY IN THE GODHEAD

by the Late J. C. RUSSELL, Australia

In the Hebrew language the numbers are singular, dual and plural. The Divine name first mentioned is "Elohim," translated "God." This is neither a singular nor a dual noun, but is plural, meaning at least three. Another Divine name, "Adonahy," translated "Lord" (Isaiah 6 : 1) is also a plural noun. In Genesis 1 the plural noun "God" is joined to a singular verb "created." Again, in the words, "let US make man in our image and after our likeness" (Gen. 1 : 26), the word "image" is singular. The same is seen in Matt. 28 : 19 where the three distinct Persons of the Godhead are named, and yet it is into only one "Name" that disciples are to be baptized. Thus we have the mystery of the Godhead—Trinity in Unity. Take again the remarkable declaration in Deut. 6 : 4 : "Hear O Israel : The Lord our God in one Lord." The name "Lord" is the most frequent Divine title used in Scripture. It is "Jehovah." There are two Hebrew words translated "one." They are ECHAD, a compound unity, or one made up of many, and YACHID, one only, absolutely, or uniquely. In our verse the word "echad" is used, not "yachid," so the true sense of the declaration is "Jehovah our Gods is one (a compound unity) Jehovah." We find other indications of plurality, thus "the knowledge of the holy" (Prov. 30 : 3), where "holy" is plural and should be, "holy ones;" or "Remember now thy Creator" (Eccl. 12 : 1) where "Creator" is plural (see Rotherham and Darby trans.).

While there are many indications in the Old Testament of this mystery it was not until the new Testament was written that the full light of the truth was revealed. This is because it needed the incarnation of the Son to reveal the Father. The Gospel of John reveals the relationship, during the days of His flesh, of the Father and the Son, and also the eternal relationship prior to the incarnation or indeed the creation. In the same Gospel the personality of the Spirit is clearly revealed. When the Lord Jesus Christ was publicly manifested at the river Jordan following His baptism, the Father's voice was heard and the Spirit descend-

ed upon the Son in the form of a dove (Matt. 3). This follows the prophetic declaration in Isaiah 42 : 2 : "Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. *I* (the Father) have put my *Spirit* upon *Him* (the Son)." Paul testifies thus : "The grace of the *Lord Jesus Christ* and the love of *God*, and the communion of the *Holy Ghost* be with you all" (II Cor. 13 : 14). Peter commences : "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the *Father*, through sanctification of the *Spirit*, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1 : 2). John completes the witnesses in the book of Revelation : "Grace be unto you and peace, from *Him* which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from *Jesus Christ* the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth" (Rev. 1 : 4, 5). There is the plural "Us" of the Hebrew Divine name "Elohim"—"and God said, let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1 : 26); the plural "Us" of Jehovah : "And the LORD said . . . let us go down" (Gen. 11 : 7); and the plural "Us" of "Adonahy:" "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6 : 8). There is the thrice "holy" cry of Isaiah 6 : 3 and Rev. 4 : 8 : "Holy, holy, holy:" Personality, individuality, equality, and yet unity. It is a wondrous truth—"not confounding the Persons nor dividing the essence." The Spirit is God (Acts 5 : 3, 4). The natural and the moral attributes are revealed of each holy Person. For the purpose of man's redemption and sanctification there is a beautiful harmony and yet a distinctive work, for the Father has His own things (Acts 1 : 8, Mark 13 : 32). The Son took on Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh and died the death of the cross (Phil. 2 : 7, 8), yet it is the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and sanctifies (John 15 : 26; I Cor. 6 : 11). And so we could continue both in Old and New Testaments to prove the blessed yet mysterious truth of the Trinity in the holy and ever blessed Godhead.

*"May the grace of CHRIST our Saviour,
And the FATHER'S boundless love,
With the HOLY SPIRIT'S favour,
Rest upon us from above."*

THE TRIBES AND THE GOSPELS

by J. C. R. TAMBLING

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

DAN

It is time for us to come, in our studies, to John's Gospel, and to look afresh at this most interesting Gospel in the light of three tribes, Dan, Asher and Naphtali, in connection with the beryl, onyx and jasper stones.

Dan means "Judge." Now that God will be the judge of all the earth is obvious right from Genesis. But how will He judge? That is the question that John will answer for us. In John 3 : 17, we read that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." The word for "condemn" here is "krino," which elsewhere in the New Testament means "judge." See also the word in vv. 18 and 19 of the chapter. The Saviour is down here, winning men for God, in a world of darkness (ch. 3), a world of dryness (ch. 4) and in a world of destitution (ch. 5). But as a result of His movements down here, as the man Who told the Samaritan woman all she did (4 : 29) and the only one Who could help the impotent man (5 : 7), the Jews seek to kill Him (5 : 18). The Lord then speaks to them publicly. His absolute equality with the Father, and yet His place here as the subject man are the theme of His discourse. So we read that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," 5 : 22. Why is judgment entrusted to Him? Because, says v. 27, He is the Son of Man. As Son of God He raises the dead. As Son of Man He judges. The Man they have refused to be their Saviour will judge them. God gives man every opportunity. He does not judge as God—no, rather, He lets judgment be in the hands of One Who knows man absolutely, because He Himself is Man—the Man of God's own counsels. The believer will never come into judgment, 5 : 24. The One Who judges absolutely right, 5 : 30.

As Son of Man He judges. We are reminded of Daniel 7 : 13. Daniel's name would have been a help to him amidst the turmoil of the nations and empires that he lived through—God is judge. The character of Gentile rule is

seen in the 7th chapter to be that of the wild beast. The "little horn," the Man of Sin, speaks great things, and he is claiming a universal dominion. But the One Who will have it is different—it is the Son of Man Who comes with the clouds of heaven, and Who is given the kingdom that shall not be destroyed. That One speaks in the fifth of John. When Daniel sets his heart to understand, and fasts for three full weeks by the river Hiddekel (Tigris), he sees a man, whose body was like a beryl—Dan. 10 : 6. When Daniel sees this man, his comeliness is turned to corruption—he is the one who will tell Daniel of what is noted in the Scripture of truth concerning the nation in the last days, going through the time of Tribulation. Whether this is the Lord, or not, we may not be prepared to say, but that the beryl is marked out in connection with the tribe of Dan seems entirely fitting when we consider the body of this one. Behind the word beryl lies the meaning "to break, or subdue." How fitting in a chapter which tells of movement in the angelic sphere, having to do with the government of this world.

The beryl occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament, notably in Ezekiel 1 : 16 where we read of the wheels of the throne of God. What a throne is this! It proclaims the thought of judgment as it moves through the earth. The wheels may indicate to us the movement of the seasons through time—the wheels reach up so high that "they were dreadful," says Ezekiel 1 : 18; he is not gifted to see them in their entirety. The throne of God moves through the times and generations of men, and we do not discern the full measure of what is happening—but the colour of the beryl will remind us that there is firm judgment going on, undiscerned though it may be, and the end to be reached is the glory. So the Bride can say of her beloved, "His hands are as gold rings, set with the beryl," Song. 5 : 14. What is gold speaks of what is divine in character : those hands are capable of moving with the speed of the wheels in Ezekiel, but that is not the point here : the point is, what they hold for God, what they *do* hold, they hold in perfect righteousness : it is the character of the judge who has these hands. Listen to what He says—"I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand," John 10 : 28. That hand! Everything is entrusted into it, John 3 : 35, and believers are kept securely in it,

as we learn from 10 : 28, with which compare 17 : 12. No believer on the Lord Jesus can ever be lost. These hands are marked by perfect competence to rule and judge, and they hold you. The writer has heard believers say that it is possible for them to take themselves out of the Lord's hand. The statement only reveals conceit : how can we dictate to Him about a work that He has done?

It is the Son of God, Who is the Son of Man, the universal judge, Who walks through the pages of this Gospel. The only One qualified to judge speaks to the woman in the Temple, in 8 : 10 and 11, and says "Neither do I condemn (katakrino) thee." He is the true judge, but in the character of universal Saviour. Note the references to His judgment in 8 : 15, 16, 26, 50, in 9 : 39, in 12 : 31, 47 and 48, and see how the Spirit carries on this work—16 : 8, 11. As Judge, He is linked with the face of the eagle in Ezekiel.

A PROPHETIC OUTLINE

by the Late WALTER SCOTT

To us "upon whom the ends of the ages are come" the future political situation is presented in a series of moving panoramic pictures, as also in statements, numerous and diversified in style and character. The seer in vision, and the prophet in word and symbol, have made us fully acquainted with the future. If, as we firmly believe, the days of the Church on earth are numbered, the moment of her triumph at hand, the greater shame to us that the scrolls of the prophets are as yet unread, and the visions of the seer at Patmos regarded as a mysterious riddle.

Here are a few of the prophetic portions, which we commend for the reading and study of our friends. Do not shrink from the delightful and easy task of having read to you, or reading yourself, these precious parts of the inspired Word, on the ground that you are illiterate or have not the mind to understand. There is no real difficulty whatever. Are you willing to learn? Do not set yourself up as a prophet and dabble about "times and seasons." Be more willing to be taught than to teach. Be patient, wait, and do not jump at hasty conclusions.

The Lord's Great Prophetic Discourse—Suppose we first listen to the Lord's great prophetic sermon, fully recorded

in Matthew xxiv and xxv. This discourse—delivered on the mount to which the Lord will return in delivering power on behalf of Israel (Zech. xiv)—is divided into three separate sections. The first section is wholly occupied with Jewish scenes and circumstances, and shews the Lord's coming to Palestine : chap. xxiv. 1-44. The second part discloses the general state of things in Christendom, or the professing Church, and the Second Advent in connection therewith : chap. xxiv. 45 to xxv. 30. The third section reveals the millennial and eternal results to the nations consequent on the return of the Son of man in power and glory. The nations dealt with in blessing or judgment are those to whom the (future) gospel of the kingdom will be preached : chap. xxv. 31-46. First, then, we have the Lord's coming in reference to the Jews; second, His coming to deal with Christendom; third, His coming to the nations—one coming in its bearing on three distinct parties, viz., the Jews, the professing Church, and the nations.

The Revelation—The “Revelation”—the only prophetic book of the New Testament—next claims attention. Here the veil is rolled aside (such is the meaning of the word “Apocalypse” or “Revelation”) and the future, in glory and judgment, of heaven, earth, and the lake of fire, is laid open to view. The reader will find the key to the study of the book in chap. i. 19. The Old and New Testament saints are witnessed in heaven in chaps. iv. and v. Then follows the course of prophetic events which relate to earth and its inhabitants, not to heaven or the dwellers there. From chap. vi. to xix. 11, the events described by the prophet and seer of the lonely Isle of Patmos have their place and fulfilment (with one or two exceptions) between the translation of the saints to heaven—the subject of revelation, not of prophecy (I Thess. iv. 15-17)—and their subsequent return to glory with the Lord, to set up the kingdom in power on the earth (Rev. xix. 14). How this consideration simplifies the study of these prophecies! Then the millennial reign of a thousand years and the general features of the eternal state occupy chaps. xx.-xxii. 5.

The Last Twelve Chapters of Ezekiel—Now turn to the prophecy of Ezekiel, the last twelve chapters of whose book positively teem with prophetic details of exceeding interest. These millennial scenes and circumstances, which circle round

Israel and enlarged Palestine, are not described in the lofty style of Isaiah, nor in the weeping strains of Jeremiah, nor in the homely language and symbols of Amos, nevertheless the future is unfolded with such precision and fulness of detail that the attempt to divert the obvious application from Israel's future temple, modified Mosiac ritual, her greatly increased land—covering an area of about 300,000 square miles—the orderly location of the tribes from west to east, and other geographical and moral features, is to do violence to human language. The reader may be helped by a brief table of contents. In chap. xxxvii., the national restoration of Israel is announced; the union of the two long-separated houses of Ephraim (the ten tribes) and Judah (the two tribes); the one undivided nation of Israel securely settled in her land under the reign of a lineal descendant of David; the people saved and sanctified, and God's tabernacle in the midst—their glory and centre of gathering. In chaps. xxxviii. we have, fully described, the last attack of Gog (Russia) upon restored Israel, then dwelling in unwalled towns and villages, Jehovah being her glory and defence. Plunder is the bait which lures them on to their destruction (chap. xxxviii. 11, 12). Ah! little do they dream that Jehovah is a wall of fire round about His people. The mountains of Israel become the scene of judgment to the countless hosts; their fury is checked, and but a sixth is spared (chap. xxxix. 2-5) to carry home to their respective lands the tidings that Jehovah, God of Israel, has miraculously bared His arm in judgment, and gained Him a victory unparalleled in history. Russia, too, and the lands of Jewish hatred and persecution, will be visited in direct divine judgment (ver. 6). The implements of war will supply firewood for seven years (ver. 9) and the spoil of the nations go to swell the accumulated treasures gathered in the land of Emmanuel (ver. 10), for "the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel in great abundance" (Zech. xiv. 14). An extensive valley, situated east of the Dead Sea, will be devoted as a huge grave for Gog and his mighty host (ver. 11), which will give employment to the house of Israel for seven months (ver. 12). The city of the dead will be named Hamonah, *i.e.*, *the multitude* (ver. 16). In chapters xl.-xlii. the construction and measurement of the fifth or millennial temple are accurately given. This vast structure—probably a mile in extent—is to form

a centre of gathering and of prayer for all peoples (Isa. lvi 6, 7; Micah iv. 1, 2). The Lord Himself will build it (Zech. vi. 12, 13), others being privileged to assist in the holy work (ver. 15). In chap. xliii. the glory of the God of Israel, which many centuries before had departed from the house and left it a prey to the Chaldeans (chaps. x., xi.), returns, and enters the temple. The glory radiates the earth, but its home and centre are in the holy house. Then the altar of acceptance is carefully measured, for the sacrifices of Israel, also those of saved Gentiles, are to be offered thereon (Isa. lx. 7; lvi. 6, 7). The ordinances of the altar are appointed, consisting of burnt offerings and sin offerings, which are offered daily for seven days; on the eighth day and afterwards, burnt offerings and peace offerings are offered by priests of the seed of Zadok. In chaps. xlv.-xlvii. we have the duties and place of both priests and prince assigned them. The prince will be Christ's vicegerent on the throne of Israel—a lineal descendant of the royal house of David. Chap. xlv. 22, besides other considerations, would negative the thought of the prince being Christ personally. In chaps. xlvii., and xlviii. the land—then immensely enlarged, from the Nile to the Euphrates—is portioned out amongst the tribes, not in irregular portions, as under Joshua, but in regular, carefully measured parts across the face of the country, from east to west. Jerusalem, with its magnificent temple, beautiful and costly beyond all telling, will occupy the space measured for the purpose—of about 50 miles—between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. What a mass of interesting details is furnished us in those dozen chapters! What a delightful and fruitful field of study!

To be continued, D.V.

HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR US

by Dr. J. W. McMILLAN, Adelaide, South Australia

Several times in his epistles the apostle Paul stresses the fact that the Lord Jesus gave Himself for us. Let us look at six of these references, two in Galatians, two in Ephesians, and two in the Pastoral epistles.

1. *Galatians 1 : 4 and 2 : 20*

The first of these verses tells us the *purpose* of the Lord

Jesus is giving Himself for us, and second His *motive* in so doing.

The purpose was to *deliver* us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father. We live in an age which is under the dominion of Satan, who is the 'god of this age' (II Cor. 4 : 4). But we have been delivered from the power of darkness, and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God's love (Col. 1 : 13). We believers are those upon whom *the end of the ages have come* (I Cor. 10 : 11). While we live in this present age, we have tasted the powers of the age to come (Hebrews 6 : 5). This deliverance belongs to us because our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself *for our sins*, because it was our sin which prevented us from pleasing God.

But why did He do it? What was His motive? Paul answers this question in the memorable words of Galatians 2 : 20 : "the Son of God *loved me* and gave Himself for me." Note the individual aspect which is so prominent here. The words 'I' and 'me' occur more than a dozen times in the immediate context. I, personally, am loved by the Lord Jesus : He died for me : I must live for Him.

2. *Ephesians 5 : 2 and 25*

The first of these verses looks *back* to the cross as the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrifices, and the second looks *forward* to the completion of Christ's purposes for His Church. Both passages use the example of Christ as an example for us to follow in our way of living.

In Ephesians 5 : 2 Paul exhorts us to "walk in love, as Christ loved us and *gave Himself* for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.' The last phrase is one which occurs often in the Old Testament, especially in the opening chapters of Leviticus (e.g. Leviticus 1 : 9, 13, 17; 2 : 2, 9, 12 etc.). The self-giving of the Lord Jesus was the one great final and complete sacrifice for our sins. We too, as John reminds us, must love our brethren in the same kind of way (I John 3 : 16).

The apostle's words in Ephesians 5 : 25 are part of his instructions to husbands, who are to love their own wives as 'Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her . . . that He might present the Church to Himself glorious . . .' Here is the forward look. The day is coming when the church will be gathered together with Christ, a glorious

church : each member will have a glorified body, like that of the body of the risen Lord Jesus Himself. With this hope in us, we must purify ourselves—by hearing the Word of God, and obeying it !

3. *1 Timothy 2 : 5 and Titus 2 : 14*

The first of these verses refer to the 'Man, Christ Jesus.' The Greek word for 'man' here is 'anthropos,' the normal word for a human being. But the second verse refers to 'our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus.' Both verses tell us that He gave Himself for us. The One Who died on Calvary, Christ Jesus, is truly Man and truly God.

I Timothy 2 : 5 tells us that He gave Himself a ransom for all. The word 'antilutron' means the price paid to redeem a slave. Man had rebelled against God, and not paid the debt of obedience owed to Him. The Man Christ Jesus paid the price—Himself—and set us free. As Paul reminded the believers at Corinth, we have been bought with a price.

Titus 2 : 14, like Ephesians 5 : 25, looks forward. Christ gave Himself to redeem us from all unrighteousness, and purify for Himself a peculiar people. The word 'peculiar' here does not mean 'odd' or 'queer,' though some may think this of us, but rather a people who belong particularly to Him, a people for His own possession. One of our outward characteristics should be that we are 'zealous of good works,' keen to do the kind of things that the Lord wants us to do, out of love for Him and for each other.

May the wonderful truth that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us daily inspire us by His grace to love Him in return, and give ourselves day by day to live for Him.

A SHORT GUIDE TO THE

TABERNACLE AND ITS TEACHING

by R. G. TAYLOR

FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

Thirteen centuries before Christ the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian slavery by the display of Divine power. This is recorded in Exodus chapters 12-15. It has been estimated that some 2½ million people came out of Egypt on the night of Exodus 12.

God then led them, after the miraculous crossing of the

Red Sea, into the wilderness of Sinai. There He manifested His presence, sustained them by manna from Heaven and water from the rock. In the wilderness they had no resources of food or clothing, no maps to guide them on their journey. They were alone with God in the desert and He never failed them. When they stood on the borders of the promised land Joshua declared "not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord thy God spake concerning you." (Josh. 23 : 14).

After they had travelled for 2 months the people halted and encamped before Mount Sinai—a barren lonely spot in the Arabian desert. They remained here for nearly a year. This was a momentous period in Israel's history. Graham Scroggie remarks it was probably "the most important year in all history."

Four great events took place as the people waited at Mount Sinai :

(a) God revealed Himself in His awesome majesty, even Moses was terrified at the sight which met his gaze (Heb. 12 : 21). The people were learning that the God who had delivered them from Egypt's bondage was a Holy God. "Righteousness and judgment were the habitation of His throne" (Ps. 97 : 2).

(b) Israel was constituted a nation. If they would obey God's voice and keep His covenant, they would be a peculiar treasure unto Him—a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. From henceforth they were to be the people of God. (Lev. 26 : 12).

(c) God gave them the law. Therein was unfolded His will whereby man's responsibilities to God and his duties to his fellow man were set forth.

(d) The Tabernacle with its ordinances of Divine service were set forth. Moses was forty days and forty nights on the Mount receiving from God the pattern of the Tabernacle. It was to be a sanctuary, that He may dwell among His people. (Ex. 25 : 8). The people had experienced redemption from Egypt's bondage, but they were as yet unlearned in Divine things. For centuries God enshrined His thoughts in outward forms and ceremonies and the Jewish ceremonial became the greatest religious order this world has even seen until the new covenant was introduced. (Heb. 8 : 8). Hence

the difficulties experienced by the Hebrew believers to leave behind the old order known as Judaism, and to follow the path of faith. In the days of the Tabernacle the people lived in the age of promise whereas we live in the age of fulfilment. The service of the Tabernacle was anticipatory of Christ and His work which fulfilled all types and introduced a more perfect order. For over 50 years the Tabernacle was the centre of Israel's national, domestic and religious life. In these early days, God taught His redeemed people His estimate of sin, His standard of holiness, His way of approach and His way of acceptable worship and Divine service.

PREPARATION

“Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” This was God's purpose in the giving of the Tabernacle. (Ex. 29 : 45). The Divine presence is the greatest blessing that can be enjoyed by man. It was the distinctive character of the nation of Israel—the living God in their midst with them and for them has been borne out throughout their history and will be fulfilled in prophecy.

Next came the call for materials. “Bring me an offering” said the Lord—every man, not a selected few and in the right spirit “willingly with his heart.” They were to bring the best of their material possessions, Precious Stones, Olive Oil and Spices, Purple, Blue, Scarlet, Fine Linen, Gold, Silver, Bronze and Animal Skins.

The response was overwhelming. (Ex. 25). So great was the material given that Moses had to restrain the people for there was sufficient and indeed too much. This was the giving of a grateful willing hearted people unto the Lord.

The plan of the Tabernacle was not left to human imagination, all design and measurements were prescribed by divine command and Moses was strictly enjoined to make all things according to the pattern shown to him on the mount. (Heb. 8 : 5).

The whole nation was aroused to activity, every man, women and all the rulers combined their efforts to prepare the sanctuary of God. It has been estimated that about 6-9 months was required for preparatory work. Each one had a sense of personal involvement but it appears that two men were selected to oversee the work of construction—

BEZALEEL of the tribe of Judah and AHOLIAB of the tribe of Dan. We note that they were called by name, filled with the Spirit and enabled for this work. Herein lies a principle which runs through all Scripture. God calls His servants to do His work and fits them for their task. What is God's call to us? (cf. I Cor. 4 : 17). It must have been a wonderful day in the experience of the Israelites when the work was finished and the Tabernacle reared up in the midst of the camp. Then a cloud covered the Tent and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.

THE CAMP OF ISRAEL

The layout of the camp provides an example of divine order. The whole encampment must have presented a majestic sight; it was 12 miles in circumference and over two million people, redeemed from Egypt's bondage were grouped around the Tabernacle. Each tribe had its appointed place and their communal life was regulated by divine command.

Four encampments are detailed in Numbers ch. 2 and they are set out as follows :

EAST SIDE—Judah with Issachar and Zebulun.

SOUTH SIDE—Reuben with Simeon and Gad.

WEST SIDE—Ephraim with Manasseh and Benjamin.

NORTH SIDE—Dan with Asher and Naphtali.

One tribe, the tribe of Levi were set apart for the care of the Tabernacle and the Priesthood. They were to pitch their tents around the court of the Tabernacle and each of the three sons of Levi were given a special assignment. Numbers ch. 3 details their place, responsibility and duties when the camp moved forward through the wilderness at the command of Jehovah (Num. 10). Their respective 'charge' was as follows.

WEST SIDE—**GERSHONITES** (vv. 23-25). Responsible for the tent coverings, curtains of the door, the gate, the court and the cords.

SOUTH SIDE—**KOHATH** (vv. 29-31). Responsible for the vessels and service of the sanctuary.

NORTH SIDE—**MERARI** (vv. 35-36). Responsible for the boards, bars, pillars and sockets.

EAST SIDE—MOSES, AARON AND HIS SONS (v. 38). Keeping the charge of the sanctuary.

God, however, required fitness for His service and before taking up their duties the Levites were cleansed, and presented before the Lord. (Num. 8 : 5-7).

CHRIST IN THE HEBREWS

by J. B. HEWITT

CHAPTER 13 ————— CONCLUDED

There must be separation from everything that savours of Judaism (v. 12, 13). Our privilege of association with Christ in reproach is a test of loyalty. We have the alluring prospect of a heavenly destiny in realization shortly (v. 14).

RESPONSIBILITY OF PRIESTS v. 15-17. All believers are holy priests who enter the sanctuary of God to worship (1 Peter 2 : 5). The precious exercise of praise to God continually is not limited to one gathering, but a daily joyful ascription of glory to God. The praise of "our lips" are a sensitive spiritual barometer of the condition of the heart. Manward there should be benefaction "doing good" is always pleasurable to God. Words of praise and works of power are acceptable to God. Sacrifice to God is priestly work, submission to godly guides is a mark of spirituality. Remember them (v. 7), recognise them (v. 17) and respect them (v. 24).

SINCERITY IN LIVING v. 18-21. Fellowship in prayer is requested by the writer that he may be restored to them soon.

He prays that the blessed work of grace in their lives may be perfected. He prays that their troubled hearts may have peace, they need the God of power to cheer their trembling souls. The Great Shepherd helps our tendency to wander. His care restores. His shed blood guarantees our everlasting safety. God can perfectly equip us for daily living. He can mend broken lives and bring us into a condition of soul to be usable. He desires that we do His will and all is executed through our Lord Jesus.

What a doxology—"to Whom be glory for ever and ever Amen."

Our God is the God of Peace, of Power, of Provision, Who planned the everlasting Covenant (v. 20). A God of Perfection and of Purpose who accomplishes all through our goodness and grace. In that day our glorious Lord will be worthy of every sceptre of sovereignty, every garland of glory, every wreath of worthiness and every trophy of triumph.

His mediation and redemption secures all for God and His saints. This praise will be without intermission, without end.

The book closed with salutations, giving us exhortation (v. 22), information (v. 23), and salutation (v. 24). This grace; gladdens the heart; refreshes the soul; assures the mind; covers all the saints everywhere, every day and can be enjoyed today. Amen.

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by Dr. JOHN BOYD

2 : 8-15, *WARNING CONCERNING PHILOSOPHICAL ERROR*

V. 8 "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,*" Paul tells the Colossians to look out for the false teachers he has been hinting at in the epistle. Note the R.V. translation, 'Take heed lest there shall be any one,' as though to suggest the proximity of a man who teaches thus, possibly in their midst—one of their own number. Then the apostle tells how such men may be recognised. Three types of gnostic teachers are described, (a) Philosophers (vv. 8-15), (b) Judaisers (vv. 16-17), (c) Mystics (vv. 18-19).

The first type of which he warns is one who would carry them off as spoil, like a slave-raider, and put again into bondage those who had once been delivered from the darkness of paganism (1 : 13). "*after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" Paul shows its origin, man-made, not the mystery of God. It is an empty fraud; its nature was that of the elementary religious principles of the pagan world (Gal. 4 : 3, 9). It was all so different from what the apostle had been setting

before them (1 : 3—2 : 3), and which he proceeds further to explain.

V. 9 "*For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,*" In this sentence Paul succinctly gathers together the truth about the Godhead of Christ, and all its implications. In Christ the Godhead dwells in all its fulness. This does not mean merely some Divine attributes, but the essential Being of God dwells in Him, permanently and unchangeably. Thus the Godhead is not, as the Gnostics imagined, made up of a number of spiritual emanations. All the pleroma, all the fulness of Deity, dwelt in Christ, as in God. What God was, Christ was, is, and evermore will be. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ, in bodily fashion, in His bodily manifestation, that is, when He became incarnate—both when on earth, and now in heaven, exalted far above all. This was expressed by John in his Gospel (1 : 14 R.V.m.)—"the Word (possessing all the fulness of Deity (v. 1), became flesh, and tabernacled among us." He, the only-begotten Son, manifested this pleroma to men (1 : 18), by His works, and by His teachings.

Let us search the Scriptures, which testify of Christ (John 5 : 39), that we might find in them the fulness of grace and truth, as seen in Christ alone. Let us not be misled by vain philosophy. Let our minds be filled with the scriptures, and our hearts with Christ. Our needs will be met, not by persuasive words of the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, resident in Christ.

V. 10 "*And ye are complete in Him,*" Possibly this may be translated, 'And ye are in Him, having been filled.' Compare the R.V., 'And in Him ye are made full.' Anything you need of the fulness of God you already have. Does this refer to the Holy Spirit, 'shed abundantly on us by Jesus Christ our Saviour' (Tit. 3 : 6)? Ye are in Christ, having been filled, that is, by reason of your association with Christ, and your incorporation into Him. He is the Filler, and He has made us full (Eph. 1 : 23). 'And from His fulness have we all received, grace upon grace' (John 1 : 16 R.S.V.). We have received the grace of salvation (Eph. 2 : 8), and thereafter whatever grace of which we have need. "*which is the Head of all principality and power:*" Paul would exhort his readers to glory 'in the fulness of Him who filleth all in all' (Eph. 1 : 23), and not be led astray into seeking

the help of angelic beings, inferior to Christ. Paul designates these as principalities and powers, referring to angels, whom the Gnostics imagined as ministering to the saints, by acting as mediators between God and men. Christ is the Head of all principality and power, by reason of His resurrection from the dead, and His superior position at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Not only does 'Head' indicate here the superiority of Christ, but also His power to energise and direct both angels and men. As the physical head controls and nourishes the body, so does Christ minister to the growth of the Church (Eph. 4 : 16), without any mediators.

Much better then for the saint to have dealings with the uncreated Head, rather than with inferior creatures. More worthy is He to be worshipped than subject angels. How much do these false teachers of the 1st Century resemble the Roman Catholic teachers of the 20th Century, in their desire for mariolatry, and the mediation of saints between men and God!

V. 11 "*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands,*" The apostle now shows them their true condition, because 'in Christ.' When at conversion they believed in Christ Jesus (1 : 4) they got a new standing. They were circumcised, but of a such higher grade even than that of the Abrahamic covenant. The believer's is the true circumcision (Phil. 3 : 3). Paul shows us three distinctions between these two circumcisions—(1) It was a different sort of circumcision; it was not made with hands, that is, something that characterised the Jews' outward circumcision; it was not the work of man; he had no part in it; it was not after the tradition of men (v. 8). "*in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*" (2) The effect of this circumcision was different from that of Abraham's; it was not merely the excision of a portion of the flesh, as a ritual token, but 'the putting off of the body of the flesh' (R.V.), that is, of the whole body of fleshly desires. This is the true spiritual circumcision. "*by the circumcision of Christ*:" (3) This indicates that Christ is the 'Author and Perfecter of our faith' (Heb. 12 : 2), where His death and resurrection are set before us. The circumcision of Christ is the cutting off of Christ at Calvary. Faith in Him as the crucified and risen Saviour brings us into the good of this spiritual circumcision.

This exposition of the circumcision of Christ, as applying to His death, is in keeping with the subsequent teaching of vv. 12-15.

V. 12 *"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him"* The believer's state, called circumcision in v. 11, is here seen as comparable to Water Baptism, after the figure set forth in Rom. 6 : 2-5. There it indicates that baptism was a confession on the part of the believer, that by faith he had died with Christ; by faith he sought to be buried with Him—baptised into association with His death; and that by faith he has been raised with Him, to walk in newness of life, as Christ did. *"through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."* The circumcision of v. 11 is made good to the believer by faith—faith in the effectual working of God. As God literally raised Christ from the dead, so does He in spirit raise the believer, a confession he makes as he is baptised into association with Christ, being put into, and raised out of the watery tomb. Paul seems here to be dealing in a similar manner with the regenerate Jew and Gentile alike, as in the parallel epistle (Eph. 1 : 19—2 : 5).

V. 13 *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,"* Paul here describes the Colossians, as they had lived in their unregenerate days (Eph. 2 : 1-2). In the sight of God they were dead, as they had walked, (a) in trespasses (R.V.)—their actions, swerving aside in folly, and (b) in the uncircumcision of their flesh—not so much the outward uncircumcision that differentiated them from the Jews, but rather the old, unclean, natural, fleshly desires which characterised their minds and caused their trespasses. Thus we see in this passage three relationships of man to circumcision, (1) *the Jews*—a circumcision made by hands (v. 11), (2) *the Gentiles*—uncircumcised, physically and morally (v. 13), (3) *the believers*—circumcised in the circumcision of Christ (v. 11). *"hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses;"* 'Quickened with Christ' means to be made alive with Christ. This is that eternal life which the believer received when as a sinner, dead through trespasses, he came to Christ in faith. God gave him this life, which he shares with Christ (John 3 : 15 R.V.). It is life in Christ (Col. 3 : 4)—the life of Christ, the receipt of which he confessed in baptism. As a

result of this faith also, all his trespasses had been forgiven. God forgave him; God quickened him.

Compare the Revised Version here, 'having forgiven us all our trespasses.' The word 'us' includes all believers, not the Colossians merely, but all born-again ones.

Note the recurring use of the prefixed preposition, 'with,' which establishes the believer's relations with Christ, (a) *Dead with Christ*, (v. 20)—this is the believer's association by faith with Christ on Calvary, 'I have been crucified with Christ, (Gal. 2 : 20 R.V.; (b) *Buried with Christ*, (v. 12)—as He was buried in the tomb at Calvary, so has the believer been buried in water baptism; (c) *Risen with Christ*, (v. 12)—as Christ was raised by God out of Joseph's tomb, so the believer, by faith in the working of God, sees himself in type as being raised with Christ out of the watery tomb; (d) *Quickened with Christ*, (v. 13)—as the resurrection of Christ showed that He had satisfactorily dealt with sin, laid on Him on the Cross, so the believer knows that in Christ his sins are forgiven, and he has been made to live in Christ, and with Him.

V. 14 "*Blotting out the handwriting or ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us,*" The 'handwriting' was a term used for a bond of indebtedness, which was signed by the debtor—something I promise to do (Philemon 19). The forgiveness of sins is here metaphorically described as Christ, by His work on Calvary, cancelling a bond—smearing out what was written against us, whether it was the Decalogue decrees, written with the finger of God in the case of the Israelites, or the words of Jehovah to which Israel had subscribed (Ex. 24 : 3), or whether it was the law written on the hearts of the Gentiles (Rom. 2 : 15), to which their conscience bore witness. Note the 'us' in this verse, including both Jew and Gentile. Both were concerned with ordinances (vv. 14, 20). Neither of these could men keep; this bond was against us; we could not keep the decrees; they were contrary to us; they hindered us.

Or, it may be that this handwriting was that which was written in the books of the works of the wicked dead (Rev. 20 : 12). "*and took it out of the way, nailing it to the Cross;*" Is Paul here concerned with blackmail? Did the Gnostics present the bond found in the Law, and compel Christians

to keep its decrees (v. 16)? Note the Revised Version here, 'And He (Christ) hath taken it out of the way.' Christ has obliterated forever the ordinances of the Law in the bond (v. 17). He took it, lit., from the midst of the believers, and keeps us from being hindered in our Christian pathway. Christ did this when He was nailed to the Cross. Metaphorically He nailed the bond of ordinances to the Cross, by making it of no effect.

V. 15 "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly," Here is a further metaphorical picture of the work of Calvary, namely, the putting off from Himself of a garment. Compare 3 : 9, the only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament. Thus He dealt with His spiritual opponents. Christ had been opposed during His sojourn on earth by principalities and powers, here referring to supernatural evil spirits. This was seen for example, in His temptation by Satan (Matt. 4 : 1); by Peter, energised by Satan (Matt. 16 : 23); at Gethsemane, in His agony (Luke 22 : 44). All these He had resisted completely. At Calvary was the final assault. There He completely stripped Himself of all the onslaughts of His spiritual foes. On Calvary He boldly and confidently repulsed all His enemies, publicly demonstrating His superiority over them. These include the spiritual enemies of God's people to-day (Eph. 6 : 12). "*triumphing over them in it.*" Another metaphor Paul uses of Christ's work on Calvary is that of a Roman triumphal procession. In this 'triumph' the defeated foes of the victorious general were led in the procession, chained to his chariot. This Christ did on the Cross, with His foes—those supernatural beings that opposed Him. Thus the shameful experience of Christ on Calvary became, as it were, His triumphal chariot.

Warnings such as these (vv. 8-15) are necessary for believers to-day, when men of apparent gift so cleverly set before their audiences, or their readers in Christian periodicals, philosophical arguments that find no foundation in the scriptures. Satan still has false prophets poised so that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect (Matt. 24 : 24). Let us take heed, lest the seeming wisdom of clever men is only vain deceit. Let us mistrust suggestions, for which no, 'What saith the Scripture, can be found (Gal. 4 : 30).

ROYAL FRIENDS IN TROUBLOUS TIMES

by the Late W. W. MORRIS

I SAMUEL 24

Saul resumes his evil course; and the incident of David and his men, hiding in a cave by the sheepfolds when Saul enters to rest and sleeps, is told. God's man, indeed, now God's king, rises high above the sordid, the selfish, the purely mundane, and looks on Saul's prostrate form with Godly compassion and reverence. "He is the LORD'S anointed; no, he shall not be slain." NO? Why? 600 whys! we think, in utter astonishment. "He takes off the hem of his robe," and David's heart smites him; this was an affront to the King, v. 5. Spiritual sensitiveness is evident here. David's loyalty, devoid of all enmity, is fully proven in v. 6—my master the LORD'S anointed. Saul is seen to leave the cave; again vv. 4 and 7 show how perilous was his position there. David's words to Saul outside the Cave, vv. 8-15, are truly heart moving; eye for eye, tooth for tooth, as Ex. 21 vv. 24.25? No, not this day; A soft answer turneth away wrath. Prov. 15 v. 1. Saul is overwhelmed "he wept." "My son David" . . . thou hast rewarded me good" . . . "I evil." So in David by the Spirit is anticipated by 1,000 years our Lord's teaching in Matt. 5 v. 44 "*If a man find his enemy will he let him go well away?*" . . . "I know that thou shalt surely be King, and that the Kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand" vv. 19-20. "Solemnly promise me . . . not to destroy my name out of my father's house," (so near to resulting from his own evil deeds) and David promises, v. 22, Saul the suppliant—how remarkable. Better to have put off the crown, laid down the sword, and turned again to husbandry; it is written—"a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," Psalm 51 v. 17. "He saveth such as be of a contrite spirit," Psalm 34 v. 18.

CHAPTER 25

Verse 1: "And Samuel died," here was a good and great man, a true servant of God, he made an outstanding impression on the national life of God's people Israel; and he is given a standing of great distinction in Jer. 15 : 1. "They

gathered together and lamented him' and buried him in his house at Ramah. The remainder of the chapter records the events involving David, Nabal and Abigail. And here a perilous situation arose that might well have stained David's hands with much innocent blood. Holy Spirit endowed men are not immune from carnal reactions betimes. The self chosen task of the protector of Nabal's flocks, David had undertaken, was so outraged by Nabal's churlishness and selfishness that dire threats were afoot to requite his unashamed insults. "But . . . the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," James 1 v. 20. Abigail, discerning the danger, hastens to redress the wrong, and meets David with an offering of appeasement, and more—with words of wisdom and womanly intelligence. The sequence—Nabal dies under Divine judgement, and Abigail counts it an honour to be David's wife. Verse 44 exposes Saul's lack of moral integrity; Michal, David's rightful wife, was given to Phalti.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



“Occupy till I Come”

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“OF HIM, THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM”

The maker of the universe
As man for man was made a curse
The very laws that He had made
Unto the uttermost He paid.

His Holy Fingers made the bough
That grew the thorns that pierced His brow
The nails that pierced His hands were mined
In secret places He designed.

He made the forests whence there sprung
The tree on which His body hung
He died upon a cross of wood
Yet made the Hill on which it stood.

The sky that darkened o'er His head
By Him above the earth was spread
The Sun that hid from Him its face
By His decree was poised in space.

The spear that spilled His Precious Blood
Was tempered in the fires of God
The grave in which His Form was laid
Was hewn in rocks His Hands had made.

The Throne on which He now appears
Was His from everlasting years
But a new glory crowns His Brow
And to Him every knee shall bow.

Selected.

A MAN SENT

by J. G. GOOD

The Gospel accounts concerning John the Baptist, impress the reader with the importance placed upon him, and immediately we are convinced that he was a man who had a special place in the plans and purposes of God. Of no other man has it been written, "there was a man sent from God" (John 1 : 6). John was a SENT man, "the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message" (Haggai 1 : 3). There can be no substitute for a man sent from God, circumstances will be ordered to reveal him (Ps. 105 : 16-17). God took the sleep from the eyes of a king in order that a man should be brought into his rightful place (Esther 6 : 1). No amount of advertising or organising will ever produce the results or promote the conditions that prevail when God works !

Not only was John a *Special* man but he was a *Selected* man (Luke 3 : 2), divine communication was directed to him, "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests" plurality of high priests was spurious as far as God's order was concerned, the Feasts of Jehovah had become the feast of the Jews (John 5 : 1), God had set aside the nation of Israel and was now dealing with individuals, how majestic are the sovereign workings of God, "they were-but the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias in the wilderness."

Again John was a *Secluded* man, in the wilderness, this would remind us that John was an independent man, not influenced by the whims and fancies of men. Is not this a lesson for our day, individually and a personal conviction should mark God's servants, that the mind of God should be declared irrespective as to what conditions exist. Popularity is a curse, following a man or men, this in turn can lead to a form of idolatry, and of course we are limiting God relative to the servants we are prepared to hear, this could be a form of clerisy !

The Diet and Dress of John were consistent with the message of repentance which he proclaimed, would camels hair suggest—separation, leathern girdle—self-control, and locusts and wild honey—submission.

There are three features which characterised John, worthy of our emulation ! (1) *Humility*—"What sayest thou of thyself" (John 1 : 22). John replied, "I am the voice" he could have said "the forerunner, a subject of Old Testament

prophecy, the son of the priest Zacharias." John's estimate of self was not the Lord's estimate of John, (Luke 7 : 28). This divine principle runs throughout Scripture, "Before honour is humility" (Prov. 15 : 33), again, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14 : 11). Abraham in (Gen. 23 : 4) said "I am a stranger and sojourner" the opinion of others was different, "Thou art a mighty prince" (v. 6). There are three Epistles in the New Testament in which Paul does not mention his apostleship, Philippians and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, in his opening salutation, the three letters dealing primarily with service, the words of the old hymn expresses the truth beautifully :

*"My highest place is lying low,
At my Redeemer's feet,
No real joy in life I know,
But in His service sweet."*

2. *Testimony.* John was a burning and a shining light, (John 5 : 35) it is possible to be burning and not shining, the wick becoming be-fogged by sin. John stood and Jesus walked, the end of an old order and the beginning of a new, (John 1 : 35-36). The ministry of John was a heart affecting ministry (John 1 : 37). John testified to the Lord Jesus as to His Past (John 1 : 15), His Present (John 1 : 29), and His Future (John 3 : 30). The Gospel of the Perfect Servant reveals a lovely touch (Mark 1 : 14) no desire to usurp, or to eclipse the service of John !

3. *Stability.* (Luke 7 : 24), John rebuked an unholy association and paid for it with his life (Luke 3 : 19). Those who would stand for divine truth and principle must expect opposition and persecution. The servants of God have been marked by this trait down through the ages, no compromise, a firm stand on a "thus saith the Lord." Divine legislation needs no revising and can never be repealed ! Unstable as water (Gen. 49 : 4) certainly did not apply to John, the line of least resistance, conformity to modern trends. We need to dig old wells and revive old names (Gen. 26 : 18).

*Stand like Daniel brave and daring,
Stand for Truth and Right,
Stand like Daniel, though against you,
Legions of foes unite.*

Our rest comes not from our being what Hé wants, but in His being what we want.—J. N. D.

THE TRUE VINE (JOHN 15)

by EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth

At the end of chapter 14 of John's Gospel the Lord Jesus says to the disciples 'Arise, let us go hence' and they make their way to the Mount of Olives. It is evident that in the intervening chapters, 15, 16 and 17 His discourse is darkly coloured by the imminence of the Cross. It is not difficult to imagine that in the course of that walk they would pass the doors of the temple, on either side of which was carved a vine. In the opening of chapter 15, the Lord speaks of Himself as 'the True Vine,' in contrast to the words 'Israel is an unpruned vine' (Hos. 10 : 1, J.N.D.). His words are followed by the significant word 'and my Father is the husbandman,' which have their application not to Christ personally but rather to His people. It would thus seem that He is speaking of Himself and the Church as One, similarly as in the words 'so also is (the) Christ' (I Cor. 12 : 12), a thought which runs throughout the chapter. This divides itself into three areas of relationship, each fairly easily and clearly defined.

1. The relationship between Christ and His own (vv. 1-11). This must be a first priority and indeed will regulate any other lesser relationship. The key verse (4), 'Abide in Me and I in you' sets out this most attractive thought of union and communion : it is not the idea of a stem to which the branched are attached. It is something akin to the flood of light to Saul of Tarsus when attacking the Church, the Lord's words are then 'Why persecutest thou ME.' Doubtless John learned much by way of intimacy as one 'leaning on Jesus' bosom' (chap. 13 : 23); so may we also be fruitful as abiding in Him. A further promise is made (v. 7) that we shall ask what we will and it shall be done unto us, following the word 'if . . . My words abide in you.' There is no question that we shall know what to ask in the nearness of this love, expressed so fully in verse 9, 'As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you : continue ye in My love.' And the Lord gives the secret of continuance, setting the example Himself (v. 10), 'If ye keep my commandments.' And the outcome of His words in the following verse, 'that My joy might remain in you and your joy might be full.' We are told that the pruning of the vine is of the most drastic character and there is no doubt that

with us, the branches, the discipline of the daily pathway is to the end that we may produce more fruit of quality. In the idea of being grafted in (see Rom. 11 : 16-20), there is in the case of the vine, a moving suggestion of the sufferings of Christ.

2. *The relationship between one another ('the branches')* vv. 12-17. The section is summed up by its opening verse (12), 'This is my commandment that ye love one another, as I have loved you,' and the concluding verse (17) in almost identical terms, simple words (John's have been called one-syllable words), so characteristic of his writings. Even the least instructed believer can enter into their meaning, yet how great the standard, 'as I have loved you.' The connection between our first section and the absolute necessity for the fulfilment of this of 'abiding in Me and I in you' (v. 4) becomes crystal clear. This is a commandment, in no way optional, and the Lord, as ever, provides Himself the example 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' (v. 13). It would seem that we qualify to become His friends, 'If ye keep My commandments.' In this way our fellowship with one another becomes more exalted in character as we see its involvement with our fellowship with Himself. As His friends (not by our choosing but His), He has made known to us all things that He has heard of His Father (v. 15).

3. *The relationship between ourselves and the world* (vv. 18-27). This section is prefaced by the word 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.' Its predominant feature is testimony and witness, having the same derivation as the word martyr. It should not surprise us, for the Lord goes on to say 'they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.' Here again the measure of our testimony will be that in which, abiding in Christ, the True Vine, we are marked by the same character, rather than by the words which we may speak. We have been chosen out of the world in which He was persecuted and the servant is not greater than his Lord. He says of Himself 'They hated Me without a cause.' and now introduces another Witness, the Comforter to be with us in the testimony, Whom He designates the Spirit of Truth. Of Him, He says, 'He shall testify of Me' and as we abide in the Vine, this too will be the character of our witness.

GENESIS 23—THE DEATH OF SARAH

by ANDREW BORLAND

Life is like a journey over undulating country. There are long level stretches of plain when the traveller jogs along, and nothing sensational happens. Sometimes there are deep valleys where light fades and shadows overcast the way. The Shepherd Psalmist describes such places as "the valley of the Shadow of Death." Sometimes, however, the traveller scales a mountain height from which there is clear vision of entrancing country, an uplifting experience, likened in the spiritual realm to intimate fellowship with God.

Abraham's life was like that. There were long periods about which no record has been kept—the day-to-day occurrences of his domestic affairs, when he lived as a successful nomadic shepherd, happy with Sarah and in his old age with Isaac. He had, too, moments of unparalleled blessing, walking so intimately in fellowship with God that he worthily had bestowed upon him the title, 'Friend of God.' There were, however, times when sorrow visited him, and grief invaded the heart of the man who walked with God. One of those moments was when Sarah, at the age of one hundred and twenty seven years, died at Kir-jath-arba, while Abraham was still dwelling at Beersheba after his return from his journey up Mount Moriah (Gen. 22 : 19).

The record in Genesis takes account of the crisis in the patriarch's life, amongst others, the call from Ur of the Chaldees, the trial of his faith on Mount Moriah when he was about to offer up Isaac, the marriage of Isaac, the death and burial of Sarah.

Genesis chapter 23 has some interesting features. It records the death of Sarah, and mentions the age at which she died; and that is the only instance in Scripture of the preservation of the age of a woman at her death. It contains the second mention of tears; 'Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her' (v. 2). The first mention is as follows; Hagar sat over against her son and lifted up her voice and wept (21 : 16). Here also is the first lengthy story in the Bible of a business transaction, conducted between Abraham and Ephron the son of Zohar for the purchase of the field containing the cave of Machpelah. While we may read of those who died (as in chapter 5),

it is in chapter 23 that we may read the first story of a burial, that of Sarah in the cave which Abraham had secured for four hundred shekels of silver, carefully weighed out in the presence of witnesses.

Sarah was a remarkable woman. She had responded with her husband Abram to the call of God when that call came while they dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees. It took both faith and courage to give up a city life to go on a journey 'not knowing whither they went' (Heb. 11 : 8). She had to exchange the comforts of a settled existence for the uncertain conditions of a nomadic life, dwelling in tents. Her name was changed at the time when God communicated to Abram the fact that his wife Sarai, then ninety years, would have a son to be his heir. Abram became Abraham, and Sarai had her name changed to Sarah. Sarai signified, 'Jehovah is Prince,' while Sarah means 'Princess.'

Sarah was a woman of attractive beauty. On two occasions her beauty caught the eye of kings. In Egypt, the ruling Pharaoh would have her for a member of his harem, while Abimeleck of Gerar would have taken her to himself had not God intervened and saved the situation.

As a woman, grieving over the fact that she had no family she was specially blessed of God. The story is most fascinating.

'God said unto Abraham, as for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her : yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac : and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (17 : 15-19). What a beautiful story !

In Romans chapter 4 it is Abraham's faith that is commented upon when 'he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith giving glory to God' (v. 20). In Hebrews chapter 11 it is Sarah's faith which is mentioned. 'Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faith-

ful who had promised' (11 : 11). She is placed in the same category as 'faithful Abraham.'

The Apostle Peter, in his first Epistle, throws a special light upon Sarah and her domestic life. The whole section is worthy of quotation without comment. It speaks for itself, and carries its own easily-understood message.

'Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the (a) word be won by the conversation of their wives; while they behold your chaste conversation (conduct) coupled with fear, whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting of hair'

THE TRIBES AND THE GOSPELS

by J. C. R. TAMBLING

JOHN (Continued)

ASHER

Asher means "Happy." Jacob says of him—"Out of Asher, his bread shall be fat"—that answers to John 6, and to the miracle and the discourse on the Bread of Life alike, note that in John, the Lord Himself distributes the food: He does not give it to the disciples, as He does in the other three Gospels. "He shall yield royal dainties." We are by the sea of Tiberias in John 21—a sea dignified with a royal name, though the wrong name. But the true King is standing on the shore watching His own on the morning after they had caught nothing. He says "Children, have ye any meat?" W. E. Vine in his *Dictionary* notes the original meaning of the word "meat" here to be "primarily a dainty, or a relish." Blessed Lord! He not only provides His own with the staff of life—the bread, in the sixth of John, but when they come to shore at the end they find "a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread" (21 : 9). He has put the "dainty" first—then the bread. The order is reversed from that in ch. 6. He is owner of the sea and land alike. The fire and food He provides are the best. To His followers, He feeds them with the best, the luxurious, the fish first. He yields royal dainties.

Moses says of Asher, "Let Asher be blessed with children—or above sons—let him be acceptable to his brethren, and

let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be," Deut. 33 : 24-25.

Shall we not say of Him that He is acceptable to His brethren, those He speaks of in ch. 20 : 17? When we read of the glory that He had with His Father, shall we not say that He is blessed above sons? But now His feet. John the Baptist draws our attention to them in ch. 1 : 27. The next day the Lord comes towards him. He has begun those holy movements down here. The next day, John is standing—as if to indicate that his work is now over—"And looking on Jesus as He *walked* said, Behold, the Lamb of God." Have we not wondered what there was in that walk that drew that breath of adoration from John? He had begun to walk for the pleasure of God, and that walk will take Him down to Lazarus' grave in the eleventh chapter. In ch. 13, they make Him a supper at Bethany. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair," 12 : 3. If we look in the parallel accounts, in Mt. 26 and Mk. 14, we shall see that Mary anoints His head. There she is drawing attention to His official character, but here, she is expressing her sense of fragrance of that walk down here. Only John mentions the feet in this connection. She is showing her appreciation of that walk. He is the greater than Asher. He dips His feet in oil. His whole walk was in the energy of the Spirit of God, and Mary expresses her realisation of this. In the Revelation, we shall see in ch. 1, that His feet are as burnished brass. The Living one has perfect strength for judgment associated with Him.

His feet are dipped in oil—but in the 13th chapter, He takes the towel, and washes the feet of His disciples. It is a delightful comparison with ch. 12. He will refresh His own, He Whose walk was throughout in the power that the "oil"—that which speaks of the Spirit—gave Him—so that we do not read in this chapter that His own feet needed to be washed. The onyx stone is throughout associated with High Priestly support—it was the stone that was upon his shoulders, and which had inscribed in it the names of the children of Israel according to their birth. In view of all that He gives to His own as the greater than Asher, we shall think that the stone rightly belongs to Him.

NAPHTALI

Finally we look at Naphtali, whose name means "Wrestling" and speaks of exercise of soul. In Genesis 49 : 21, that exercise is over. "Naphtali is like a hind let loose—he giveth goodly words."

The hind let loose should remind us of the title in Ps. 22—"Upon Aijeleth Shahar"—which means "The hind of the morning." In the first twenty-one verses of Ps. 22, where is the hind? It is at the mercy of every wild creature that comes to attack it. But He is heard—from the very horns of the wild oxen (R.V.) He is answered, and in verse 22 breaks out with all the joy of resurrection—"I will declare Thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee."

It is morning in John 20, and the swiftness of the hind's movements may be discerned in the running of Mary and of Peter and John. But Mary says "Rabboni." but He will simply say, "Go to My brethren," and say "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; unto My God, and your God."

It is the world of Ps. 22 : 22 exactly. He has called them servants, and friends, but now, what a new relationship is opened up by the cross! We are His brethren now : linked to the same Father. "I will declare Thy name." It is not as "Heavenly Father" that we know Him now—that title belongs to the Gospels which show Israel's relationship to their covenant-keeping God. We are on entirely new ground. We know Him as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The words of Hebrews 2 : 10-18 need to be carefully weighed in relation to this sublime truth. What a profound name it is that has been declared! We may well feel that we do not rise to our privileges in simply being able to call Him "Father." Read John 17 : 26 in connection with the Lord's intention to bring His own into a wider sphere, where they may know the intimacy of the Father's love. Truly "He giveth goodly words."

If He is the "hind let loose," we know where He is now. He is on the mountains of Bether—separation—in the heavenly place again. Song. 2 : 7. The Bride, at the end, looks for His coming back—"Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of spices," Song. 8 : 14. Suddenly He will appear from the place where He is now concealed!

He has gone up—and is in the place where the full glory

of God rests upon Him. We read of the Holy Jerusalem in Rev. 21 : 11, "having the glory of God, and her light was like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." The jasper stone brings before us the brightness of Diety. Associated as it is with His ascension, we can see its fitness attached to Naphtali. The glories revealed in John's Gospel are those of the Son of God.

We have not done more than begun a study on these tribes in relation to our Lord Jesus. As the true Israel Himself, those twelve tribes just show refracted beams of His glory. May we be helped to see in all the Scriptures the "things concerning Himself."

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by DR. JOHN BOYD

2 : 16-17, WARNING CONCERNING JUDAISTIC ERROR

V. 16 "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink," Here Paul warns the Colossians of a second type of gnostic false teacher—the Judaizer. This man would compel them to accept the Law of Moses, as a way of living, despite the fact that 'the handwriting of ordinances' had been blotted out (v. 14). He would criticise them for eating food prohibited by Moses, e.g. the eating of unclean meats (Lev. 11); he would impose his own laws on them (Rom. 14 : 3, 10). Restrictions also about drinking. These prohibitions had all been set aside (Acts 10 : 15); they had only been given until the time of reformation, established by Christ at Calvary (Heb. 9 : 10). The power of the Kingdom of God in a man's life is not determined by what he eats or drinks. There were other Judaistic compulsions under the Law of Moses which the Gnostics would impose on Gentile believers. They were mainly in respect of three kinds of feasts to which the Israelite in the Old Testament must pay attention. Mentioned here are, (1) The three Annual Set Feasts (Deut. 16 : 16)—the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles; (2) The monthly feasts, at the new moon (R.V.) (Num. 28 : 11-15); (3) Sabbath Days, with all their holy connotations. The position of these in the New Testament is clearly set forth in Rom. 14 : 16. Days for special observances belong to the Old Testament

ritual, which seem to have been set aside, and all days now given to be devoted equally to God.

V. 17 "*Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*" The relation which these things of the Law (eating and drinking, and the observance of special days) have to Christianity is seen under a two-fold picture here. (1) They were a shadow of something good to come; they pointed to it with unerring accuracy (Heb. 10 : 1). (2) As a shadow is an immateriality associated with something material, or substantial, so these legal examples from the Mosaic ritual portrayed nothing less than the person of Christ Himself (Heb. 8 : 5-6).

So the examples of the Law give way to the reality of the things of Christ. Christ is the Mediator of the better covenant of the Gospel (Heb. 8 : 6). The first covenant, under Moses, was faulty, and was passed over, and replaced by the second. The Law could never make the offerer perfect, but the offering of Jesus Christ did just that (Heb. 10 : 1-10). Therefore the child of God in the New Dispensation finds all his satisfaction in the things of Christ rather than in the demands of the Law of Moses. He does well to leave the things of the Law, and go on to perfection, in the teachings of Christ. This is the general warning against setting aside the commandments of Christ for these gnostic ideas of Judaism. They are but a shadow, to be put away, when Christ the Reality is presented to us.

2 : 18-19, *WARNING CONCERNING MYSTICAL ERROR*

V. 18 "*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.*" In dealing with the errors of mystic philosophy Paul introduces a new metaphor—that of the greek games, looking at them from the standpoint of the prize to be won. Paul deals with this metaphor also in other epistles. In I Cor. 9 : 24 we see an ordinary race in progress, in which the coveted prize is the acquisition of one person only among the runners, a corruptible laurel wreath. But there are many first prizes for which believers contend in the Christian race. This is the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3 : 14, R.Vm.), the presentation by Christ of incorruptible wreaths of righteousness, to all who like Paul have so loved the appearing of Christ as to serve Him faithfully (II Tim. 4 : 8).

The apostle uses the word translated 'prize' (Phil. 3 : 14), as a basis for the compound word rendered 'beguile' here, meaning to hinder one getting his prize, the work of the teacher of the error of mysticism. This the false teacher did by suggesting to the believer to delight in (cf. 'desire,' Luke 20 : 46), a mock lowliness of mind. It is akin to the expression of the Lord with regard to fasting (Matt. 6 : 16). Compare v. 23, below. Thus gnostic teachers taught mock self-humility, which manifested itself in rites and asceticisms. In Ch. 3 : 12 the word here used for false humility is also translated humility, and there used of a christian virtue, by way of contrast to what is found here. This voluntary humility was manifest in the worship of angels, when as a token of their so-called humility, angels were appealed to by using them as intercessors with God, which custom is condemned in scripture. "intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind," In his speech the false teacher haughtily enters into details about things he claimed to have seen, though he had not. Compare the Revised Version, 'dwelling in the things which he hath seen.' His *visions* were likely imaginary, and with these he sought to impress his hearers. In reality his voluntary humility was but an empty self-inflation, due to the working of his mind being energised by his flesh, not by his spirit. Asceticism is one form of the fleshly mind.

This mock humility, worship of angels and dealing with imaginary visions were all the manifestation of the mysticism that characterised the pagan religion of the Colossians before conversion. It was, in effect, a reversion to their old religious customs, cf. v. 23. Such a desire to go back to the rites and ceremonies of primitive religions is presenting itself in so-called christian countries to-day, and must be vigorously opposed.

V. 19 "*And not holding the Head,*" In contrast to what the false teacher taught concerning the worship of angels, Paul shows them here the Gnostics' gross omission; he left out the important fact of the believer holding fast to, being dependent upon Christ, who alone can bring blessing to the child of God, apart from angels. "*from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together,*" Paul now suggests what 'holding the Head' implies, and how it is done. From Christ (note the R.V. 'from

whom') comes the only means of the building up of the Church. The phrase, 'having nourishment ministered,' is derived from a word that was used of the leader of the Greek chorus, who not only conducted the stage appearance, but also defrayed the expenses of the chorus (W. E. Vine, Dictionary). It is rendered 'ministereth' in Gal 3 : 5 of the continuing supply of the Holy Spirit of God to believers for service. So here the Lord Jesus Christ ministereth all that is needed for the nourishment of the Body, the Church, by reason of its association with the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole Church is built up (Eph. 4 : 15-16). "*increaseth with the increase of God.*" In the human body the successful growth of members is established by joints (the bringing of adjacent parts of free limbs into apposition), and bands (the ligaments which firmly ho'd the joints together). The head, by means of nerves, supplies tone to the joints and ligaments of the body, enables them to function, and so makes for growth. This God does for the saints, for His glory. Dependence upon Christ, and on all that He provides, will enable the Church to grow, as God intended, and for which growth He has provided all things, (a) *the Head*, Christ, upon whom we are dependent, (b) *the joints* are the apostles, free (1 Cor. 9 : 1), (c) *the bands* are the teachers, who bind together. The Head, Christ, is the giver of all those who perfect the saints, and edify the Body (Eph. 4 : 11-12). He gave some, apostles. Does this suggest the freedom of the joints (I Cor. 9 : 1)? He gave some, pastors and teachers. Does this suggest those who speak the truth in love (Eph. 4 : 15), the great bond of perfectness (Col. 3 : 14)?

God's method to-day for the upbuilding of the Church is much the same as in Paul's day. The Head of the Body, Christ, ministers stability through the teachers whom He has called, and by whom instruction is given unto edification. Well might we believers to-day pay attention to these warnings, for similar dangers present themselves to us. The traditions of men, the vain philosophies, the mystic religions are all a source of trouble to us, and only to be overcome by holding to Christ, the Head.

2 : 20-23 THE IMPLICATION OF OUR DEATH WITH CHRIST

V. 20 "*Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the*

rudiments of the world," Paul reminds the Colossians once again of the truths confessed by them at their baptism. In this act they had in effect stated that they had died with Christ, since they had asked for baptism (2 : 12). Having by faith died with Christ, by faith they had asked to be buried with Him. They had been associated by faith with Christ's death in His circumcision—the death of Christ. Being dead with Christ implies separation from all that Christ dealt with on the Cross—the rudiments of the world, the elementary religious principles to which the pagan world subscribed. Thus they were dead, freed from (Rom. 6 : 7), the rudiments of the world. *"why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,"* The apostle queries, why if in fact, they were dead as far as the rudiments of the world were concerned, they seemed to be living in it, by subscribing to its ordinances. 'Subject to ordinances' might almost be translated, 'rule-ridden,' either the rules of Judaism (v. 16), or of the empty philosophy of v. 8.

V. 21 *"Touch not; taste not; handle not;"* Note the R.V., 'Handle not, nor taste, nor touch'—three examples of the ordinances of v. 20, possibly three different degrees of the same prohibition. The Greek word translated, 'Handle,' is the root from which the word rendered 'joint' (v. 19) is derived. 'Handle not,' means do not be joined to these ordinances. 'Touch not,' means momentary contact. These three prohibitions may refer to the ordinances of v. 20, or to the meats of v. 16. It would seem as if these words were the parrot-cry of the false teachers, and constituted the decrees set forth.

V. 22 *"Which are all to perish with the using;"* These ordinances are non-important, for they refer to things that will perish as they are being used, e.g., the meats of v. 16, or even the so-called impure things which the false teachers suggest would not be touched. *"after the commandments and doctrines of man?"* The portion in brackets vv. 21 and 22a) is parenthetical, which suggest that the phrase here refers to the ordinances of v. 20. These are not Divine legislation, but arise from men's own teaching. Compare Tit. 1 : 14, where the Jewish fables seem to refer to the Pharisaical prohibitions of eating bread with unwashed hands (Mk. 7 : 3), which the Lord clearly refuted (Mk. 7 : 18).

V. 23 *"Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body;"*

Paul shows the nature of such ordinances. They seem to be of value; they seemed to denote wise thinking, but in reality they constitute will worship—a self-devised religion, that is, what a man imposes on himself, not from God; they seem to indicate humility, the voluntary, or self-imposed humility of v. 18, which was not produced by the Holy Spirit; they seemed to call for severity (R.V.) to the body, lit., not sparing the body, leading to ascetic practices—the vain puffing up of his fleshly mind (v. 18). *“not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”* The apostle closes this section by reminding the Colossians that these ordinances are not of any profit to the body; the purpose of using them is for the satisfying of the flesh. They set aside true honour for the body, that which has been redeemed by Christ; they only satiate the flesh, the sensual indulgence that man so often seeks after.

A SHORT BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

THE TABERNACLE AND ITS TEACHING

by R. G. TAYLOR

THE PRIESTHOOD

From the tribe of Levi God selected one family—Aaron and his sons, for the work of the priesthood. The purpose of priesthood and mediation. The priest represented the people before God and maintained their relationship with Him. The priest also engaged in the service of the Sanctuary, attendance at the altar, caring for the light and renewing the shewbread each Sabbath (Lev. 24 : 1-9). The priest was also required to instruct Israel in all the statutes which the Lord had spoken (Lev. 10 : 11).

Aaron was appointed to the special office of High Priest and his sons were engaged in the other priestly activities. Aaron then was a high priest by divine calling and not appointed by man (Heb. 5 : 4). At the command of the Lord a solemn and elaborate ritual was ordained before Aaron and his sons entered their duties. Minute instructions were given regarding their personal fitness (Lev. 10 : 9-11; Lev. 21 : 16-23). Aaron and his sons were cleansed, clothed, anointed and consecrated for this priestly work (Ex. 29). The

high priest however was clothed in regal attire with garments of glory and beauty. He bore before the Lord continually the breastplate of judgment which was held from the shoulders and rested upon his heart. The names of the children of Israel were inscribed on the shoulder pieces and on the breastplate itself (Ex. 28). All Israel therefore were upheld constantly in the presence of the Lord, sustained by His omnipotent power (shoulder pieces) and everlasting love (breastplate of his heart). On the day of atonement the high priest alone entered the holiest.

The Aaronic priesthood, however, was the example and shadow of heavenly things (Heb. 8) and typified the One Who is now our Great High Priest over the house of God. Israel's elaborate ritual shadows forth the merits and character of Christ who is now seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens (Heb. 4 : 14; 8 : 1).

He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 1 : 3; 9 : 26) and now appears in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9 : 24). Our Great High Priest sustains His people for He is touched with the feelings of their infirmities (Heb. 4 : 15) and by His intercession enables them to endure their trials and overcome the attacks of the evil one (Heb. 7 : 24-25).

THE TABERNACLE

THE COURT (Ex. 27 : 9-19)

The court was a rectangular enclosure marked out by 60 pillars made of achia wood with sockets of brass and crowned with capitals of silver. There were 20 pillars on each of the North and South sides and 10 on the East and West sides. The pillars supported the white curtains at the gate. The court marked the boundary of God's habitation. Inside was regarded as holy ground (cf. Lev. 6 : 16-24) and no stranger was permitted inside the court (Num. 3 : 38). The gate at the East end marked the first of the three entrances directing the way into God's presence. The four pillars of the gate supported a curtain of blue, scarlet and fine twined linen. These colours suggest thoughts of heaven in the blue, regal splendour in the purple, sacrificial work in the scarlet and righteousness in the fine linen. The gate was the only entrance into the court and this reminds us of the words of our Saviour Who said "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14 : 6).

THE BRAZEN ALTAR (Ex. 27 : 1-8)

On entering the gate the first vessel is the brazen altar. It was the largest of the Tabernacle vessels ($7\frac{1}{2}$ feet square and $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high) and called the altar of burnt offering. All that was consumed on this altar ascended as a sweet savour unto God. The victim was brought to the gate, the offerer identified himself with it by the laying on of hands. It was then slain on the north side of the altar and the officiating priest sprinkled the blood round about the altar and the carcase of the animal was consumed upon the altar. The offerer would behold his offering rising as a sweet savour unto God and find in it acceptance and atonement (Lev. 1 : 4).

The burnt offering speaks of Christ's perfect sacrifice. He has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour (Eph. 5 : 2). In contrast to the oft repeated sacrifice on Jewish altars, Christ offered "one sacrifice for sins forever" (Heb. 10 : 12). There is now "no more offering for sin" (Heb. 10 : 18). At the brazen altar we learn there is only one righteous meeting place between God and man and salvation is only possible on the ground of sacrifice. It foreshadows the cross of Christ and the One Who alone is competent to undertake the work of redemption.

THE LAVER (Ex. 30 : 17-21; 38 : 8).

Moving forward into the court we come to the Laver which was made entirely of brass or bronze, obtained from the polished metal mirrors of the women. No particular design is specified and no measurements are given but the use of this vessel is clearly stated. It was a vessel for personal cleansing. Aaron and his sons were required to wash their hands and feet before entering the sanctuary and ministering at the altar. Failure to do this meant instant death.

In like manner the Christian needs constant cleansing from the defilement contacted through his contact with the world. The blood at the altar cleansed from the guilt of sin whereas the water in the laver, which speaks of the Word of God cleanses from the defilement of the world (Eph. 5 : 26). God calls for clean hands to do His work and clean feet to walk in His ways (cf. Ps. 26).

ROYAL FRIENDS IN TROUBLOUS TIMES

by THE LATE W. W. MORRIS

I SAMUEL 26

Verse 1. The Ziphites yet again inform Saul of David's whereabouts, and he goes out with 3,000 men and again seeks to kill him, adding to all that in the recent past had demonstrated his great wickedness, and in which he had been delivered into David's hand by God as he had acknowledged. But David ascertaining that Saul was there in person, and where he would lie down for the night, comes, and with Abishai his nephew looks down on Saul's prostrate form again. A deep sleep from the LORD was upon him, and those all around him, even Abner his bodyguard. "Let me smite him," urges Abishai—"at once." But David replies "Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed and be guiltless"—"The LORD shall"—it is His prerogative (how solemn this is). "Take his spear and cruse of water, and let us go," vv. 8-11. How forbearing and gracious. From the top of a hill afar off, David taunts Abner with failure respecting his guardship of the King. And Saul knew David's voice, and David answers with becoming deference and humility and Godly wisdom, vv. 13-20. King Saul's reply in v. 21 certainly approximates more nearly to repentance: "I have sinned . . . I have played the fool and erred exceeding but "Return my son David" is hypocritical! since he had given Michal, David's wife, to another man. Parting words are spoken (vv. 22-24) all in the hearing of Abner and 3,000 men assembled to kill David. Saul's last words to David are best left at their face value, the two part for the last time. David has no regrets; there is nothing to hide from God—He is judge! David's hands are clean and his motive right; his acts are righteous, and his faithfulness proved (Psalm 18 vv. 20-24).

CHAPTER 27

Verse 6. David considers it expedient to move away to the south, with his armed men and families, to seek asylum again in the city of Gath, with Achish, King of Gath. Received by him, he later asks to be given place in a town, rather than impinge on the royal city, and Ziklag is allotted to him. This was evidently to David's liking, and it is also evident that he exploits the hospitality afforded to him, not at all in the interests of his host. The interests of the people

of God never waned in his mind, nor could do so. Verses 8-12 detail his ruthless activities against Israel's enemies, his accounting to Achish and the confidence the king had in him.

CHAPTER 28

Now Saul must face another trial of strength, with the Philistines in massed array, and he is utterly estranged from God. Samuel is dead; the priests are dead; in this grave hour *he is alone*. David is with the Philistines now; Saul is afraid, and his heart trembles greatly.' In desperation he resorts to an evil expedient he had rigorously suppressed before—to witchcraft, as he knew it. He *wishes to know*—how many are ensnared thus—and by the voice of Samuel, vv. 15-19, *not* of this woman's familiar spirit, he learns what the morrow shall bring forth, but first, that all is in consequence of Saul's own unfaithfulness. "David shall be King! Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me, and the host of Israel shall be delivered into the hands of the Philistines," v. 19. Terror prostrates King Saul. It is his last act of defiance of God's law. Deut. 18 vv. 9-14. This manifestation whether of the person or voice of one who has died and whose body lies in the earth corrupted, is unique in Holy Writ: but it is the occasion of the rebuke of Saul, and all who tamper with the occult and evil spirits, whose activities are Satanic. Departed saints are "with Christ, which is far better" Phil. 1 v. 23, "and in His keeping."

CHAPTER 29

So the Philistines again go out to war against Israel, and Achish would have David and his band go forth with him, but this is over-ruled; the princes of the Philistines will not have it so, they divined rightly, David would not be *their* ally. He and his men return, v. 11.

CHAPTER 30

After an absence of three days at most, they find Ziklag ravaged and burned by Amalekite invaders, and with the total loss of all, both persons and goods, vv. 1-2. This is a dark day indeed, in which David is to prove how fickle human allegiance could be "but he encouraged himself in the Lord" v. 6. At David's request, Abiathar brings the ephod, and God-given assurance of complete recovery is vouchsafed and acted upon forthwith, and all is brought back, and far more than was lost. The wisdom exercised

by David in the disposal of the spoil, shows him to be compassionate, just and generous. Also the loyalties of friends, proved during the years of his exile are duly rewarded, vv. 21-31.

CHAPTER 31

The battle is now joined, and the disaster foretold overtakes the host of Israel. "They are delivered into the hands of the Philistines"—what a grievous reversal of the purposes of God for His people! (ch. 9 v. 16). How often King and people are, in the Scriptures, seen to be involved together in crisis resulting from spiritual decline and breakdown : of which their Rulers are especially guilty. Saul and his three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua are slain. Jonathan? yes, about whom the scriptures are silent, since he sought out David in the Wood of Ziph, "and returned to his own house," not to Saul and his cohorts who were awaiting precise information of David's whereabouts, with ill intent. In this he was completely at variance with his father throughout, but when the interests of the nation are at stake, Jonathan with the rest is at his father's side, a duties call, and this had much importance to David who so loved his nation over which he was destined to reign in the will of God. But his enthronements, now so long in prospect, must be of God's directing alone. It could well have been brought to pass much sooner had God willed it, but in His sovereign working, He allowed King Saul to reign 40 years—the full probationary period, as also with David and Solomon, each was Divinely chosen; but David only was faithful to the last. *Only awaiting God's time* was proper; not a blow could be struck. *Jonathan had, we shall agree* continued in the only pathway he knew to be right under God for him.

The Philistines, as conquerors, impale the bodies of Saul, Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua on the walls of Beth-Shan. Does this imply fault in Jonathan and his brothers? No!—it certainly does in Saul! it could never have happened had he walked in the ways of God and in His fear.

The history of the Christian Church abounds in evidences of the innate cruelty of the human heart, finding expression in the acts of evil men in afflicting the Godly both in life and death. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do," are the words

of our Lord Jesus, Luke 12 v. 4. Do they not make a mockery of the walls of Beth-Shan? and were they spoken in view of the gross indignity of John the Baptist's execution, when his head was brought (at the demand of the utterly impious Herodias) on a charger to the banqueting hall of Herod? John was a martyr for his faithfulness to the law of God. His insistence on the guiltiness of Herod in taking his brother Philip's wife was met by the revenge of Herodias herself. We would not allow for a moment that John's integrity and faithfulness are in question, neither may we impugn Jonathan's integrity because he fell with Saul. John fulfilled his course, Acts 13 v. 25. Might this be true of Jonathan also? John's disciples came and took his body, and buried it.

The valiant men of Jabesh Gilead, remembering the deliverance wrought by Saul of their city from Nahash the Ammonite (1 Sam. 11 vv. 1-11), journeyed all night and took down the bodies from the wall of Beth-Shan, and burned them, and buried their bones at Jabesh Gilead. (They were later reinterred in the sepulchre of Kish, Saul's father, at King David's word, II Sam. 21 vv. 13-14. David commended those valiant men, II Sam. 2 vv. 5-6.

"LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE SET BEFORE US"

By running is meant cheerful, ready, and zealous observance of God's precepts; it is not go, or walk, but RUN. They that would come to their journey's end must "run in the way of God's commandments." It noteth a speedy, ready obedience, without delay. We must begin with God betimes. Alas! when we should be at the goal, we have many of us scarce set forth. When a man's heart is set upon a thing, he thinks he can never do it soon enough. And this is running, when we are vehement and earnest upon the enjoyment of God and Christ in the way of obedience. This running . . . is very needful, for cold and faint motions are easily overborne by difficulty, and temptation. A slow motion is easily stopped, whereas a swift one bears down that which opposeth it; so is it when men run, and are not tired in the service of God.

"TOHU - VA - BOHU"

"TOHU-VA-BOHU" (Hebrew—"Without form and void") (Bohu meaning emptiness) see Gen. 1 : 2; Isaiah 45 : 18; Jeremiah 4 : 23. The Genesis passage says that God did not make the first creation "empty and without form." It

“was” or “became” that which indicates that in the earliest of times of which we have no history the earth was or became empty and void, but in the Jeremiah passage it is linked with the day of the Lord’s vengeance. So then some great calamity had taken place long before man’s history began and it is thought by many that it had to do with a rebellion of fallen angels headed by Satan. We get indications of this in several scriptures where he and his associates were together combined in an attack on the throne of the Eternal, and there is a trinity of evil banded together to take the position of the Almighty and that this earth was the sphere of their rebellion. We can but briefly refer the reader to such passages as Isaiah 14 : 7-24, and Ezekiel 28 : 1-19, which must go far beyond any human being how ever exalted, and this threefold power is opposed to the Trinity.

That there had been a rebellion amongst the heavenly host, probably before time began, is explicitly stated. Jude 6 refers us to angels which kept not their first estate, so that there was a great rebellion probably before time began, and a whole host of the followers of Satan who were implicated in his first great rebellion against God. —R.W.B.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



***“When I come again
I will repay thee!”***

LUKE 10 : 36.

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CORDS OF LOVE

Oh blessed One who loves a guilty soul,
Thy sacrifice has made this sinner whole :
In trustfulness my soul has ceased its strife,
And leans on Thee, my Hope, my Lord, my Life.

Unworthy still am I of aught from Thee,
But Thy great love goes out to lost ones free.
Oh I would cast me lowly at Thy feet,
And praise for love so pitiful and sweet.

And I would worship Thee for all Thy love,
Serve Thee with joy on earth and then above.
Lord, I am Thine ! Thou in great drops of blood,
Purchased my soul and brought me back to God.

Thy yoke upon me now I gladly take;
Oh teach me Love Divine, for Thy Name's sake.
Then may I never shun my cross to bear,
Or waste the life that cost Thy heart so dear.

It cost Thy precious blood that life to give;
Then use me, O my God, long as I live,
To magnify the Name of Him whose love
Endured all things to bear my soul above !

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY.

GLORIFYING GOD ON THE EARTH

by C. JARRETT

John 17 : 4 "I have glorified Thee on the earth."

John 16 : 14 "He shall glorify Me."

John 15 : 8 "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

John 17 : 4 "I have glorified Thee on the earth."

All that God created was intended to give Him pleasure (Rev. 4 : 11); all His works shall praise Him (Ps. 145 : 10); the heavens declare the glory of God (Ps. 19 : 1) and everything that has breath is called upon to praise the Lord (Ps. 150 : 6) but sin has so marred God's purpose, that, so far as unregenerate man is concerned, he in no way glorifies God. He is out of the way, unprofitable, and does not, of himself, seek after God (Rom. 3 : 11-12). The time is coming, however, when God's glory will be revealed universally. The prayer of Ps. 72 : 19 will be answered and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory (Isa. 11 : 9 and 60 : 2). God's glory will be seen in the church throughout all ages, world without end (Eph. 3 : 21) and indeed, in the consummation of His purposes, He will be glorified in all things (Rom 11 : 36).

Only One has been able to say to God, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." Many true believers from the patriarchs onward, have desired to glorify God. Enoch, Job, Abraham, Moses and David all receive praise from God in regard to their character, ways or words, and doubtless many others since their times have sought to "live unto God" and have in measure, glorified God. To do this was not merely a feature of the Lord's life; it described His life in its entirety. There were no lapses, no times of self-pleasing; there was no hidden resentment in this Unique Man Who delighted to do God's will and Who always did those things that pleased the Father. The head, the fat, His inwards and His legs were all burnt on the altar, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Jehovah (Lev. 1 : 8-9).

There has been One, but only One, Who perfectly and entirely, glorified God on the earth and how it should produce worship when we remember that the Lord Jesus has given to God that which we never could have given.

John 16 : 14 "He shall glorify Me."

The Lord Jesus was a Comforter, to use the word in the Authorised Version and John 14 : 18 has this thought, "I will not leave you comfortless." He spoke of "another Comforter" (John 14 : 16) and revealed the Spirit's ministry, as it concerned the world (John 16 : 8-11) and His own (John 14 : 15-16) and the words, "He shall glorify Me" would seem to summarize the entire object in the Holy Spirit's coming.

The word translated "Comforter," by which the Spirit is described in John's Gospel, is applied to the Lord Jesus in John's first epistle (2 : 1) and is translated "Advocate."

The Spirit does on earth, what the Lord Jesus did when He was with His disciples, and now continues to do "with the Father." The Lord Jesus came in the Father's Name (John 5 : 43; 8 : 42) and the Spirit was sent in Christ's Name (John 14 : 26).

Christ revealed and glorified the Father (John 14 : 9).

The Holy Spirit reveals and glorifies Christ (John 15 : 26 and 16 : 14).

The Lord Jesus received from the Father, the things He declared (John 7 : 16 and 17 : 8).

The Spirit received from Christ, the things He communicated (John 16 : 13-15).

He is called "the Spirit of Truth" (John 14 : 17, 15 : 26, 16 : 13) so that His help and ministry are infallible. He reveals truth and enables us to detect error. The words of John 16 : 12-13, spoken before the coming of the Spirit, had special meaning for the Apostles, to whom truth was revealed which is now incorporated in the New Testament, but the Spirit's ministry to them and to all who follow, has as its object, the glorifying of Christ. As we now come to the Scriptures, He still teaches us all things and guides into all truth, and in taking of the things that the Father hath, that the Lord said "are Mine," He glorifies Christ. This clear indication of the object in the Spirit's ministry, enables us to know when the words of a believer, or of a professing believer, are of the Spirit.

If a man seeks admiration, by displays of cleverness, or in boasting of his service, or by personal vanity, he evidently desires his own glory, and if a man speaks or writes with a view to claiming the pre-eminent place for the Holy

Spirit in the Holy Godhead, his testimony is of error. One reverently believes, although the truth is beyond one's understanding, that the three persons of the Divine Trinity are One, yet for the accomplishing of their purposes in redemption, the Holy Son and the Holy Spirit have both been "Sent." (John 10 : 36, 20 : 21, 15 : 26, 16 : 7).

John 15 : 8 "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

The Lord is recorded in John's Gospel as speaking three times of the evidences of true discipleship. In John 8 : 31 He said that they should continue or abide in His Word. In John 13 : 35 He said that their profession would be known by all men, to be real, if they were seen to love one another. How we fail in this evidence! Unkind criticism of believers is spoken not before believers only but before unbelievers. How guarded we need to be in the home where injurious talk about other believers harms them and the spiritual welfare of our children who hear us. To see that christian love and fellowship are not genuine, greatly stumbles children and may turn them away from the assembly.

In John 15 : 8 the Lord says that we must bear fruit in order to become His disciples. Let us all be deeply exercised about this. Let us not be diverted into dwelling upon our reputation or upon how much we do or how much we carry but let us be concerned about fruitfulness for God. The verse says "much fruit." It is in this that we glorify the Father. Yet we cannot produce it ourselves. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself (15 : 4).

We can however, so live, habitually abiding in Christ our Life and transformed as we dwell upon and are subject to, His words abiding in us, that the Father has fruit and is glorified. He has the right to be glorified in His children. Fruit for God is not to be measured by the number of engagements to preach nor by our claims to success, that we might assess as fruit. The Lord spoke in verse seven of the believers prayers being effectual and then followed with "Herein is My Father glorified." Just here, He is not speaking of preaching but of fruit from the prayers of those who abide in Him. We are mistaken if we think that there must be more fruit from the life of the much

travelled busy public preacher than from the unseen prayer ministry of the restricted believer confined to the room. The Lord has given us a service, to make known the Gospel and to do good and there are many ways in which we can fulfil the Lord's will but the one object in it all is so to live as to glorify the Father and that those who see our lives may themselves glorify Him (Matt. 5 : 16). In living with this desire always before us, we are following His steps and like our Lord Jesus, giving pleasure to God in a scene that greatly dishonours Him.

I beseech young believers to accept that these things are as realistic to them as they are to the most responsible and mature. The life of faith is still that in which we walk with God and please God as Enoch did so long ago (Gen. 5 : 24, Heb. 11 : 5).

ARE THERE SIGN GIFTS IN THE CHURCH TO-DAY ?

by the Late J. C. M. DAWSON, M.A., Belfast

When the kingdom of heaven is set up in glory and power, at the return of the Lord Jesus to earth, Israel will occupy the central position amongst the nations. Then sorrow will give place to joy, disease and sickness will be practically shelved, death will be held in abeyance except for rebellion against the King, and men will speak one tongue (Isa. xxxv. 5-10; lxxv. 20; Zeph. iii. 9). Tongues are for a sign (I Cor. xiv. 20-22), and the passage quoted (Isa. xxviii. 11, 12) refers prophetically to Israel in those future days immediately preceding the setting up of the kingdom. Consequently these miraculous sign gifts obviously point to the kingdom.

Matthew in his Gospel presents Christ as the promised Messiah, the King. In chap. iii., John the Baptist announces the approach of the kingdom. Then Christ, the King, issues His manifesto in the Sermon on the Mount, and displays His character and power by His miracles, defeating Satan, conquering death, healing diseases, and feeding the hungry. John sent from his prison two of his disciples to ask Him, "Art Thou He that should come?" (i.e. "Art Thou the Messiah?"). The Lord answered: "Go and show John

again those things which ye do hear and see : the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (Matt. xi. 2-6). The Lord thus declared His miracles and other works to be His credentials as the Messiah.

Again, later on, when our Lord healed a blind and dumb demoniac, the multitudes were amazed and said, "Is not this the Son of David?" They arrived at that correct conclusion from the miracle. The Pharisees, refusing to accept Him as the Messiah, sought to account for the miracle in another way. Our Lord refuted their charge, and said to them, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." In other words, the miracle pointed Him out as the King, and declared that the kingdom was nigh (Matt. xii. 22-28).

Again, He sent forth His disciples to heal the sick and to declare the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you (Luke x. 9).

Notwithstanding that His miracles clearly accredited Him as their King, the Jews despised and rejected Him. They said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," and they handed Him over to the Cross.

Raised from the dead, He commissioned His disciples, who were all Jews, to disciple, baptise, and teach (Matt. xxviii. 18-20). This commission covers more than the church dispensation, for it lasts until the present age of Gentile domination, and Jewish subjection terminate, by the return of Christ to enter on His reign. We read about miraculous signs in connection with this commission (Mark xvi. 15-20), which contains His disciples marching orders down to the kingdom, for which the Jews were longing. Those signs were in operation from the day of Pentecost (Acts ii) for a number of years, when they ceased, as we shall presently see, and they will be in exercise again after the rapture of the church and before the kingdom is set up (Rev. xi. 3-6). Consequently those disciples offered the Jews up to the murder of Stephen Christ as their Messiah and Saviour (Acts. iii. 19-21), and, though the offer of the kingdom may have been withdrawn then, Israel had still preferential treatment wherever the Gospel was carried, up

to Paul's imprisonment in Rome (Luke xxiv. 47; Acts iii. 26; xiii. 26, 46; xviii. 4-6; Rom. i. 16). From that time they were placed on a level with the Gentiles, and this will continue until the church is completed and removed to heaven.

God, on the other hand, who sees the end from the beginning, knew that the nation of Israel would not accept the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, and He commenced at Pentecost to gather out the church, though the disciples themselves were ignorant of it. At Pentecost they knew none of the special truth about the church, but after Stephen's death God revealed His Son to His chosen vessel, Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Paul the apostle, and through Him, while the favoured nation position was still accorded to Israel, He gradually unfolded the truth about the church, but not in its fulness until the preferential treatment of Israel ceased (Acts xxviii. 28), for it is in Ephesians and Colossians written after this, that we find the highest church truth.

The miraculous signs lasted until then (Acts xxviii. 3-10), for they were given in connection with the presentation of the Messiah to Israel, and they will be renewed after the church is taken to heaven, for God will then renew His dealings with Israel, and in due course the kingdom will be established, to which all such miracles point, and during which disease and death will be practically shelved and the confusion of speech be healed.

There is no Scriptural evidence of any miraculous sign after Paul's declaration to the Jews in Rome (Acts xxviii. 28). Tongues are last mentioned in I Cor xiv., which was written when Paul was in Ephesus (Acts xix.). We know that after Paul made this declaration Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 26, 27), Timothy (I Tim. v. 23), Trophimus (II Tim. iv. 20), and Gaius (III John 2) were ill, all godly servants of Christ; but no gift of healing was used to restore them. Epaphroditus was restored in answer to prayer, and Timothy was ordered to take a little wine. It has been said that these sign gifts were not used in the case of believers, and that therefore these instances do not prove the cessation of these gifts. However, Scripture shows that those who had faith were miraculously healed and restored to life. Our Lord, for instance, healed Bartimaeus and the woman with the issue of blood, and He raised Lazarus from the dead. He sent

His disciples out to perform miracles in His Name (Mark. xvi. 17-18). Their works were a continuation of what the Lord began to do (Acts iii. 6, 16; iv. 7-12, 30; ix. 34). Paul received his sight three days after his conversion (Acts ix. 18), Dorcas was raised from the dead (Acts ix. 36-41). Again, it was believers that were to be immune from injury by serpents (Mark xvi. 18), exemplified in Paul's person (Acts xxviii. 3-6). Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not (I Cor. xiv. 22), but they were used for the edification of the church (I Cor. xiv. 5, 6, 13, 27, 39). These gifts were signs to unbelievers, but they were used for the benefit of believers. Consequently, since they were not employed to heal Epaphroditus, Timothy, Trophimus, and Gaius, it is manifest that they had ceased to be.

Many people must have wondered why the Acts ends so abruptly. We are told nothing about Paul's actions while in prison, his trial, release, subsequent movements; his second arrest, trial, and martyrdom. Why is this? Because the book is the history of God's dealings with Israel until their preferential treatment at His hands ceased, and they were placed on a level with the Gentiles.

In I Cor. xii., written while Paul was in Ephesus, and therefore years before these miraculous signs ceased, we have a list of gifts, and amongst them "tongues," "healing," "miracles." In Ephesians, written after the event recorded in Acts xxviii. 28, we have the list of permanent church gifts and all the sign-gifts are absent from it—a plain declaration of their transitory character.

The promise given to Israel in Exod. xv. 26 is sometimes quoted as giving the believer warrant to expect entire immunity from diseases on rendering full obedience to God. But Israel in the wilderness was a type of the church under its present circumstances (I Cor. x.). Israel's blessings were earthly, temporal, material; the church's are heavenly, eternal, spiritual. Consequently, just as Egypt is a type of the world and Pharaoh, its king, a type of Satan, the prince of the world, so the promise in Exod. xv. 26, of preservation from the diseases of the Egyptians on certain conditions, typifies our preservation from spiritual diseases on certain conditions. The manna that fed their bodies was a type of Christ our spiritual food. Their shoes and clothes lasted through the journey to Canaan (Deut. xxix. 5), so will our

spiritual raiment until we reach heaven. Unless I am to expect the food for my body direct from heaven daily, and my bodily clothing to last without any renewal until I make my exit from earth, I ought not to expect to be kept free from bodily diseases.

In conclusion, I would refer briefly to James v. 15-16. This epistle was probably one the first portions of the New Testament to be written; in any case it was written several years before Paul was carried as a prisoner to Rome, and, therefore, while the sign-gifts were *exercised*. The sick one was restored in answer to prayer. The word for anoint is not that used for anointing kings—it is practically the equivalent of the modern term massage, and indicates means to be employed. The Christian finds in this passage the best advice for him when ill—that is, bring his sickness to God. He can cure through means or without them, the choice should be left to Him. God hears prayers and works miracles still.

A SHORT BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE—

TABERNACLE AND ITS TEACHING

by R. G. TAYLOR

THE FRAMEWORK (Ex. 26 : 15-29).

The framework or walls of the Tabernacle was made of achaia wood overlaid with gold; each board stood 15 ft. high and 2½ ft. broad. Twenty of these standing side by side formed the south and north sides and six boards at the west end where two additional boards stood in each of the corners. At the base of each board were two tenons which fitted into two sockets of silver. The boards were also sustained in their upright position and linked together by five bars on each side of achaia wood overlaid with gold.

Over the boards were two coverings, the outside covering of badger skins and then a second covering of rams skins dyed red. Underneath there were two sets of curtains, one of goats hair and the second the coloured curtains richly embroidered with cherubims. This latter curtain was called the "tabernacle" or tent (Ex. 26 : 1-14).

At the east end of the framework stood the door which consisted of five pillars of achaia wood overlaid with gold,

resting upon copper sockets and crowned with capitals of gold. These pillars supported a coloured curtain of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen (Ex. 36 : 37-38). This door formed the second entrance of the Tabernacle where the priests entered the sanctuary. Within there were two compartments. The Holy place and the Most Holy or Holiest separated by the vail (Heb. 9 : 1-4).

Within the sanctuary we are reminded of the words of the psalmist "worship the Lord in His glorious sanctuary" (Ps. 29 : 2 Marg.). Beauty and glory characterised God's earthly sanctuary. The lampstand casting its light upon the golden boards, the vessels and the ceiling of embroidered curtains, all added to the glory of the Holy place. Each vessel was of pure gold and is spoken of as being "before the Lord" continually. Here we look upon vessels which set forth truths concerning the Son of God ascended and glorified, and is engaged in a continuous work on behalf of His people.

We now consider the three vessels in the Holy place.

THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND (Ex. 25 : 31-40).

On the south side of the Holy place stood the lampstand. This must have been the most costly of all the vessels, no measurements are given. It was beaten out of one talent of pure gold (approx. 114 lbs.) and consisted of a centre shaft with four sets of ornamentations (pomegranates and flowers). From each side three branches extended, each with three sets of ornamentations. Each branch, including the centre shaft, carried a golden lamp filled with olive oil which illuminated the Holy place with a sevenfold light. Aaron the high priest attended the lamps continually each morning and evening and golden tongs and snuff dishes were provided to maintain the brilliancy of the light (Lev. 24 : 1-4).

This vessel would foreshadow Christ who perfectly displays the light of God in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Is. 11 : 2) we call to mind the words spoken by the Saviour at the Feast of the Tabernacles "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life" (John 8 : 12). Since then multitudes who have heard His voice and followed His steps have experienced spiritual illumination. The use of the golden tongs and snuff dishes might suggest the priestly ministry of our

Great High Priest who, in His disciplinary ways removes the hindrances to the brilliancy of our lamps (cf. John 5 : 35 and Phil. 2 : 15).

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD (Ex. 23 : 30, Lev. 24 : 5-9)

Opposite the Lampstand, on the north side stood the Table of Shewbread. It was made of achaia wood overlaid with pure gold and girded with two golden crowns. It was 3 ft. long, $2\frac{1}{4}$ ft. wide and $2\frac{1}{4}$ ft. high. Set on the table were twelve loaves of Shewbread (or Presence bread) made of fine flour and laid out in two rows with frankincense upon them. The shewbread was to be continually before the Lord and Aaron renewed the bread every Sabbath. It then become food for Aaron and his sons to be eaten in the Holy place.

The twelve loaves on the table represented the entire nation constantly before the eyes of the Lord, fragrant in the place of acceptance. In like manner, God's priests today are perpetually before the eye of God, "accepted in the beloved" and complete in Christ (Col. 2 : 10). They also feed upon Christ in glory, Who is ever fragrant and the delight of the Father's heart.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE (Ex. 30 : 1-10, 34-38).

The Altar of Incense or Golden altar stood before the veil. It was made of achaia wood overlaid with gold with four horns and a crown of gold round about. It was $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. square and 3 ft. high. The service of this altar differed from the brazen altar where blood was shed and sacrificial beasts were consumed, whereas the purpose of the golden altar was for Aaron to burn incense. On the day of atonement the blood of the sin offering was placed upon the horns. Each morning and evening, when Aaron dressed the lamps he would burn incense before the Lord. The incense was carefully compounded of four ingredients, measured out in equal weight. It was to be regarded as pure, holy, and exclusive for the Lord. No stranger was permitted to make or offer it and the occasion when it was offered apart from the priesthood brought forth the judgment of God (cf. Lev. 10, Num. 16, II Chron. 26).

The burning of incense brought forth the fragrance of the ingredients, perfumed the holy place and rose as a sweet smelling savour unto the Lord (cf. Deut. 33 : 10 marg.).

It was therefore an offering which delighted the heart of God.

God's priests today offer spiritual sacrifices as they tell forth the work and perfectness of God's Son and express their gratitude to the Father from their redeemed hearts. These sacrifices are made acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (I Peter 2 : 5) who ever lives at God's right hand and intercedes on behalf of His people.

*"Glory and might and majesty and splendour
Be to the Lord who hath redemption won
Lift up the voice ! O let us gladly render
As to the Father, honour to the Son."*

(J. Boyd.)

"HAGGAI"

by **E. R. BOWER**

This short word of prophecy should be read against the background of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but as we read it there is one word which forces itself upon our attention. It is the word "Consider." This word sums up the challenge of the prophet—"Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, 'Consider your ways.'" (1 : 5).

Haggai is reckoned as one of the 'Minor' prophets, but notwithstanding this relegation, as it were, to the 'lower ranks' of prophecy, he was a 'man of the hour'—an hour which is well dated—the second year of Darius the king was of great importance.

It has been said that Haggai was, in point of time, the first of the post captivity prophets, and all that we know of him scripturewise is what we have in this book which bears his name, and by references to him by Ezra 5 : 1, 6 : 14; where he is named with Zachariah. From the reference in chapter 2 : 3, it has been conjectured that he had seen the first Temple in which case he must have been quite an old man. Others believe that he had been born in Babylon.

The object of this prophecy was "to rouse the restored exiles from a condition of religious torpor, and induce them to complete the restoration of the Temple"—a restoration delayed by opposition from within and from without; the

regrets of the aged men who recalled its past glories, and the self-seeking of many of those who had returned from the captivity. Those who had returned were a comparatively small company—hardly enough to be called a ‘nation’—just 42,360 freemen and 7,337 slaves. Most of these, so it would appear, were content to let things drift.

Then came Haggai in the sixth and seventh months of the second year of Darius. He was joined by Zechariah in the eighth month (Zech. 1 : 1-6), and then gave his final message in the ninth month. Zechariah carried on for another two months.

Not a long ‘reign’ as a prophet—just four months.

His message was one of rebuke and of promise.

The work of building upon a hallowed site had been neglected. The people themselves, because of poor harvests, were desperately poor. They had lost heart.

“Haggai’s voice was uplifted at just the right moment. Whether old or young, whether he had bided his time through the years, or was seized by his first inspiration for leadership, he was the man of the hour.”

In the purposes of God, this is always so.

The men whom God uses may illumine the darkness for many years, or for just a few days. We cannot all be an Isaiah or Jeremiah; a Daniel or an Ezekiel; a Peter or a Paul. We may, however, be a Haggai or a Zephaniah, a Philip or a Thomas.

Just four months. Just six short messages.

Chapter 1 : 1-2 CHALLENGE, to the leaders.

Chapter 1 : 3-11 CHALLENGE to the people.

Sometimes treated as one message.

Chapter 1 : 12 RESULT—the challenge met.

Chapter 1 : 13 ENCOURAGEMENT — the presence of God assured.

Chapter 1 : 14-15 THE STIRRING OF THE SPIRIT.

Chapter 2 : 1-9 RETURNING GLORY.

Chapter 2 : 10-19 DEFILED LABOUR or WORKMANSHIP! HENCE, A DEFILED TEMPLE.

Chapter 2 : 20-23 THE CHOSEN SERVANT OF JEHOVAH.

CHALLENGE—to the Leaders (1 : 1-2).

Zerubbabel, prince of the house of Judah, governor or viceroy of Judah under Darius, king of Persia, and Joshua the high priest are directly addressed, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."

The Word of the Lord came (vv. 1-2) and Haggai, 'the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message' (v. 13) passes it on. We are reminded here that when the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth he spoke of Titus and others as "messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ" (II Cor. 8 : 23). The first message of Haggai was a simple one; a repetition in fact of what the people were saying concerning the rebuilding of the house of God. Perhaps, as would appear later, they, by reason of their poverty, could not afford it. Perhaps they were satisfied with things as they were. The message to Zerubbabel and Joshua seems to imply a question. "Are you the leaders of this people? If so, do you accept their majority opinion when you know what My mind is? What are you going to do about it? Prince and Priest—you have a responsibility."

CHALLENGE—to the People (1 : 3-11).

Twice the challenge comes—"Set your heart on your ways" (Margin).

"Why are you doing so much with so little result?" asked the Lord, and answers, "Because Mine House is laid waste, and ye run every man unto his own house." This is why the showers of blessing, the dew of Heaven is withheld. Plentiful sowing; little fruit. It needs the dew of God to bring on the fruit.

Unless our spirits are exercised how can God stir them up to do His work; to build His Temple? Not forgetting that we ourselves are also God's building, and that His Spirit indwells (I Cor. 3).

The remnant of Israel was concerned with consolidating their position in the land—aren't we all?—but our Lord says "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6 : 35).

Is it my way, or His way? Is my way, His way?

Is it my house, or His House? Is my house His House?

Not only does God ask His people to consider their ways, but also to consider the effect of their ways (2 : 15). Consider also the blessing that comes from obedience to His word (v. 18). Weigh up the pros and cons.

Note the word of David (Ps. 77) when he writes, "Thy way, O God is in the Sanctuary" (v. 13). The Sanctuary is the place to find and to know His way. But a Sanctuary must be built; and it must be Holy.

"Consider thy ways."

RESULT—the Challenge met (1 : 12).

"Then" Obedience to the word of the Lord; obedience to the word of His messenger. Obedience coupled with reverential fear—that fear which "is the beginning of knowledge" (Ps. 111 : 10; Prov. 1 : 7).

ENCOURAGEMENT—God's Presence assured (1 : 13).

With the coming of knowledge of, and obedience to, the word of God, there follows Haggai's shortest message—the assurance of the Presence of God with them. "I am with you."

The command was, "Build the House."

Said the apostle, "Now if any build . . ." (I Cor. 3 : 9-23).

God would be glorified in the building, and in it would be glorified (v. 8).

Building, however, means **WORK**. Working for themselves did not bring prosperity—practically or spiritually. It was not a question of "No time" or "No money." They must find the time; God would provide the means. But there must be from God a

STIRRING OF THE SPIRIT (1 : 14-15).

They had received the word of God; they had obeyed. Now to **WORK**. It was C. H. Spurgeon who, preaching on Job 1 : 14, ". . . The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them : " said in effect, that there were many feeding upon the Word, but few working; many were well fed while others worked. Thus the message, "I am with you." Again a reminder of that part of the word of God to which reference has been made so many times in these notes I Cor. 3 : 7-9—"Labourers together."

Leaders and people alike were stirred up by the Lord. "And they came and did work in the house of the Lord of Hosts, **THEIR** God." (cf. Neh. 3).

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by DR. JOHN BOYD

3 : 1-4, THE IMPLICATION OF OUR RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST

V. 1 *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,"* Having dealt with their confession at baptism of death with Christ (2 : 20-23), Paul now deals with the complementary confession of new life in Christ—of being raised with Christ (Rom. 6 : 4), and its implications. 'If,' or 'seeing that,' here, is the continuation of the 'if' of 2 : 20. Compare also 2 : 12. The word translated 'be risen,' or as R.V., 'were raised,' in the Greek is in the aorist tense, referring to what happened once for all in the past, that is, at their baptism. The apostle shows us what the newness of life (Rom. 6 : 4) entails in actual practice. It is based upon a true spiritual conception of what life with Christ involves. It means being by faith, 'with Christ,' where He is, seated with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2 : 6); it means finding our interests fixed on things above, not on the passing things of this mundane life. *"where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."* This phrase amplifies the word, 'above.' It tells us where Christ is—in heaven, at the right hand of God; it tells us of His place of honour—far above all; it tells us of His occupation—ruling over the principalities and powers; it tells of His relation to the Church—Head of the Body (Eph. 1 : 20-23); it tells us that, in spirit, we are there also.

V. 2 *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."* Note again, the 'things above.' Not only should our interests be found there, but also our minds (R.V.), our thoughts. Let us be continually 'thinking' of what living in heaven with Christ must mean to us, by faith to dwell there.

V. 3 *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."* Note the R.V., 'ye died,' again the aorist tense, referring to their baptism (v. 1), in which they had confessed that they had died, a once-for-all completed act in time past. But not only is the believer dead with Christ (2 : 20), he is also alive in Christ, 'quickened together with Him' (2 : 13). This life is hidden, perfect tense, something done in the past, the effects of which still remain; it is buried out

of sight with Christ; the world cannot see it (John 14 : 17), but God knows it. As the world knows nothing of our new life, so ought our new life to have no part with the world.

V. 4 "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.*" Note the development of thought here concerning our new life—it is with Christ, (v. 1); it is hidden with Christ from the world (v. 3); Christ is our life (v. 4). The implication of all this is that one day the life that has been hidden shall be made manifest (R.V.) to the world. We shall be manifested with Him, as He comes to earth in power and great glory (II Thess. 1 : 10). Then shall our life be known to the world. Our new life is not now known by the world, because Christ was not known by the men of the world. We believers are now the children of God, even though it is not manifest to the world. But when Christ shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, and be manifested as the children of God (I John 3 : 1-2). What a day that will be!

Our obligation to-day is that, being dead to the world, and alive in Jesus Christ we should manifest even now that we belong to Him; by walking in Him (2 : 6); by seeking His interests; by setting our minds more and more on Him, and on His commandments, rather than on the passing things of this world (John 13 : 35).

COLOSSIANS 3 : 5 — 4 : 6

ETHICAL INSTRUCTION

CHRIST IN ALL

Chap. 3 : 5-17 The Believer's Personal Responsibility

3 : 5-11 Things to be Discarded

V. 5 "*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;*" In Col. 1 : 13 — 3 : 4 Paul has been dealing with the believer's standing in Christ; now, (3 : 5 — 4 : 6), he comes to the practical outworking of this relationship—walking in newness of life, as professed in baptism (Rom. 6 : 4).

The believer prior to conversion was dead in trespasses and in sins (Eph. 2 : 1). When he trusted Christ he passed from the state of death, the old condemnation (Gen. 2 : 17), and came into the possession of eternal life (John 3 : 15, 5 : 24). Now he has the life of Christ (v. 4), life with Christ (v. 3, Eph. 2 : 5), life in Christ (II Tim. 1 : 1).

The apostle would remind the believer that, whilst he had this spiritual life, he would still be troubled with the old man, and its members; he calls on the regenerate man to put to death these members, which are delineated in the latter part of the verse. The word 'mortify' here is not used, as the Gnostics implied, with reference to severity to the body (Col. 2 : 23); he must not mortify the members of his body; it is not the mortification of the literal flesh, of which the physical body is composed, as practised by the ascetics; the 'members' here compose 'the body of the sins of the flesh' (2 : 11).

'Mortification' here refers rather to the putting off of the fleshly tendencies of the old man. The 'old man' is the manner of life before conversion, the habits, the selfish desires—the former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit (Eph. 4 : 22 R.V.). These fleshly desires he exemplifies as fornication, covetousness and idolatry (v. 5), and anger, malice and blasphemy (v. 8). They are called the works of the flesh, in contrast to the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5 : 19, 22). Mortification is thus the crucifixion of the flesh, with the passions and lusts thereof (Gal. 5 : 24 R.V.).

These fleshly members are described as being upon the earth, that is, where they function. They have no place in the heavens, where spiritual things alone occupy the mind (v. 2).

"fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry :" Five types of sinful tendencies are set forth here, as constituting members of the old man. These are frequently associated together in the New Testament. *Fornication* is impure love; *uncleanness* is general impurity, and includes all kinds of immorality; *inordinate affection* (R.V. passion) is lit., suffering from a diseased mind, giving oneself up to passions; *evil concupiscence* is the overaction of evil desires and lusts; *covetousness* is a desire to have more—the driving force of impure living (Rom. 7 : 7), with which it is closely joined; *idolatry*—covetousness is often associated with idolatry in the New Testament, because it is the worship of self, instead of God. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

V. 6 *"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience :"* 'Children (sons, R.V.) of

disobedience' is a term used in the New Testament of the unbeliever (Eph. 2 : 2). Upon these the wrath of God abides (John 3 : 36). It would seem as if Paul is urging the Colossians to examine themselves, to see if they be in the faith (II Cor. 13 : 5). If, instead of putting the things of v. 5 to death, they were characterised by such conduct, they would merit the title of the sons of disobedience, and discover that they had never been born again. Compare also Eph. 5 : 3-6.

May we to-day in like manner examine ourselves to see if there be any way of wickedness in us, lest the wrath of God be visited upon us, and we discover, too late, our dreadful mistake. The present tense of the Greek verb translated, 'cometh,' indicates the certainty of God's judgment.

V. 7 "*In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.*" In the pursuit of these pagan customs (v. 5) ye also, as other unregenerate men, once regulated your walk and life—life was your state, walk your activity. They had lived in the midst of these practices, and their walk was dictated by them.

V. 8 "*But now ye also put off all these;*" 'But now,' indicates a change in their condition. Before, they had yielded their members servants to gross iniquity. Now, their new life demonstrates their obligation to yield their members servants unto holiness (Rom. 6 : 19). Ye also, as other believers have done, ought to put away not only the things of v. 5, but also all evil of any kind, a further enumeration of which he proceeds to set before them.

"*anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*" Anger is a settled mind, bent on revenge; *wrath* is the boiling up of one's feelings, sometimes leading to anger; *malice* is a mind bent on doing harm to another; *blasphemy* is speaking evil of another, so as to hurt; *filthy communication* is obscene, abusive language. The medium of these last two is the mouth; such employment of the lips is not becoming to Christian behaviour.

V. 9 "*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;*" This continues the warning against the wrong use of the tongue. These fleshly habits are unsuited to a believer—one who at his baptism has professed to have done with them, and henceforth to walk

with Christ in a new kind of life, in contrast with the old pre-conversion ways; he had resolved to do away with such pagan customs; he had reckoned that his old man, his former manner of life, has been crucified with Christ, and that the body as used for sinning must be set aside, that he should no longer be under bondage to sin (Rom. 6 : 6).

It would seem as if Paul here, and in the kindred epistle—to the Ephesians, is teaching them some things that have been embodied in the law given to Israel, but was foreign to the thinking of the heathen Colossians and Ephesians. Paul would impress on them the obligations of the Mosaic law, as far as its moral commandments were concerned.

Let us not think that the believer to-day has no responsibility in these matters. Let him learn to find in these epistles guidance for his mind, and his activities.

ROYAL FRIENDS IN TROUBLOUS TIMES

by THE LATE W. W. MORRIS

II SAMUEL CHAPTER 1

News is brought to David by an Amalekite stranger bringing Saul's crown and bracelet, and telling him that both Saul and Jonathan were slain upon Mr. Gilboa, and that he himself had had a part in Saul's death. For this, he paid the penalty David deemed right, since Saul was the LORD'S anointed, vv. 2-16. Of his own anointing David had never spoken, but he deeply revered the fact of it, as is abundantly clear in his song, II Sam. 22 and Psalm 18. David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, vv. 17-27, is very compassionate and deeply affecting—"lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided," v. 23. Not a word of recrimination is evident in respect of Saul, but a loyal tribute is paid to his prowess on the battlefield. The deeply affectionate tribute to Jonathan is a never-failing source of delight; surely it constitutes a soul utterance of great beauty and sincerity, v. 26, "O Jonathan . . . slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." It was on hearing news of Jonathan's and Saul's deaths that the nurse of Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth,

when fleeing with him from the Philistines, accidentally allowed him to fall, from this fall injury resulted—lameness in both his feet at 5 years of age, II Sam. 4 v. 4. Later, King David gave him a place at the royal table *for Jonathan's sake*. "Mephibosheth" means "end of shame." It is apparent that Jonathan had waited many years for a son to be born to him, and his great pleasure is reflected in this choice of name. The name of Merribaal also associated with Mephibosheth means "contender against Baal"—this too is deserving of note (see E. W. Rice, D.D., Bible Dictionary). Through the line of Jonathan alone did it please God to perpetuate a posterity to the house of Kish, and Saul (an only son), 1 Chron. 8 vv. 33-40. David kept faith with Saul and Jonathan.

That Jonathan was devoted to David was patent to Saul, but he was also loyal to Saul his father. That he was utterly selfless is evident; so was John the Baptist. This is a trait inherent in godliness. David knew that in Jonathan he had a true friend at court, with not a semblance of treachery, self-seeking or duplicity evident. On the positive side, Jonathan proved his integrity in the severest tests, even in the face of death and of his father's prolonged antagonism to David, whose loyalty disposes of any thought of subterfuge on Jonathan's part. Utter shame and desolation was brought to Saul by his failure to comply with Divine requirements, and subsequently by clinging to power and prestige in the face of God's decree that he should no longer be his sufficiency as once was possible.

David, subject to God's will, in all things is anointed King over Judah at Hebron (II Sam. 2 vv. 1-4). Aged 30 years, he was mature, as was Joseph (Gen. 31 v. 46), and the priests, (Numbers 4 vv. 3-47). David's incomparable Antitype, our Lord Jesus commenced his public ministry, "being about 30 years of age" (Luke 3 v. 23).

A number of the Psalms comprising the first book Nos. 1 to 41 may well have been written during, or have special reference to, David's experiences during the years of his wanderings, wanderings which were entirely due to Saul's evil intent towards him. Saul involved many who otherwise would have been at David's side, combating the common foe whose depredations had so often impoverished the land. Saul betrayed his nation's good. To look over these reflect-

ions of the Psalmist with him impress the mind with the undeviating loyalty, fidelity and integrity he maintained, also his constant dependance on the Lord, into Whose face he can look with a conscience void of offence in respect of Saul. Nor can we discern anything in the scriptures relating to Jonathan that comes short of the same. He also was a man of God walking in the fear of God, subject to His word.

In grievous contrast, Saul's tragic end is briefly summarised in 1 Chron. 10 vv. 13-14. Saul died for his transgressions which he committed against THE LORD, against the word of THE LORD which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit . . . and enquired not of THE LORD. Retribution is brought to bear when forty years of probation yields not the least response to God's forbearance.

Following two years of strife, caused by Abner defiantly seeking to retain the allegiance of the remaining tribes to the house of Saul, the day for which David had waited long and endured much came at last.

It was a great day indeed; the elders of Israel came to the King to Hebron . . . and they anointed him king over Israel, II Sam. 5 vv. 1-3, *according to the word of the Lord by Samuel*, I Chron. 11 v. 3.

And so is ushered in the reign of Israel's most illustrious king. No other has such frequent honourable mention in the scriptural records of that nation's history as David: and his name is again mentioned in connection with its future glory and pre-eminence amongst the nations of the world, Jer. 30 v. 9.

In Rev. 22 v. 16, our Lord affirms "I am the Root and the Offspring of David and the Bright and Morning Star." He is referred to as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, Rev. 5 v. 5. How greatly is David honoured thereby. In thus being in Holy Writ so intimately associated with the Lord of Heaven and Earth, David stands unique.

Jonathan's Divinely inspired appraisal of David's worthiness, when at the Valley of Elah he slew Goliath and when Jonathan so freely surrendered his all to David was fully justified, and remains an abiding honour to him.

But the absolute worthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is for ever reflected in that greatest of all triumphs at

the place called Calvary (Col. 2 v. 15) and who on the cross of shame suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; obtaining eternal redemption for us by *His own blood*, now confronts us with a far greater challenge than ever Jonathan knew, to thankfully concede and submit to the ever blessed Lordship of the Risen Christ of God, who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings; and whose worthiness alone—which is so infinitely beyond all human appraisalment—will be for all His own redeemed ones, *the grand theme of eternal praise*, Rev. 5 vv. 9-10.

“Precious to the Father,
All Thy steps below,
Telling out God’s Glory,
In this world of woe,
For His Will and purpose,
Was Thy pleasure here,
In devoted service,
To Thy God so dear.”

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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THE REDEEMER'S PRAISE

(REVELATION CHAPTER 5)

A challenge from the Throne is given,
To all on earth, in Hell and Heaven,
'Twas made in words so plain and clear,
That doubtless every one would hear.

Who is the Worthy One to be,
To take the book that open He
The seals that were therein contained,
And prove the heritage is claimed.

The seer weeps when there is none,
Seems worthy to approach the Throne,
To take the book from Him Who there,
Doth sit in majesty so fair.

But soon a voice is heard to say,
Weep not for One is on His way,
Who hath prevailed o'er every foe,
To save the lost from endless woe.

The lion of Great Judah's race,
Has won the right to have the place,
To take to Him the sacred scroll,
And all its contents then unroll.

And as the prophet gazes on,
Upon the scene around the Throne,
Behold a Lamb comes into view,
As though it had been slain anew.

And as the scene is witnessed by,
The host of the redeemed on high,
Before the Lamb they prostrate fall,
And thus acclaim Him Lord of All.

They sing the praise of Him Whose blood,
By which they were redeemed to God,
Worthy art Thou Who once was slain,
Resounds aloud the glad refrain.

And all the angel voices blend,
Their homage to the Throne doth send,
The Lamb is Worthy they proclaim,
All honour to His Blessed Name.

The Late Robert Feely.

"HAGGAI"

by E. R. BOWER

RESULT—RETURNING GLORY (2 : 1-9).

After the exhortation of chapter 1, for rulers and people to consider their ways, they had responded by obedience to the "voice of the Lord their God"—an implied prior disobedience—and "the words of Haggai."

"And the people did fear before the Lord."

The Lord's reassurance followed, "I am with you."

The spirits of prince, priest and people had been stirred, and they rose up to do the work of the House of the Lord of hosts.

Now, in chapter two, just a month later, on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles the word of the Lord came again, reminding them of what His House had been in the days of its greater glory, and of what it was at that moment. Again the message embraces prince, priest and people—each dependent upon the other, "Be strong . . . **AND WORK** . . . for I am with you." This was God's ancient promise at the time of their redemption; His Spirit was always there, despite everything.

This work they were called upon to do for His House had a bearing upon the glorious future of Israel and the glory filled the House yet to be.

"Yet a little while" (quoted in Hebrews 12 : 26-27)—a reminder to the Christian believer of the word of Hebrews 10 : 37, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

V. 7 is generally considered to be a Messianic character and content, but the words should possibly be translated as "the precious things of all the nations shall come"—i.e. as offerings.

Peace will come with the latter House—Peace and Glory.

The message to the Christian believer is "Look now and see if today's 'temple' is as glorious as in the days of yore." The answer to this is, **WORK** for the night is coming when no man can work, for there is a Temple being built which will indeed be a Temple of Glory." (I Cor. 3 : 9-17).

"Be strong . . . fear not . . . My Spirit remains with you."

Between Haggai's fourth message and his fifth message

intervenes Zechariah's call to the nation to repent (Zech. 1 : 2-6)—"Turn ye unto Me."

As we have said, there are many believers today who take a retrospective view of the Church and ask, "Who is left among us that remember the first glory?"—thinking more particularly of the Assemblies. Perhaps a little more introspection like that of Zerubbabel and Joshua would lead to more work—edifying work. Let us beware, however, of the wood, the hay and the stubble; fearing the coming manifestation. (1 Cor. 3).

"Turn ye unto Me . . . and I will turn unto you."

DEFILED WORKMANSHIP (2 : 10-19).

Work had begun on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month (1 : 15); now, on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month—just ninety days later—it became necessary to remind the builders of the word of God in the Law of Moses—Leviticus 6 : 27. The flesh of the sacrifice hallowed those who touched it. Contrariwise, Numbers 19 : 13, "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord."

"So is this people." They, their work, their offerings were unclean.

The law of the red heifer and the water of separation is seen in Antitype in Hebrews 9 : 13-14, "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works (see 6 : 1) to serve the living God?"

Israel was defiling the Temple by their dead works and their neglect of the Temple.

"Every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it . . . if any man defile (destroy) the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself." (I Cor. 3; Romans 14-15).

A defiled work is fruitless.

Yet there must have been a turning to God, for He says, "From this day I will bless you."

THE CHOSEN SERVANT (2 : 20-23).

Of these verses a late twentieth century commentator wrote, "It appears unnecessary to find a literal fulfilment of the predictions of the overthrow of the world powers 'everyone by the sword of his brother' as of the utterance repeated from v. 6, "I will shake the heavens and the earth' . . . Nothing, in fact, can be extracted from these passages beyond a dim presage of the heathen kingdoms being pervaded by the moral influence of the Christian Church." We wonder what this commentator would say today, when heavens and earth are being shaken—quite literally, and kingdoms are failing by the hands of those who greet each other as brothers?

Haggai is no exception to the rule that where there is reprimand or rebuke there is also promise. The life of Zerubbabel descendant of David would continue, and our Lord would be a direct lineal descendant. From the line of this prince of the house of Judah would come He Who would be the chief corner stone of a building 'fitly framed together' which would grow 'into a holy temple in the Lord : in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Thus with the promise of the Servant of the Lord, taken and chosen, the prophet leaves the pages of prophecy; his own work for the Lord accomplished.

THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL

by C. JARRETT

JOHN 15 : 11; 16 : 24; 17 : 13; I JOHN 1 : 4; II JOHN 12

This thought is in each of the references above. What welcome promise they offer and how uplifting in days when discouragement and dissatisfaction are more in evidence than joy.

These promises were given for realisation during the period of the Lord's absence. We can therefore, and should, earnestly seek to claim and prove them in our own lives.

John 15 : 11 begins with the words, "These things have I spoken unto you." The means of realising fulness of joy has been made known in the previous verses. They speak

of fruitfulness as being the Father's desire and the means of His being glorified. We cannot produce it ourselves but He will do so as we abide in Christ. This teaches a constant appropriation of Christ, John 6 : 57. The Lord Jesus said, "I live by the Father," and then added, "so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." To live upon Christ and thus abide (continue, dwell, remain) in Him, is not an occasional exercise but an habitual one. This is how the Lord lived and if we seek to imitate Him He says that by bearing fruit we shall become His disciples, John 15 : 8.

The Lord spoke also of abiding in His love (John 15 : 9) and tells us what is needful if this is to be true. It is a life of obedience to His words but we note they are "My commandments." The blessed result of this obedient life is that, "ye shall abide in My love." As He walked here and kept His Father's commandments, He also abode in the Father's love (John 15 : 10). The sole purpose for which the Lord came down from heaven was to do the will of Him that sent Him and in this He found His joy.

If we then would know fulness of joy, it will be found in obedience to the Lord. The disobedient child, in satisfying his own desires, loses the joy of the one who abides in His love. The obedient life may seem narrow and somewhat lonely, but it is in this walk that a believer knows nearness of heart to Christ and joy that is full.

John 16 : 24 gives us the second means of knowing fulness of joy. It comes from the blessedness of receiving from the Father, as we pray. In John chapters 14 to 16, the Lord uses the words, "In My Name," seven times. If my reader will find and meditate upon them, it will be seen that the Lord is showing how much His Name avails while He is with the Father. There is nothing too much to bring to the Father in prayer. The Lord used the words, "whatsoever" and "anything" in John 14 : 13-14 and promises "He will give it you" 16 : 23. The Lord was about to leave them and His people were to have this great comfort, that His Name could be used with the Father. In one sense the scope of prayer was to be limitless, "whatsoever ye shall ask," in another, it was confined to what may truly be asked "In My Name." It must be for His sake and in keeping with all that for which His Name speaks. If we receive not, it may be because we ask amiss (James 4 : 3).

When our petitions and motives are such that His Name and all that it speaks as to His person, can be reverently used as our plea, we shall receive, that our joy may be full. Our prayers may only reflect personal desires, asked to avoid failure and difficulties, or to gratify our wishes and may disregard the fact that the Father may take us through experiences we would avoid, so that our exercises in them yield profit to us and fruitfulness for God. When we pray with true guidance, according to His will, in His Name and in faith, what joy it is, to receive from the Father. Some speak as though they get everything they ask, everything being made agreeable to their wishes, but this is often the testimony from a passing experience only. We should avoid any glorying as though we are regarded by the Father more favourably than others. A life of prayer is a deep exercise, spiritual discernment and subjection to God's will are not learnt in a superficial experience but answered prayer gives a joy that is full.

John 17 : 13. In His prayer the Lord desires that, as He comes to the Father, His own, who are left down here, might be filled full with His joy. He had kept them while with them on earth (v. 12). Now He was going to the Father and would be there for them. "I pray for them" He had said (v. 9). In abiding in Him, living to bring forth fruit for God, pleading His Name before the Father and in knowing He is in the presence of God as our Great High Priest, we can bear the world's hostility (v. 14) and yet know fulness of joy.

Our next reference is I John 1 : 4 "And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." John writes first of "the Word of Life," with the Father and then manifested. He then writes of the fellowship of life that we have with the Father and with His Son. There can be no greater joy or higher experience than to live in that holy fellowship. This is where our joy may be full. It requires that walking in the light as He is in the light (1 : 7), we confess known sins (1 : 9), and avoid deliberate sin (2 : 1), that we keep His commandments (2 : 3) and walk as He walked (2 : 6) in the unbroken joy of fellowship with the Father, what loss and folly it is to lose the realised joy of this fellowship, this nearness of heart, this blessing of fruitfulness, for the indulgence of sinful desire and a walk

in darkness, even as a passing thing. To rise each day, to commune with the Father, to follow our daily pursuit "in the light" and at close of day to bring our desires and needs, and those of others, to the Father, "in His Name" is a manner of life that yields fulness of joy.

II John 12 is our last verse. John writes to the Elect Lady and her children of speaking "face to face, that our joy may be full." This is the joy of fellowship where believers who walk in truth (v. 4) and who love one another after His commandment (vs. 5-6), meet together. Oh that we knew more of this joy. We share the same Life but a walk in truth and love is needful to the fellowship and resultant joy. How easy it is to be ungracious in ways and hurtful by speech and thereby empty the joy from our meetings! How shallow is the joy when fellowship is attempted while truth is not honoured? Fellowship and division cannot be reconciled.

The verses to which we have referred all show how readily every believer may know fulness of joy. It is not a matter of mood or circumstance not of persuading ones self to be happy but is the outcome of an obedient life, of the joy of answered prayers, of knowing that the Lord is with the Father on our behalf and of walking in a way that maintains unbroken fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Let us all, whether young believers or older ones, deeply desire and seek to experience these things while we wait for the Lord to come again.

ADDING, READING AND LOOKING

by H. A. BARNES, Bromborough

Peter had two burdens in writing his second epistle, both of them in terms of what the Lord could do: first "the deliverance of the godly out of temptation" and secondly "keeping the unrighteous under punishment unto . . . judgement." *II Peter 2 : 9 R.V.* He was moved to speak in a prophetic mode of things that were going to happen in the future, namely the appearance of false teachers, *2 : 1*; the initial success of their allurings, *2 : 2*; but their eventual swift judgement, *2 : 1; 3 : 7*.

While warning of these evil men and their attacks Peter gives his readers ample means of defence against them. Like so many of his Old Testament counterparts, although the things they prophesied certainly would come to pass, any one generation that was willing to listen to the warnings could escape them in their day.

There are three principal ways of escape outlined by Peter

1 : 10 If ye *do* these things, i.e. *adding*, ye shall never stumble.

1 : 19 The word of prophecy . . . whereunto ye do well that ye *take heed* as unto a lamp shining in a squalid place, R.V. margin.

3 : 11 Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be—*looking*.

i.e. *Adding, Reading, Looking*.

Adding. Peter's ministry is essentially one of reminding, II Peter 1 : 12, 13, 15; 3 : 1, 2. In chapter one he reminds them of what *God* had given to *them* :

Verse 1 Each one had obtained an equally precious faith.

Verse 3 His divine power had granted all things that pertain to—relate to, are necessary for—life and godliness.

Verse 4 He hath granted unto us His precious and exceedingly great promises . . . having escaped from . . . corruption.

God thus dealt with their *past*, provided for their *present* and promised a great *prospect*. Peter then reminds them of *their* responsibility to give in the light of what God has given.

They were to give diligence, i.e. to hasten to do, to exert oneself. This diligence was to be directed into specific tasks; all involving *adding*.

They were not to add faith, for this God had given, but were to add to, or in, their faith, and neither were they dependent on their own energies or resources for the material to add for His divine power had already granted unto them all the things that were necessary for life and godliness. However, like a house builder, having had his materials delivered to the site, the believer must get to work and

build the house! He must build with God's materials, I Cor. 3 : 11-16, and in God's power, Phil. 2 : 13.

Virtue, that frame of mind from which comes good works. Knowledge, Self Control, Patience, Godliness, Love of the brethren and Love; these are sevenfold graces that should characterise our profession of faith. Their possession and abundance lead to the certain promise that we will not be idle or unfruitful. Their lack spells spiritual disaster : blindness, short-sightedness and spiritual amnesia, 1 : 9.

"Wherefore brethren give the *more* diligence to make your calling and election sure," i.e. sure for you not for God, who if He elects is certainly sure! "For if ye do these things, i.e. diligently add, ye shall never stumble.

Peter was a man who *had* stumbled, Matt. 26 : 31-35, and had learned his lesson the hard way. He wants us to learn in a less painful way. For those who are faithful in this matter there is a special welcome home! 1 : 11.

Reading. If *adding* assures the readers of their spiritual fitness to prepare for the coming battle, then *reading* sharpens their spiritual intelligence. The scriptures, with special reference to prophecies, should be heeded, 1 : 19, because

- i they shine as a lamp in a dark place, cf. Psalm 119 : 105, making them indispensable in dark days,
- ii they originate from the moving of the Holy Spirit in their writers and are not private interpretations of God's messages to men. They are thus effective weapons in the fight against false doctrine, Eph. 6 : 17. The inspired writings of Paul were going to be misused by the false teachers, they were going to take the difficult passages and twist or torture them and like some poor victim of the rack, they were going to make them say what they wanted. This is the mark of the false teacher : he cannot refute the plain teaching of scripture so has to twist the difficult passages to try to make them support his arguments

- iii they forewarn, 3 : 17, and thus forearm the readers.

There are no spiritual situations that the believer has been left unaware of, then or now. The scriptures are our complete answer to today's difficulties, II Tim. 3 : 16.

It seems unfortunate that what Peter prophesied about, as Paul had before him, Jude reports some years later to

have started to happen, cf. II Peter 2:1; with Jude 4. Perhaps Peter's readers had not read carefully enough, if they had, they might have been delivered in that test.

Looking. The false teachers denied the Lord and His coming. Their denial was one of convenience, so that they could live as they liked, "walking after their own lusts." Their lives deserved judgement and destruction, 3:7, so they wanted to shut out any thought of His coming and they mocked such ideas, 3:3.

The believer on the other hand is at least looking for such things, 3:14, and better should be earnestly desiring them, 3:12. Looking for these things in the future should have its effect in the present. Peter exclaims "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness!" "What manner" Vine tells us, originally meant "from what country" and later "of what sort." The implication is clear; if we are looking for a day "in which dwelleth righteousness," then we should live now as if we were living then.

Thus we have the threefold illustration of how the Lord is able to deliver us from temptation, whether it be error in doctrine or in living. Let us be careful to—

Add what God has provided.

Read what God has written.

Look for what God is going to do.

A BRAND FROM THE BURNING

by TOM WILSON

Which of us has not sung lustily, "A brand from the burning He rescued me." The deep sense of guilt, the genuine appreciation of mercy and the never-to-be-forgotten favour, that linked us indissolubly with Christ, are once more assessed with the result that we love to sing of the rescue and the Rescuer.

The vivid imagery of the consuming fire and the tinder-dry wood are more than likely drawn from Amos 4:11, Zech. 3 and Jude 23. These passages, however, are looking at the restoration, rather than the initialisation, of relationship with God. In point of fact, if we were to use current phraseology, they relate to the restoration of the backslidden and not to the salvation of sinners. Without denying to the poet the necessary choice of language, we must be

careful not to allow our interpretation of the Holy Scriptures to be unduly influenced by poetic expressions, which are not "words . . . which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (I Cor. 2 : 13). Only from within the Word of God are our impressions certain to be divinely given.

It is hardly surprising that some dear saints of God found themselves out of touch with "the only Master and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4) in the days of Jude. The early signs of apostasy were to be seen by the spiritually perceptive, if not by all who truly belonged to Christ. On every hand facts of the faith once for all delivered to the saints were being denied by the apostates and defended by the faithful. No truth was too dear, no dignitary too high to escape the maligning tongues of the false, and no passion was too base, no sin too grave, no practice too corrupt to be excused by them. In the waves of convulsion that came with every fresh onslaught it was hardly surprising that some Christians were swept away temporarily, losing for a time the firm rock of the faith.

It was not enough that spiritual perspicacity note that the dread features of apostasy were present, there must be identified speedily, identified both the true and the false. The apostate may pasturise himself (Jude 12 lit.) as Ezekiel's faithless shepherds (Ezek. 34) but those under-shepherds, who know the Good and Chief Shepherd, must be discerning in their judgement and urgent in their efforts to recover His sheep.

The description Jude gives for the guidance of those, who would seek to recover the erring brother, is obscured in the A.V. rendering. Jude gives three pointers in verses 22, 23.

- (a) And some convict when they contend :
- (b) others save, pulling them out of the fire :
- (c) others pity with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

The use by Jude of the word "save" would persuade any evangelically minded Christian that initial salvation of soul cannot be in view—salvation of life is the prospect for the restored backslider.

In the view of the present writer Jude's threefold description of the backslider is based on Zechariah 3. Jude is recalling Joshua the High Priest, silent, clad in filthy garments, described as a brand from the fire. In Zechariah's

interpretation no doubt Joshua was representative of the nation, being their high priest, but in Jude's application Joshua was reminiscent of the backslidden saint, for whom Jude cared.

Joshua had been seen silenced before the Accuser (alas! not silent as the Sinless One was, "a sheep before His shearers dumb He opened not His mouth," Isa. 53 : 7). So Jude looked to the silencing of those caught up in the contentions of apostasy. Their mouths must be stopped before recovery could begin. False doctrine easily imbibed is not readily abandoned. Let all beware!

Joshua was shamefully dressed when Zechariah saw him. Those garments of beauty and glory, that distinguished the High Priest of Israel, had been defiled in the most disgusting of ways. How different Joshua was from the Coming One who was morally what His garments became on the Holy Mount, "white as the light;" "shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them;" "white and glistening!" "As habits or clothes are to the body, so are actions to the real man," concluded Jude. The cause of the defilement was "the flesh," perhaps through impure moral practices. The recovery to be wrought would cause a revulsion to such sin, not just in the backslider, but also in the compassionate shepherd; otherwise his soul was likely to be engulfed in the defilement.

Joshua was certainly a brand out of the fire. The fires of persecution had been kindled for many a long year, consuming the very cedars of Lebanon. All that was left after years of exile was a brand. Would God treat Israel as a brand to be plucked out of the fire? Joshua certainly was not able to meet the consuming fire on behalf of his people and to endure its burnings, as One did for us at Calvary. He needed One to pluck him from the fire. Equally Jude's backslider needed plucking from the fires of testing. Once again it seemed as if the enemy had "sent the sanctuary into the fire" (Psalm 74 : 7, lit.) and "the carved wood" was in danger.

The fires of apostasy still burn brightly even today. Whether we realise it or not, there are many in Christendom feeding those flames. Betimes many who love the Lord find themselves engulfed in those flames. Jude would expect us to know such, to care enough to act and to pluck them as brands from the burning.

CONSECRATION

by the Late H. C. SPENCE, Bournemouth

Almost every child of God has at one time or another sung saintly Francis Havergal's hymn of consecration—

“Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee!”

Take my life has been echoed by many hearts and they have come to the realisation of all the power and joy of full consecration. We are reminded in Colossians chapter 3, verses 3 and 4, “For ye are dead and your *life* is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our *life* shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” The Lord Jesus said “I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10 : 10).

The Apostle Paul declared “For me to *live* is *Christ*” (Phil. 1 : 21). Again in Galatians “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” (Galatians 2 : 20).

May our *lives* be wholly dedicated completely to the Lord's service. If we do the yielding the Lord will do the keeping. (Jude 24).

“Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.”

Consecration means *all* our time—the moments of our little *life under His control*. In moments of trial, temptation, joy and sorrow we may be in touch with the Lord for :

“Moment by moment, I'm *kept* in His love.
Moment by moment, I've *life* from above.”

In Isaiah 26 we read that “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace *whose mind is stayed on Thee*” (Isaiah 26 : 3) and my days then surely, they will be filled with praise. “So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” (Psa. 90 : 12).

“Take my hands that they may move
At the impulse of Thy love.”

What a challenge to a loyal and happy service in the Lord! The Lord said to Moses : “What is in thine hand?” (Exodus 4 : 3). It was only a rod, and Moses little thought

what power would be displayed by the Lord when He took the rod in His hand. Our Lord reminds us : "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, *do it with all thy might.*"

May we know the gentleness of our Lord Jesus in the touch of our hands, and also may our hands be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. May our hands move at the impulse of His love that we might minister to others in our daily *lives.*

"Take my feet that they may be
Swift and beautiful for Thee."

"How beautiful are the *feet* of them that bring glad tidings of good things." (Isaiah 52 : 7). The Apostle Paul declares "And how shall they preach *except they be sent.*" (Romans 10 : 15).

The Lord sends each of us to be messengers, and may our *feet* be willing to carry messages for Him. To walk with the Lord following His steps until we *walk* with Him in white. In our pathway here the Lord Jesus has promised to *keep* the *feet* of His saints (II Sam. 2 : 8).

"Take my heart; it is Thine own.
It shall be Thy royal throne."

It is a good thing that the *heart* be established with grace. (Heb. 13 : 9). We find in Psalm 112 : 7 "His *heart* is fixed trusting in the Lord." And again in Psalm 51 the psalmist prays : "Create in me a *clean heart*, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (v. 10).

May the Lord graciously incline our *hearts* that He may have the *first* place.

"Take my *love*; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet Thy treasure-store."

The words of the Lord Jesus come to us as a challenge in our day and generation. "*Lovest thou me?*"

May we exclaim with Peter : "Yea Lord, *Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee*" (John 21 : 17).

The Lord requires the response of our affection for Him *who first loved us* and *gave Himself for us.*

"Take myself and let me be
Ever, only, all for Thee."

This is surely that which the Lord is worthy of, because "*We are not our own, but we are bought with a price, even with the precious blood of Christ*" (I Cor. 6 : 19-20).

TABERNACLE AND ITS TEACHING

by R. G. TAYLOR

THE VAIL (Ex. 26 : 31-34).

Dividing the Holy place from the Most Holy was the vail. This was a curtain of blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen richly embroidered with cherubims and hung from four golden pillars which rested upon sockets of silver. The pillars carried no capitals.

Within the vail stood the Ark of the Covenant and Mercy Seat and entrance through the vail was solemnly guarded. The vail marked the great separation which prevailed because of sin and could only be entered by Aaron, the high priest, once a year, on the day of atonement (Lev. 16, Heb. 9 : 9-18).

The vail speaks of our Lord's flesh (Heb. 10 : 20) and through Him the smitten One, the way into God's presence has been opened by "a new and living way." This remarkable event took place at the death of Christ when the hand of God rent the vail of the Temple from the top to bottom (Matt. 27 : 51). The way into God's presence is now open to every believer to approach boldly to the throne of God.

*"No more vail! God bids me enter
By the new and living way.
Now in trembling hope I venture
Boldly I His call obey.
There with Him, my God, I meet
God upon the Mercy Seat."*

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (Ex. 25 : 10-22).

The Ark was an oblong chest of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, measuring $3\frac{3}{4}$ ft. long, $2\frac{1}{4}$ ft. wide and stood $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high. A crown of gold surrounded the top and a lid of pure gold represented the Mercy Seat.

At each end of the Mercy Seat there was a cherubim carved out of pure gold, symbolising divine power and justice. Within the ark was placed the two tables of the covenant, the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded (Ex. 32 and 33, Num. 17 : 10, Ex. 25 : 16, Deut. 10 : 5, Heb. 9 : 4 and 5).

The ark has been described as the “central symbolic vessel of the Old Testament divine service” (Sauer). It was a unique vessel and viewed as most sacred because it was God’s throne in the midst of Israel. “Here I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat.” Here God’s voice was heard, His commands given and His will made known. The ark was also the divine centre for the hosts of Israel and symbolised God’s presence and power. On certain occasions, it went before the people and guided them as they moved forward (Num. 10 : 32). God’s power was also manifested as the ark approached the waters of Jordan (Josh. 3 : 15-17) and at the capture of Jericho (Josh. 6 : 4-5). It was the only vessel of the Tabernacle carried into Solomon’s Temple (I Kings 8).

In this vessel we have the highest expression of the Person of Christ. His manifold perfections and glory are set forth and the work of atonement accomplished. The contents of the ark were a reminder of failure on the part of the people. They broke His law (Ps. 78 : 10), they despised the manna (Num. 11 : 6), and rebelled against the priesthood (Num. 16). In God’s presence however, there was One person, the Son of God, which came down from heaven to meet the needs of His people (John 6). In contrast to a changing and imperfect priesthood, Christ hath an “unchangeable priesthood” (Heb. 4 : 14, 7 : 24-28).

The MERCY SEAT which formed the lid of the ark was where atonement was effected once every year. The annual Day of Atonement was regarded as the most solemn day of the year in Israel. The impressive ritual is recorded in Lev. 16 in great detail, but for our purpose we note the activities connected with the Mercy Seat.

(a) all activities of the nation were virtually brought to a standstill and a spirit of contrition marked the whole congregation, as the sins of the nation were dealt with before God.

(b) The High Priest would divest himself of his garments of glory and beauty and put on “holy linen attire” and entered ‘alone’ the Holiest. He would carry a censer of live coals from the golden altar and in his hands sweet incense which was placed on the burning coals. Immediately a cloud of incense covered the mercy seat. The high priest

brought in the blood of the sin offering, both for himself and the people.

(c) With his finger the high priest sprinkled the blood (the solemn witness of death) once on the mercy seat and seven times before it. The blood therefore was presented to God on His throne and the holy claims of a righteous God were fully met.

(d) Finally the high priest came and laid his hands on the Scapegoat and confessed over it all the sins and iniquities of the children of Israel. The goat was then led into the wilderness and let go. The sins laid upon it were no more to be remembered for another year.

The epistle to the Hebrews contrasts the old order of sacrifices to the new covenant which was brought about by the advent of Christ. The constant repetition of the sacrifices under the law could not make the comers thereunto perfect, because there was a remembrance of sins year by year (Heb. 10 : 1-4). But Christ has now appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9 : 26). This was final for Christ by His own blood entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9 : 12). There is now no more offering for sin and the way into God's presence is open and we can come boldly into His presence because sin has been purged, the conscience is cleansed and the sacrifice is perfect.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by DR. JOHN BOYD

COLOSSIANS 3 : 5 — 4 : 6

ETHICAL INSTRUCTION

CHRIST IN ALL

V. 10 "*And have put on the new man,*" Instead, the believer has resolved to live a new sort of life, following the example of Christ Himself (Rom. 6 : 4). He has put on the new man, in that he has decided that new habits must henceforth characterise his nature, and not the things that are after the flesh (II Cor. 5 : 16-17).

"*which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him :*" A different Greek word is the basis of the word rendered here by 'renewed,' from that translated 'new' in the earlier part of the verse; yet both are used of the same man. The Greek word used in the first part

of the verse has reference to time, and tells of one whose life has recently been changed, whilst 'renewed' refers to a different quality of life, usually an improvement. Thus the newly born-again man is continually being changed by a gradual filling with the full-knowledge of God, an approach to the likeness of the image of God, in which God created him at the first, in all his pristine perfection (Gen. 1 : 26). This renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3 : 5), and is the thorough knowledge of God's will, not the faulty knowledge of the Gnostics (see note on 1 : 10).

V. 11 "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free :" In the spiritual sphere about which Paul is writing—the sphere of the regenerate man, the apostle sees all believers as one, without distinctions created by reason of worldly origins or attainments.

Paul does not consider as of any importance their national privileges (Greek or Jew); nor their religious observances (circumcision or its absence); nor their inability to speak Greek, whether living in the Roman Empire (Barbarian), or outside the dominion of Rome (Scythian); nor their social caste (bond nor free). With Paul there are no distinctions as to nationally, covenant, culture, or slavery in the new creation.

"but Christ is all, and in all." The apostle announces, by way of contrast the true position of the believer relative to Christ. All these conditions he has just mentioned were opposed to the new life in Christ. The one thing that really mattered was their relation to Christ. They are 'the saints and faithful brethren in Christ' (1 : 2); they had been 'translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.'

Let us believers to-day not boast of any superiority over one another, whether it be a question of colour or race, or of better education, or of possessing greater wealth. Let us ever remember that we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3 : 28).

To believers *Christ is all* that is necessary for their faith, to lead them to salvation (1 : 14)—the fulness of Deity (1 : 15), the fulness of creational power (1 : 17), the Headship of the Church (1 : 18), the One in whom all fulness permanently dwells in bodily manifestation (2 : 9).

Moreover, *Christ is in all*. He occupies the pre-eminent

position in creation, and in the new creation. In all things He has the pre-eminence (1 : 18). He is in all who believe.

Thus we see manifest the two great divisions of the epistle—(1) 'Christ is all,' the summary of 1 : 15—3 : 4. He is all that matters to the believer. (2) 'Christ is in all,' the summary of 3 : 5—4 : 18.

V. 12 "*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,*" Having exhorted the Colossian believers to do away with the customs and sinful tendencies of the old pagan life before conversion (vv. 5, 8), Paul now instructs them in a positive way what should replace these habits.

Christ now dwells in their hearts by faith; they have been chosen by God (I Thess. 1 : 4) as His own people, the especial object of His love; they have been called to produce the fruit of holiness in their lives (Rom. 6 : 22). Note the order here—*election* (before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1 : 4); *holy* (sanctified in Christ Jesus, I Cor. 1 : 2); *beloved* (as beloved children, Eph. 5 : 1 R.V.).

Thus the apostle shows them how to clothe themselves with befitting habits—those which characterised Christ, whose they are, and Whom they serve.

"*bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*" *bowels of mercies*—bowels are lit., the upper viscera, more especially the heart, the seat of the affections, here the inward desires, as R.V., 'a heart of compassion,' towards others; *kindness*—the desire to be useful to another; *humbleness of mind*—a lowly conception of oneself; *meekness*—one whose strength is channelled into usefulness towards others (a meaning derived from the taming of a wild animal); *longsuffering*—lit., long-mindedness, no hasty retaliation. These qualities were seen in Christ (Phil. 1 : 8, Eph. 2 : 7, Matt. 11 : 29, I Tim. 1 : 16).

V. 13 "*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any;*" The apostle calls on the believers to put up with, to have patience with the failings or weaknesses of one another, and to show the grace of forgiveness, to forgive them frankly (Luke 7 : 42). If any cause for a complaint arises between them, let grace be the arbiter in restoring the status quo (I Pet. 4 : 10).

"*even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*" As Christ (or, 'as the Lord,' R.V.) had forgiven their trespasses (2 : 13-14), they should follow His example, and forgive their brethren, as set forth in Luke 7 : 41-50.

CHRIST IN THE HEBREWS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

"THE CHANGELESS CHRIST" 1 : 12; 13 : 8.

This epistle, without introduction or superscription, brings us into the presence of God that we may hear the voice of "His Son." It presents contrasts rather than comparisons; its theme being that the Son of God, Founder of Christianity precedes, exceeds and supercedes all. The key to the epistle may be found in the words of chapter 10 : 9 "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second."

We are made intelligent as to His glories as the Son of God; ch. 1. He is associated with the throne of God and everything He touches takes character from Him, the unchanging Christ. He is the Son of Man; chapter 2. As Apostle and Leader ch. 3, 4. He is the Rest Giver ch. 4 and Great High Priest ch. 5-7. Minister in the Sanctuary ch. 8, 9. The glory of His atoning work ch. 10, seen as Author and Finisher of faith ch. 11, 12 and as the Great Shepherd of the Sheep ch. 13.

The thought of the Lord's stability stands majestic above the best of the Old Covenant. Created works, whether in heaven, or on earth, will perish ch. 1 : 10; but He remains unchanged and unchanging "The Same" 1 : 12.

HIS UNDIMINISHED POWER 1 : 10.

He is creation's unchanging God and universal sovereign Lord v. 10; Psalm 102 : 22-27. The self-existing "I am" of almighty Lordship became the "I am" of abject loneliness Psal. 102 : 6. Note the five "I am's" in this psalm.

He is the everlasting Being who brought everything that is visible into existence, the One who is the creator and upholder of all things by the Word of His power 1 : 3. The "worlds" is ages, referring to the plan and arrangement of the various dispensations through which the created world has passed, is passing and will pass.

In chapter 1 verses 11 and 12 the creation's transience is contrasted with the Creator's perpetuity. Creation will change, He cannot change, He never fails, for the peerless Lord Jesus is changeless and endless. In His incomparable glory He is much "better" than the angels. In His Divine nature, they worship Him v. 5, 6; in His Kingly nature, they obey Him v. 7-9; in His creative nature, they respond

to Him v. 10-12; in His exalted nature, they serve Him v. 13, 14.

The immutability of His Person gives character to all He does as the Omnipotent sustainer of all things.

HIS UNSULLIED PURITY 7 : 27.

His personal characteristics never change since He ever lives. There was absolute harmony existing between His unblemished character and unblamable conduct. His raiment remains undefiled, and His reputation remains undamaged. He is "holy" towards God in the sense of reverence. It is a moral feature, holiness of character, qualities such as godly fear, 5 : 5.

"Harmless" in His disposition towards men. He was "guileless," entirely free from all malice; His spotless character.

"Undefiled" — in Himself. Unstained, unsullied in His personal character. No moral impurity or defilement ever marked this lovely Man thus fitting Him for a heavenly priesthood.

"Separated from sinners" permanently in His life and ministry at God's right hand. Lifted out from among men and withdrawn from them. A historical occurrence which introduced an abiding state. God's vindication of His sinlessness. "Higher than the heavens," "removed out of the earthly sphere and elevated into communion with God where nothing intervenes between the face of God and Him." 4 : 10; 9 : 24. A. B. Davidson.

HIS UNTRANSFERABLE PRIESTHOOD 5 : 5,6; 7 : 25-28

His priesthood has a value beyond all price, and a virtue above all that is precious for He continues in the power of an endless life.

He is before nature, before time, and above space, superior in sovereignty, and sufficient in sympathy. "Time will fail me" 11 : 32 to speak of Him Immutability, who is glorious in majesty at the right hand of power 8 : 1. The High Priest is tender, was tempted and is sinless 4 : 15, a helpful priest 4 : 16. An appointed and compassionate priest 5 : 1-2; a royal priest 5 : 6. He has entered within the veil 6 : 19, 20. He is able, saving, interceding, holy, undefiled and an exalted priest 7 : 25, 26. He is an enthroned high priest 8 : 1, and a minister of the sanctuary 8 : 2. He made

propitiation for sins 2 : 17; 7 : 27; offered one atoning sacrifice 10 : 12, and perfected the sanctified. He is the Mediator of the new covenant 7 : 22. He has made available to us eternal salvation, eternal redemption and eternal inheritance 5 : 9; 9; 12 : 15.

We can trust His unwearied watchfulness, His untiring faithfulness and His unceasing helpfulness in every time of need. This Priest could not have had a predecessor and most certainly can never have a successor. "A priest forever." His life is endless, His Priesthood is changeless, His intercession is ceaseless.

HIS UNLIMITED PROVISION 4 : 14; 13 : 20.

We are assured of daily help because of His personal excellence 4 : 14; and His personal experience v. 15. Priesthood has reference to believers and has in view our temptations. As Priest He sustains and His ministry is preventative in character, against us committing sin.

As "Son of God" has all the resources of Deity, power and provision. The name "Jesus" tells us of His humanity, nearness, oneness and sympathy. His greatness is inferred in His passing through the heavens He is exalted and victorious having ascended to the right hand of God. He was thoroughly tested by temptation, remained sinlessly perfect, and is sympathetically understanding in His help. This help is available as we "keep on drawing near," for we have spiritual freedom to approach God. Mercy is the quality of the High Priest 2 : 17; and grace as that of God.

We need mercy because of our sins and grace because of our weakness. The guarantee that all our need will be supplied is His resurrection and Shepherd character 13 : 20. This choice expression "that great Shepherd" assures us of care and comfort. As the good Shepherd we see His sufficiency as a sustainer Heb. 13 : 20; and as chief Shepherd His supremacy as a sovereign I Pet. 5 : 4. He has triumphed over death, and the Devil 2 : 14; and now sways the sceptre of sovereign supremacy in God's presence 1 : 8, 14.

His care in the provision made for Israel on their journeys would remind us of abundant provision for us Psa. 78 : 52, 53; Psa. 79 : 13; 80 : 1.

HIS UNFAILING PRESENCE 13 : 5, 6.

The sin of our day is "covetousness," the need of the

hour is contentment. "The best tent in which to dwell is content." This is a virtue we need to cultivate in this age of materialism. This is based upon the covenant relationship between God and His people, and His faithfulness and goodness.

His verse of assurance "I will never leave thee" brings us into a right relation to earthly things. He never withdraws the sustaining hand of help. The promise is an adaptation of several passages Gen. 28 : 15; Deut. 31 : 6; Josh. 1 : 5; Isa. 41 : 17; and verse 6 is taken from Psa. 118 : 6. Here is the promise of His personal and perpetual presence. I will not at any time, for any cause, leave thee or forsake thee. My aid and my help shall be continuous. The presence of the constant Christ means stability, for He is eternally fresh and fragrantly faithful.

"The Lord is my helper" brings consolation; "I will not fear" is holy boldness and confidence in God. May the doxology of v. 20, 21 be our response in adoration and worship. Amen.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

***“Whom having not seen,
ye love”*** *1 Peter 1:8*



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YES, JESUS KNOWS

*"Casting all your care upon Him: for He careth
for you." 1 Peter 5 v. 7.*

Every bit of grief and sorrow,
Jesus knows;
All the dreading of tomorrow,
Jesus knows;
All thy sadness and thy sighing—
Faded hopes around thee lying;
All the burden of thy crying;
Jesus knows.

All thy bitter disappointments
Jesus knows;
Crosses—that are "His appointments."
Jesus knows;
Do not cloud thy days with worry;
Take the cross He bids thee carry—
Not for long His aid will tarry;
Jesus knows.

Doubts and fears that so oppress thee,
Jesus knows;
Vain regrets that will distress thee,
Jesus knows;
Lonely hours from loved ones parted—
Loss, that leaves thee broken hearted,
And those tears that memory started,
Jesus knows;

Yes, thy very grief and sorrow,
Jesus knows;
From this thought sweet solace borrow,
Jesus knows;
He has promised not to fail thee;
Ne'er to leave, nor yet forsake thee,
Oh, to trust in Him completely!
Jesus knows.

Edith L. Hennessay.

"THE SECRET RAPTURE — A MYTH?"

by THE EDITOR

I have before me a copy of "The Witness" dated October, 1978, and my attention has been drawn to a question and answer on Page 310.

The Question (69) is :

"The claim is made in a recent book that teaching of the secret rapture of the Church is "a myth" invented by J. N. Darby. Would you please comment."

The answer :

"Whether one calls the idea of a secret rapture a 'myth' or not will depend on one's view of eschatology! However, all the available evidence indicates that the concept did not originate until the early years of the nineteenth century and there is no evidence that it was ever taught before this time. Although it became very much a part of Darby's teaching, it would appear that the idea of a secret rapture did not originate with him, but rather with Edward Irving, a Church of Scotland minister who was later (rather sadly) excommunicated and founded his own Catholic Apostolic Church. According to contemporaries Darby took up the concept from Irving's teaching at the Albury prophetic conferences around 1827 or 1828.

"It is important to remember that Darby was still in his twenties, a young man just beginning to formulate his ideas and the concept of a secret rapture accorded well with the "dispensational" form of biblical teaching that he was to develop. The theory of a secret rapture is, indeed, central to dispensational teaching, enabling a distinction to be drawn between the future of the Church and national Israel. It was a form of teaching at one time common in Brethren and other evangelical circles and at times pushed to extremes. I have to admit, however, that I see little support from the New Testament for this view of the return of Christ, nor for the system of teaching it supports."

The suggestion that "the Secret Rapture of the Church is a myth" has come as a shock to many of the readers of the "Witness." Of course they are not ignorant that there are those who think and talk that way. But to find such a

question in the "Witness" followed by an answer that does not condemn such a suggestion is a surprise!

The founder of the firm of Messrs. Pickering and Inglis Ltd., publishers of the "Witness" Mr. Hy. Pickering, gathered together an immense list of testimonies of outstanding men relative to the "Second coming of the Lord Jesus" and published them both in the magazine and in his books. He was a firm believer in the "Secret Rapture of the Church." Not only so, but the former editors of the "Witness" have been firm believers in the "Secret Rapture of the Church" as their writings clearly show.

The answer to the question states "It is important to remember that Darby was still in his twenties" when he took up "the concept of a secret rapture." It is equally important to remember that he held that truth to the very end of his days. Is there anything wrong in having clear convictions as to truth in one's twenties? That is when most men who minister divine truth to profit begin to minister with conviction and power.

Again the answer says, "I have to admit that I see little support from the New Testament for this view of the return of Christ." Does this mean that Dr. Howard does not believe in the "Secret Rapture of the Church?" (I hope I have come to the wrong conclusion and if I have I most humbly ask his forgiveness). If so it would appear that he believes that the "Secret Rapture of the Church is a Myth!" If that is the case my dear brother, are you not writing in the wrong magazine? You are contradicting, what the "Witness" for many years, contended for! Or have the publishers of the magazine changed their views on the coming of the Lord Jesus? (I believe they have not). But I find something more alarming in the answer to the question "the concept of the secret rapture accorded well with the dispensational form of Biblical teaching that he was to develop dispensational teaching enabling a distinction to be drawn between the future of the church and a national Israel . . . I see little support for this view of the return of Christ nor for the system of teaching it supports." Does this mean that the doctor does not accept "the Dispensational form of Bible Teaching?" Does this mean that he does not see a distinction between the future of the Church and a national Israel?"

Surely that such questions should arise out of an answer to a question in the "Witness" is alarming. It would appear (I hope I am wrong) that our dear brother (1) does not believe in the Secret Rapture of the Church, (2) does not believe in a distinction between Israel and the Church, (3) does not believe in Dispensational Teaching. It may be that he is an A-millennialist, (I trust not). If this is the case surely he should not be answering questions in the "Witness." The former editors of the magazine believed all these things and the publishers have a large number of books in their past and present lists that teach these things.

May I say also, as I note the words "It was a form of teaching at one time common in Brethren circles." My dear brother, it still is! The vast majority of saints in assembly fellowship still believe these things. It is a small but loud minority that do not believe them.

And what does the editor of the "Witness" believe? There is a note by the editor at the close of this answer in the "Witness." One would have expected to read "the views here expressed are not those of the editor and publishers"—but there is no such note. Does the present editor of the "Witness" believe the "Secret Rapture of the Church is a myth?" Does he believe in "a distinction between the future of the Church and a national Israel?" Does he believe "Dispensational Teaching." I trust that the answer to these questions is a clear YES! If it were otherwise it would be a tragedy.—A. M. SALWAY GOODING.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by DR. JOHN BOYD

COLOSSIANS 3 : 5 — 4 : 6

V. 14 "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." To continue the figure of putting on as garments, the graces of vv. 12-13, Paul tells them to add as a covering garment, over them all, love. Love is here used with the definite article, 'the love,' that is, Christian love, the love that is befitting to Christian testimony the love that is essential to the proper working of these virtues (I Cor. 13).

Paul further describes this love is a bond, something that binds all those other graces together. It makes for perfection,

as does an outer coat, holding the inner garments in their places. Or it may be that the apostle is thinking of love as a girdle, which holds the other garments together, and enables the believer to function more perfectly in service for his Lord. The figure of love as a bond of perfection here is akin to the use of the word love in Rom. 13 : 8-10, where it is seen as fulfilling the Law.

V. 15 "*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,*" The R.V. renders this more correctly, "peace of Christ." It was the peace that characterised Christ on earth, and which He left as a legacy to His disciples ere He went to Calvary (John 14 : 27). This peace, Paul teaches, would act as an umpire, to advise where the running is faulty. This is in contrast to the use of the same word as a basis for the compound word 'beguile' in 2 : 18, where the Gnostics were seen as false umpires in the Christian race, and caused the runners to lose their reward. But believers will know that they are running well if the peace of Christ 'guards their hearts and thoughts' (Phil. 4 : 7).

"*to the which also ye are called in one body;*" In addition to a personal peace in their hearts, this would suggest an appeal to the Colossians to maintain peace amongst themselves, which would make for fellowship. For this purpose they were all united in one body. It was a peace that Christ looked for in them, the members of this body.

"*and be ye thankful.*" Paul had prayed for a spirit of gratitude to God to be found in them (1 : 12); now he teaches what will bring this spirit of gratitude more than anything else—the peace of Christ in their hearts.

V. 16 "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*" The punctuation of this verse is given here as in the A.V., but it occasions some difficulties. It dissociates the word 'wisdom' from 'teaching and admonishing one another,' which seems to detract from the sense of the verse. Also 'singing' is separated from 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,' and these three words are joined to 'teaching and admonishing,' which upsets the balance of the verse.

The punctuation is much better set out as in the R.R.V.

—‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.’ This associates ‘richly’ with ‘dwell,’ then ‘wisdom’ with ‘teaching and admonishing one another,’ and finally, ‘singing’ with ‘psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.’ Thus the three subjects of the verse are more clearly displayed, and with suitable emphasis.

Paul’s first exhortation is that the word of Christ should dwell richly, abundantly in their hearts. The ‘word of Christ’ is nowhere else used in the New Testament; it was the word He spake to men (John 15 : 3), not yet written down, for the gospels were not committed to writing till after this epistle. That the word of Christ should dwell in them richly, is an ample statement by itself, for the very riches of His spoken word shall lend insight into the other two exhortations, which are expressed by present participles, (a) ‘teaching and admonishing in all wisdom.’ For this association of wisdom and teaching see 1 : 28 and 4 : 5; (b) ‘singing’ psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are the outpouring of your hearts to God (R.V.) with thankfulness. ‘Psalms’ are the psalms of David; ‘hymns’ are addresses of praise to God; ‘spiritual songs’ are the poetical effusions of spiritual men. This lay-out of the three exhortations seems to be more acceptable.

V. 17 “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,*” Paul here sums up the first practical part of the epistle (vv. 5-17) by showing believers their responsibility to submit in all things to the Lordship of Christ Jesus. This is more fully developed as we see our responsibility towards others set out in the next section. Note there the recurring use of the words, ‘the Lord.’ In all that we do or say on earth we must ever be conscious of the over-ruling authority of the Lord Jesus Christ; in all things we serve the Lord Christ (v. 24). Thus we appreciate the main theme of the epistle—that in all things Christ might have the pre-eminence (1 : 18). He, and not the angelic intercessions suggested by the Gnostics, is our only mediator; in Him are all things held together (1 : 17).

“*giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.*” The purpose of this submission to the authority of the Lord is an expression of gratitude to God our Father, for all He

has planned and done for us. Let us remember that all this has been done for His glory (Eph. 1 : 5-6, I Cor. 10 : 31). The R.V. omits the word 'and' after God. All God's grace, and all our thanksgiving to God are mediated by the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone we can approach the Father (John 14 : 6).

*Teach us, Master, how to give
All we have and are to Thee;
Grant us, Saviour, while we live,
Wholly, only Thine to be,
Henceforth be our calling high,
Thee to serve and glorify :
Ours no longer, but Thine own,
Thine for ever, Thine alone.*

A SHORT BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE—

TABERNACLE AND ITS TEACHING

by R. G. TAYLOR

THE MARCH THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

(Num. chapters 9 and 10)

THE SIGNAL TO MOVE FORWARD

The movement of the camp of Israel through the wilderness presents a remarkable example of the orderly way of God instructing and guiding His people. The signal to go forward was indicated first by the rising of the cloud (the visible symbol of His presence) from off the tabernacle. This was the divine regulator of all Israel's movements. If the cloud tarried over the tabernacle for two days, a month, or a year the people waited and only went forward at the 'commandment of the Lord' (Num. 9 : 15-23, 10 : 11-13). Israel would therefore learn lessons of patience, dependance and their pilgrim character as they ordered their lives within the orbit of God's will. Secondly the camp would hear the sounding of the two silver trumpets by the sons of Aaron (Num. 10 : 8), which directed and ordered the camp arrangements. As the notes of the silver trumpets echoed through the camp all the people would realise the time had come for them to take the next step in their wilderness journey.

THE COVERING OF THE VESSELS (Num. 4).

Preparations were now put in hand to dismantle the tabernacle. The covering of the sanctuary vessels was the first requirement and Aaron and his sons undertook this sacred duty with due reverence. No other man was permitted to see the holy vessels when they were covered (Num. 4 : 20).

The vail which separated the holy place from the holiest was taken down by Aaron and his sons and spread over the ark of the testimony, a covering of badger skins would then be put on and a cloth of blue spread over as a final cover.

Each of the remaining vessels were then covered as follows.

The Table of Shewbread with a cloth of blue, a cloth of scarlet and a covering of badger skins.

The Lampstand with a cloth of blue and a covering of badger skins.

The Golden Altar with a cloth of blue and a covering of badger skins.

The Laver and its foot with a purple cloth and a covering of badger skins.

(Note—This is omitted in the A.V. and R.V. but included in the Samaritan copy of the Pentateuch and the Septuagint version).

The Brazen Altar, after the removal of the ashes was covered with a purple cloth and covered with badger skins.

THE CARRIAGE OF THE VESSELS

When the covering of the vessels was complete instructions were given regarding the carriage of the Sanctuary. Each of the three families of the Levites (Num. 3 : 17) were assigned a special task.

The vessels of the sanctuary were to be borne over the shoulders of the Kohathites (Num. 7 : 9).

The curtains, coverings, hangings of the door and the gate of the court were the charge of the Gershonites. To them were given two wagons and four oxen for transport (Num. 7 : 7).

The boards of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, and their sockets were the charge of Merari. To them were given four wagons and eight oxen for transport (Num. 7 : 8). The

wagons and oxen were gifted by the princes of Israel on the day of dedication of the tabernacle (Num. 7).

THE ORDER OF THE MARCH (Num. 10).

As Israel marched through the wilderness in their orderly array, bearing the sanctuary of God, they must have presented an impressive sight to the surrounding nations. The Order of the March is set out in Num. 10:14-27 as follows.

STANDARD OF JUDAH

(3 Tribes)

JUDAH - ISSACHAR - ZEBULON

<p>GERSHON</p> <p>Coverings Curtains Cords</p> <p>2 Wagons and 4 Oxen</p>	<p>MERARI</p> <p>Boards Bars Pillars</p> <p>4 Wagons and 8 Oxen</p>
--	--

STANDARD OF REUBEN

(3 Tribes)

REUBEN - SIMEON - GAD

KOHATHITES

Bearing of the holy vessels of the sanctuary.

STANDARD OF EPHRAIM

(3 Tribes)

EPHRAIM - MANASSEH - BENJAMIN

STANDARD OF DAN

(3 Tribes)

DAN - ASHER - NAPHTALI

This unique caravan moving along the desert highway was a public acknowledgment of the God Israel worshipped and served. Each vessel, borne high upon the shoulders

of the Kohathites, being covered tells that their inner meaning and concealed glory is only known to spiritual vision and anointed eyes (cf. I Cor. 2 : 14).

The ark of God with its covering of blue leads the way. This vessel, as we have previously seen symbolises the Throne of God in the midst of Israel. It would suggest to our hearts that as we press through this scene we are to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in our hearts and lives.

The table of shewbread with its fragrant loaves speaks of the food of the priests and their communion with God. The bread of God now sustains us, as priests of God in a hostile world.

The seven-branched Lampstand illuminated the sanctuary and in that light the priests engaged in their sanctuary activities. The light of God, through His Word presents Christ Who is the source of all spiritual light.

The golden altar with its perpetual fragrance speaks of Israel's worship which ever delighted the heart of God. We are continually to offer to our God the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13 : 15).

The brazen laver, the cleansing vessel for the priests' hands and feet testifies to the essential purity in all who would engage in God's service.

Finally the massive brazen altar indicated that sacrifice and blood shedding formed the basis of all approach to a holy and righteous God. Truly Christ crucified is the foundation of our faith.

At the commencement of each journey Moses offered a short prayer 'Rise up, O Lord and let Thine enemies be scattered.' At each resting place Moses prayed 'Return O Lord unto the many thousands of Israel' (Num. 10 : 33-36). It was to be a victorious march as Israel moved forward through the wilderness bearing the sanctuary of God.

Forty-two journeys are recorded in Numbers 33. Each one taken at the commandment of the Lord and every step marked out by His unerring wisdom and love. Truly He led them by the right way (Ps. 107 : 7).

Israel's God is our God and as we travel with Him upholding the truth of our redemption we shall indeed prove His love and power bringing us safely to our eternal home.

PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

by J. G. GOOD

We have three references to Philip in the Acts of the Apostles, in chapters 6 : 5, 8 : 5 and 21 : 8. We see him in the Assembly, in the World, and in the Home, respectively, these are the three spheres into which we find our lives divided. In the *Assembly* he was marked by *Consistency*, in the *World* by *Activity*, and in the *Home* by *Hospitality*.

Partiality has reared its ugly head among the saints at Jerusalem, murmuring follows in its train, there is nothing more calculated to destroy the unity and the fellowship of saints than this evil. How we are constantly warned of this in the New Testament, James 2 : 1, I Tim. 5 : 21. It is remarkable that the seven brethren chosen to deal with this crisis, were of the same nationality of those who murmured, namely, greek speaking Jews, we would never find this situation prevailing in the world, the men chosen would display honesty and righteousness in their dealings with others, surely this is a fundamental requirement in our dealings with our fellow believers. 'Seven men,' there must be unity of purpose among these who serve and lead, whether they be deacons or overseers, no one shone at the expense of the other, responsibility evenly distributed, if this were true of us today the phrase 'leading brother' would no longer be a part of our vocabulary. Three qualifying features are mentioned, 'honest report' marked by Sincerity of purpose, 'full of the Holy Spirit' Spiritual as to their state, and 'wisdom' Sensible, the ability to discern, the word is common sense, to know when and how to speak! This wisdom is not worldly, neither is it academic, it is tragic when brethren with 'professional' occupations, are expected to assume responsibility solely on this ground, it is imperative that those who function as leaders among the saints are spiritual, nothing else matters and should never be considered, titles and the like should be left outside and never allowed to create a class system in God's assembly.

We look now at Philip in the *World*, please note that Philip was firstly :

Guided in his Movements, 8 : 26, 'Arise and go toward the south.' There had been a great response to the preaching

of the Gospel in Samaria, 'there was great joy in that city' 8 : 8. Philip was ready to leave this successful mission to reach a solitary soul in the desert of Gaza! No questioning by the evangelist as to the merits of this new crusade, 'and he arose and went.' How we are impressed in the Acts by the definite leading of the Spirit of God. The place of Divine appointment will always be the place of blessing, whether it be Elijah by Cherith's brook or Philip here in Gaza.

Gracious in his Manner, 8 : 30. We can almost sense the appeal in the question of Philip, 'Understandest thou what thou readest.' What a lesson for us to-day! No tone of dogmatism, but tender persuasion. When we look at the Lord Jesus by Sychar's well in John ch. 4, we see the Great soul winner at work, with what love and compassion He reveals, first the sin of the woman, and next the provision of the life giving stream. 'He that winneth souls is wise' Proverbs ch. 11 : 30. The Gospel is a winsome message and this must of necessity be a characteristic feature of those who proclaim the evangel, without this virtue all will be in vain.

Grounded in his Message, 8 : 35, "Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus," the account of the sufferings of Jehovah's Perfect Servant won the heart of the eunuch. In contrast it was the thought of judgment which moved the Philippian jailor, here the story of the Cross convinces the eunuch that the One portrayed by the prophet, was none other than God's Blessed Son. The Spirit of God knows exactly the chord to touch in the heart of the sinner! Philip was scriptural in his preaching, there is an ever present danger of 'another' gospel, which forms the basis of the message in the pulpits of Christendom, a social gospel, a moral gospel, anything but the Gospel of the Grace of God. Observe, the Word of God was his Authority, the Son of God was his Subject, and the Spirit of God was his Power, what a panoply for the servant of the Lord. Do we require anything more?

*"As the eunuch tried to read,
Philip taught him of his need,
And baptised him in the stream,
Long ago,*

*As the outward seal and sign,
Of the inward work divine,
Which was wrought through that old fountain,
Long ago."*

In the *Home*, 21 : 8, we see that Philip was marked by hospitality, in the light of the two previous references, could it be otherwise. He was a consistent man, every department of his life was pervaded by the Spirit of God, how often the opposite is the case, and we are in the assembly, what we are not in the World, and in the Home. We must differentiate between the social round, to which we oftentimes resort, hospitality is far deeper than this, meeting the need of His servants with no thought of reciprocity. The conversation of Paul and Philip must have had many themes, it's a grand thing to see how the Grace of God, brings together in happy fellowship those who at one time stood on opposing sides. Is this not the answer to the problems which confront society? The gospel abolishes slavery, emancipates women, destroys religious bigotry, removes national pride, gives a present salvation and a prospect of being like Christ and with Christ in eternity. May it be ours to preach like Philip and see others "go on their way rejoicing."

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

An Outline by WM. BARR, Cumbernauld

The basic, fundamental doctrine unfolded in Holy Scripture, is that associated with *the Death of Christ*. If the Incarnation divides time, the Death of Christ divides eternity. It stems from it, (I Peter 1 : 19), and becomes the central theme of praise in ages to come (Rev. 1 : 5, 6). It is the basis of God's dealings with man, and the foundation upon which the believer rests for salvation, both present and future. There is the Godward side, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and the manward side, "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain" (Acts 2 : 23). In scripture, we find references to the Blood of Christ, the Cross of Christ, and the Death of Christ, and although they indicate different aspects of the subject, together, they contribute to this one grand eternal theme.

Here in all its glory and wonder, is displayed the Divine

Purpose and Love of God. For the believer, it's importance is further confirmed by its association with the two ordinances of baptism and the breaking of bread. The one involving identification with it, and the other providing for its living commemoration and remembrance. Generally, this subject is presented in scripture, in a variety of aspects, and from different points of view, and we will consider each briefly, and in progressive order as it affects the believer.

1. REPRESENTATIVE

Here we take, what might be termed, the telescopic view of the Death of the Lord Jesus, and scan the vast, all embracive, and far reaching effects and blessings, resulting from it. Although accomplished independent of faith on man's part, it at the same instance, becomes the necessary and essential preparation for it. God, through the Death of Christ, could now put right, things wanting in various spheres, secure future blessings on a righteous basis, and make possible salvation for man. The spheres thus affected, in terms of the results, could be described as follows :

(a) Defeat of Satan (Heb. 2 : 14)

As the promised seed of the woman (Gen. 3 : 15), the Lord overcame the evil one, annulled his power, and in effect, secured deliverance for the believer. In this unique verse the perfect humanity of Christ is strikingly presented, and at once, He is revealed as our Kinsman, Avenger and Redeemer.

(b) Deliverance From Sin (Rom. 8 : 3; Heb. 9 : 26)

Sin, as a root principle in nature, was dealt with on the representative man upon the Cross. As a sacrifice for sin, God in Christ, condemned sin in the flesh and put it away for ever. In a sense, what was introduced through the first Adam (Rom. 5 : 12) was judged and removed through the 'Last Adam.' This is beautifully illustrated in the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21 : 8). Here the 'Law of Likeness' is indicated, (Serpent for Serpent) and man's basic need being met by the Son of Man being lifted up, is anticipated (Jn. 3 : 14, 15). If sin in man had to be atoned for, it had to be, by the death of a man, and He the Perfect Son of Man.

(c) *Demands of Law* (Gal. 3 : 10-14; 4 : 4-5)

To those under it, the Law was demanding, and the curse pronounced on disobedience and failure, irrevocable. This curse was associated with hanging on a tree (Deut. 21 : 23), and the Jew was particularly aware of the shame and reproach it involved. The Apostle Peter refers to the Death of Christ thus, in his preaching (Acts 5 : 30; 10 : 39), and the teaching of the Apostle Paul, presents it as the means of redemption from such a curse.

(d) *Dominion Upon Earth* (Ps. 8 : 4-6; Heb. 2 : 5-9)

Creaturally, man's degree, distinction and dominion, associated with Adam, and affected by 'The Fall,' will one day be properly and finally fulfilled in Christ as Son of Man. He has tasted death for every man (or thing) and therefore set the basis for future rule and dominion (Jn. 1 : 51).

(e) *Domain of Heaven* (Heb. 9 : 23)

Here we are introduced to the necessity for even heavenly things to be purified on the basis of the Death of the Lord Jesus. In a past dispensation, the purifying by blood, of things which were but patterns of heavenly things, was a foreshadowing of the divine provision in the Saviour's Sacrifice, for the cleansing of the heavenly things themselves. The fact that the term 'better sacrifices' is used, would indicate, that the full value and efficacy of the Death of Christ, is brought in, as a means of purifying such a sphere.

2. PROPITIATORY

God in His infinite love and wisdom, has provided a propitiatory sacrifice in the Death of His Son (I Jn. 4 : 10), and the Lord Jesus in consequence, becomes the believers' propitiation (I Jn. 2 : 2). The righteous demands of God having been met and satisfied, He now can come out to sinful man in mercy and grace (Luke 18 : 13). The references to propitiation in the N.T., could perhaps, be summarized as follows :

(a) It *Dispenses* His mercy (Luke 18 : 13, R.V. margin).

(b) It *Declares* His righteousness (Rom. 3 : 25).

(c) It *Displays* His faithfulness (Heb. 2 : 17, R.V.).

(d) It *Denotes* His forgiveness (I Jn. 2 : 2).

(e) It *Demonstrates* His love (I Jn. 4 : 10).

Two further observations must suffice. Firstly, the word used in Rom. 3 : 25, is the same word as for 'mercy seat' in Heb. 9 : 5, and secondly, we learn from this, the advantage to be gained from a consideration of the O.T. references to the equivalent word.

3. *ANTI-TYPICAL*

The Death of the Lord Jesus, is the one final and complete sacrifice, to which those of a past day pointed forward, and to which also, in a coming day, the millennial sacrifices will point back.

Eternally it preceded them (I Peter 1 : 19).

Dispensationally it replaces them (Heb. 10 : 8, 9).

Spiritually it fulfils them (Heb. 10 : 14-18).

Abel's offering, the patriarchal altars, the passover, the brazen altar, the mercy seat, the Levitical offerings and the day of atonement, amongst others, found their fuller, grander and complete expression at Calvary. The type has been replaced by the anti-type, the shadow by the substance, the picture of the Person and the figure of the fulfilment.

4. *SACRIFICIAL*

This aspect confronts us with the sufferings of the Saviour on our account, both at the hands of God and men. Here alone, is revealed a love which *provides* salvation, *prompts* separation, *promotes* worship, and *produces* service.

The sacrifice of Christ *produced* a sweet savour to God (Eph. 5 : 2), *Put away* sin (Heb. 9 : 26), *Purged* our sins (Heb. 10 : 12; 1 : 3), and *Provided* spiritual sustenance for us to feed upon (I Cor. 5 : 7, 8). Such O.T. passages as Psa. 22, Psa. 69 and Isa. 53 reveal, in some measure, the deep experience of Calvary, and unfold the feelings and sensitivities of the Lord Jesus, who for us, became the Spotless Lamb of God.

5. *RECONCILING*

Being reconciled to God is a position and blessing the believer enjoys, and which brings with it, such peace of mind. Through the Death of Christ, and by reason of His propitiatory sacrifice, sinful man, through a change of mind and attitude, can accept God's provision, and thereby become

reconciled. We must ever remember, that the hostility and enmity was only on man's part, and he requires reconciliation (Rom. 5 : 10).

In the Scriptures we find :

(a) The *Means* of Reconciliation (Rom. 5 : 10).

(b) The *Motive* behind it (Col. 1 : 21, 22).

(c) The *Ministry* involved (II Cor. 5 : 18-20).

(d) The *Movements* entailed in future times (Col. 1 : 20).

6. SUBSTITUTIONARY

Scripture does not sustain the idea that Christ died in the sinner's 'room and stead.' This only becomes effective through faith in Christ for salvation. It is, however, again, a most precious facet of the Death of Christ for the believer, producing deep devotion, and loyal service. In this connection, the prepositions used must be distinguished, the one is 'Anti,' that is "in place of," and the other 'Huper' meaning generally "for the benefit of." The latter is more common in the N.T. We confine ourselves to one example of each from Scripture.

"The Son of Man is come—to give His life a ransom *for (Anti)* many" (Mark. 10 : 45).

"Who gave Himself a ransom *for (Huper)* all" (I Tim. 2 : 6).

Note the term '*many*' in the first reference, contrasting with the '*all*' in the latter. In brief, Christ died *on behalf* of all, and *in the place* of the many who believe.

7. DEVOTIONAL

A measure of appreciation of the Death of the Lord Jesus, will motivate us to *reckon* properly, with respect to sin (Rom. 6 : 11), to *yield* our members in service (Rom. 6 : 13, 16, 19), and *obey*, from the heart, "that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered." (Rom. 6 : 17, R.V.).

Similarly, there must be preparation of heart for the first day of the week by an *inward look* of self examination. (I Cor. 11 : 28). This will result, in enjoying a *backward look* of anticipation, since it is only "till He come." (I Cor. 11 : 26).

This would indeed lead us to consider the associated phrase, the *Cross of Christ*, which in the N.T. is presented *as the basis of our discipleship* (Gal. 6 : 14).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

(1) The Inspiration of Scripture

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

The Holy Scriptures are themselves the permanent and authoritative "form" of God-given revelation. This revelation has been recorded in the original writings by inspiration, both the writers and the writing being inspired, 2 Tim. 3 v. 16-17; 2 Pet. 1 v. 21. Consider these ten reasons for confidence in the Bible, in the form of an acrostic of the word "Scriptures."

Spoken by Jehovah, 2 Tim. 3 v. 16; 2 Pet. 1 v. 21. A great proportion of the Scriptures is definitely stated to consist of the very words of God. The first chapter of Genesis repeatedly states "God said," Gen. 1 v. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29. Trace the expression "the Lord said" in Genesis and Exodus. "The Lord spake unto Moses" opens almost every chapter in Leviticus. These and similar words, declarations of the utterances of God, stamp the whole book with a divine impress. Dr. W. Evans has stated that in the Pentateuch the list extends to nearly 700. In the historical books their number exceeds 400. "Thus saith the Lord God" and similar phrases occur some 150 times in Isaiah. The "Word of the Lord came unto me saying" and like statements are found almost 350 times in Ezekiel. Such expressions as denoted above occur altogether 3,800 times in the Old Testament so at least three-fifths of the whole of the Old Testament is *directly* declared to be the Word of God.

Confirmed by the Lord Himself, John 5 v. 46-47; 7 v. 42; Luke 24 v. 25-27. The Lord's witness to the historicity of the events and persons recorded in the Old Testament is indisputable. In Matthew's record He refers to Moses, 8 v. 4, David, 12 v. 3-4, Jonah, 12 v. 40-41, Solomon, 6 v. 29, Isaiah, 15 v. 7-9, Daniel, 24 v. 15, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, 8 v. 11, the queen of Sheba, 12 v. 42, Noah, 24 v. 37, 38, Abel, 23 v. 35, Sodom and Gomorrah, 10 v. 15. The Lord's appeal was always to Scripture, "Have ye not read," 19 v. 4; 22 v. 31. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures," 22 v. 29. Find similar confirmation in Mark, Luke and John. He appealed to the Word of God as the final authority, Matt. 19 v. 4-5; Mark 7 v. 9, 13.

Revealed by the Holy Spirit, Acts 1 v. 16; Heb. 3 v. 7; 2 Pet. 1 v. 21. David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me," 2 Sam. 23 v. 2. Elsewhere we read, "David himself said by the Holy Ghost," Mark 12 : 36; compare Acts 4 v. 25; 28 v. 25.

The Lord ascribed the writing of a Psalm to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Mark 12 v. 36. The prophets were borne along by the Spirit of God, 2 Pet. 1 v. 21; Heb. 10 v. 15-17. Throughout the Pentateuch the Holy Spirit was pointing beyond the shadow to the substance, Heb. 9 v. 8. In the New Testament He continues to speak to the churches, Rev. 3 v. 6.

Information is Accurate. The words of the Lord are pure words, Psalms 12 v. 6; 119 v. 140, and true, Psalms 119 v. 160, and perfect, Psalms 19 v. 7. The Scriptures are an unerring guide, Prov. 6 v. 23; 2 Pet. 1 v. 19. The Lord reminds us of the reality of Lot and his wife, Luke 17 v. 29-32, of the manna, John 6 v. 31, 49, 58, the brazen serpent, John 3 v. 14, of Elijah and Elisha, Luke 4 v. 25-27. This book is living and powerful, and a critic of thought and will, Heb. 4 v. 12. God preserved the writers from error, they made no mistake and set forth nothing which might mislead. "All thy commandments are truth," Psalms 119 v. 151-152.

Proved by Experience. The Bible is the only living book, Heb. 4 v. 12. It is the instrument used for regenerating, Jas. 1 v. 18; 1 Pet. 1 v. 23, quickening, Psalms 119 v. 50, 93, converting, Psalms 19 v. 7, making wise, 19 v. 7; 2 Tim. 3 v. 15, producing faith, John 20 v. 31; Rom. 10 v. 17, cleansing the heart and ways, John 15 v. 3; Eph. 5 v. 26; Psalms 119 v. 9. It is sure, Matt. 24 v. 35, strengthening, 1 Pet. 2 v. 2, sanctifying, John 17 v. 17; Eph. 5 v. 26, satisfying, Psalms 119 v. 97, and if obeyed will bring success, Josh. 1 v. 8. It is enduring in substance, 1 Pet. 1 v. 23, emancipating in its ministry, John 8 v. 32, and encouraging in its promise, 1 Kings 8 v. 56.

Teaching is Instructive, Rom. 15 v. 4. The word of God is profitable both for doctrine and practice, 2 Tim. 3 v. 16-17, full and sufficient, Luke 16 v. 29, 31. The true meaning of the Mosaic Law is found in Matthew 5-7 where its moral content is expounded and expanded, and summed up in the golden rule given in 7 v. 12; compare 22 v. 40. It is a

storehouse of wisdom and gracious promises, the delight and rejoicing of the heart. Psalm 119 is the classical example of the power and influence of this indispensable book for holy living. Trace the synonyms for the Word of God in it, "statutes" 22 times; "way" 13 times; "testimonies" 23 times; "precepts" 24 times; "commandments" 22 times; "law" 25 times; "judgment" 23 times; "righteousness" and kindred terms, 12 times; "word" with two different meanings, one meaning "to reveal," "to bring to light," 19 times, the other meaning "to set in order," "to arrange," 23 times.

(to be continued)

THE END OF ALL THINGS

by A. W. JOYCE

We are drawing near to the end of another year. Naturally at such a time the mind goes back over the past—and leaps from the reflective to the prospective and asks "What has the future in store for me?" School days, single life, business life as it draws near to the end looks backward and forward. So at the end of the year we look back over 1978 and wonder what 1979 will bring. How quickly the year has passed, especially for those of us who are older!

When we turn to the Scriptures we are reminded of the end, not merely the end of the year, but, as Peter tells us, "The end of *all things* is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." (I Peter 4 : 7). But if we really believed that the end of all things, as we now know them, was at hand, what effect would it have upon us? To some Christians it would bring wonderful encouragement, to some it would be a message of warning and to all it could bring a message of incentive. It would certainly make us regard the things of this present time more lightly, and the things of eternity more earnestly.

How sweeping the words of Peter are : "*The end of all things.*" What are some of the things that will soon be at an end? Well, most of us know that the epistle of Peter is the epistle of the wilderness—the epistle of *suffering*. In every chapter we have references to the sufferings of Christ on behalf of the Christian, and the sufferings of the Christian on behalf of Christ.

Thank God! the first thing that will soon be at an end is the *SUFFERINGS of the believer*. Whatever form the

suffering may be, it will soon be at an end. Pain, ill-health, poverty are only known to the Christian on earth, in heaven they are unknown. And as we sing :

*"O how will recompense His smile,
The sufferings of this little while."*

It will also bring an **END** to **SERVICE**. Immediately after conversion we discovered that we were saved to serve. From the very beginning of Israel's history they had learned the object of their deliverance. "Let my people go that they may *serve Me*." The Thessalonians were quick to grasp the purpose God had for them, "They turned to God from idols to *serve the living and true God*." The call to service is for everyone redeemed by blood. Have we heard and obeyed the call? Perhaps we began well, but have grown "weary in well-doing." The Lord encourage our hearts afresh in view of the fact that we only have a very little while left to serve Him. The time is short. Because we are so near the end of the opportunity of service, is it too late to begin now? Why, you say, we are in the eleventh hour. That is true. "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others idle, and saith unto them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" (Matt. 20 : 6). Truly they had been idle too long, yet in grace the Master gives them an opportunity yet to serve. So dear child of God, it is not too late to get busy in the Master's service. What a gracious reward their lord in his sovereignty bestowed upon these late-comers!

The end of the time of opportunity is so near, shall we miss what may be the last call to service before the end of the day, and the command goes forth "Call the labourers."

There will be an **END OF SOULWINNING**. This may be one of the most laborious forms of service, but it is also one of the most joyful. When the soul is led to Christ, it brings joy to the Sunday School teacher, the tract distributor, the individual worker, the mother in the home, or the preacher on the platform, who has helped to win that soul for Christ. And if there is much joy now, there will be much joy hereafter. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (I Thess. 2 : 19).

The **END OF STEWARDSHIP**—We have been considering the expression, "The end of all things" in I Peter 4 : 7

and then in verse 10 Peter says "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." God has not called us to service into the field of soul-winning without giving us the gift to do the work and His truth that we may know how it should be done. God has given us the full deposit of His truth in the Word of God. From it we have learned the path we should tread and the truth we should maintain. Let us then be faithful and remember the words of the exhortation, "Buy the truth and sell it not."

The "Preacher" in Eccles. 7 : 8 tells us, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning." What a very striking contrast there is between the end of a sinner and the end of the righteous, as illustrated by the words of the celebrated poet, Lord Byron, and those of an obscure working man. At the age of thirty, disillusioned with life and all the world had to give, Byron wrote :

*"My life is in the yellow leaf, the flowers, the fruits
of life are gone,
The worm, the canker and the grief are mine alone."*

How different the words of the unknown Christian :

*"My life is like the springing grain, the brightest
and the best to come,
The joy to see the Lamb once slain, and be at home."*

REVIEW—"THE WONDROUS NAME"

by DAVID CRAIG

I had the great pleasure of visiting our brother David (affectionately known as "Scots Craig") when he had almost finished the writing of this book. Though terribly weak he was full of the joy of the Lord and revelling in the preciousness of the Lord Jesus as we talked together of the many titles and offices of the Lord Jesus. It was his great desire that he might leave for the saints of God to enjoy, some of his thoughts regarding the Saviour whom he loved and had served so well. Now the book has been published and at this time will make an excellent gift and be treasured as a memoir of a dearly loved servant of God.

Those who knew our brother and listened to his forceful preaching will hear again his voice as they read his book. This is not merely a memoir of a great man, but a great man's thoughts of his Lord,—edifying, soul lifting, heart warming, instructive. It contains among his various meditations, expositions, outlines, some chapters are in that acrostic form that was a familiar style in his ministry, he also gives advice to preachers (and there are very few present day preachers that can compare with David Craig). Of course the dear unsaved are not forgotten, his preacher's heart bursts through his meditations to appeal to them and to warn them of their danger. (Why not give a copy to that unsaved friend who knew of David Craig).

The subjects dealt with are "Jesus—Jehovah, Saviour, Anointed Prophet, Priest, King, Lord, Mediator, Shepherd, Lamb, Root and Offspring of David, Bright and Morning Star."

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