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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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JOSEPH

Chap. 4, continued

6. The Patience and the Heart of Joseph

Joseph didn't act towards his brothers through vengeance nor with real harshness. Formed by discipline he was master of himself and could wait God's time. He was animated by a real love for his brothers, so did not want a half way restoration for them.

The temptation, without doubt, was great to immediately reveal his identity (42:7) instead of acting as a stranger, but his purpose was, not to exalt himself, but to restore their souls. At that moment, he could have made himself known to his brothers and told them: at last, here you are bowing down before me, I surely predicted it. Bow down before me again several times, and I will pardon you. But he did not seek such vainglory.

He remembers his dreams (42:9). The one who was despised, rejected, sold as a slave, must, according to God, receive homage. But he does not exact it, even when he reveals himself, nor by threatening them, he waits patiently that the work be done in their consciences. The Father seeks worshippers, who moved by gratitude for all that has been done for them, give Him thanks; He is not a despot who exacts the adulation of His subjects.

At the end of three days, when the conscience of his brothers start to be touched, Joseph weeps (42:24), but in secret. He has

enough self control to bind Simeon before their eyes in order that they be touched to repentance.

In all these chapters we see his profound affection for his father. What a relief to learn (42:13) that he is still living! With what anxiety he is going to ask when his brothers come the second time: 'Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he still alive?' (43:28). If he had wanted to, he could have seen him much sooner by making himself known to them on their first trip, but the good result would not have been reached.

All Joseph's wonderful feelings come out when he sees Benjamin his brother, his mother's son. He doesn't recognize him as he does his other brothers since he was only ten years old when they parted. He has to ask: Is this your youngest brother of whom you spake? How he is touched. He seeks a place to weep. He goes into his room, washes his face and comes out. On their first journey he did not seek his own glory; on this journey he does not listen to his heart until the work of conscience is completed.

What an example of patience towards a soul that seeks. How much intercession; how many discreet interventions. To let God work is necessary in order that a deep work may be done that is not superficial as the grains that fell on stony ground.

In James 5:7 it is said: 'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and

latter rain." The Lord knows how to use patience. Let us learn from Him in this respect.

Joseph does not reproach his brothers, as extraordinary as it seems. But he wants to bring them to pronounce upon themselves the necessary reproaches. "The judgment of their sin against him was pronounced by their own hearts; but not a harsh word came out of Joseph's mouth from the beginning to the end." (J. G. B.)

Was it not the same with the Lord Jesus with Peter? He looks upon him; He meets him alone on the morning of the resurrection; and later on will simply ask him: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"

It is easier to make reproaches, to show our brethren and all that wherein they have failed. But what God would teach us is to act like Him: to behave in such a manner as Joseph did, that those who have failed may come to accuse themselves for their faults. The friends of Job knew only how to blame him; Elihu shows him the way to repentance. But when God Himself appears to His servant, He shows him how he "darkeneth counsel" (Job 38:2) and "contendeth with the Almighty" (40:2), but withal, God does not reproach him nor blame him. It is Job, when his eye has seen God, who says: "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42:6).

Observe in passing that seven times Joseph weeps in the chapters we have been occupied with without counting the anguish of his soul when his brothers cast him in the pit and then sold him (42:21).

In Genesis 42:24, he is filled with sympa-

thy before the anguish of his brothers, and also with secret joy when he witnesses the beginning of the awakening of their conscience.

In 43:30, seeing Benjamin, his true brother, the only one not guilty, he is moved and weeps.

In 45:2 in view of their conviction of conscience which brought back their hearts and affections to a just valuation of things, he weeps aloud.

In verses 14 and 15 he weeps upon Benjamin's neck, and after having kissed all his brothers, he weeps upon them.

At Jacob's death he fell upon his face and wept upon his father whom he loved so much (50:1).

And when his brothers doubt his love after he had done so much for them (50:17), he weeps again.

(b) The restoration (Genesis 45)

Joseph wanted his brothers to be happy in his presence. He knew how to wait that the work of heart and conscience be sufficiently deep before he makes himself known to them.

1. Joseph Reveals Himself

What an unforgettable moment when the Lord reveals Himself to a burdened soul and it sees the light. Sacred moment spent between the soul alone and its Lord. "There stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren" (v. 1).

There should be no witness to the confusion in which the brothers were going to be; they must also feel themselves in the intimacy of Joseph in this crucial instant of their lives.

How many times in the Gospel, we see the Lord Jesus take aside those He wants to heal: the blind man of Bethsaida; the deaf mute of Decapolis; Peter who must launch forth from the shore with the boat where he will throw himself down at Jesus'feet saying: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

We understand that his brothers were "troubled" (v. 3). Convicted of their guilt, they may well wonder what Joseph will do to them. Before the glory of the Lord Isaiah said: "Woe is me! for I am undone" (Isa. 6:5).

But Joseph is full of goodness: "Come near to me. . . . And they came near" (v. 4). It is not a question of hiding as Adam from the voice that calls, but on the contrary of answering with the hymn:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Joseph sets their sins in the light. He twice repeats, "You sold me." But he does not at all reproach them; on the contrary, he emphatically says that it is God that had sent him to be the means of saving their lives by a great deliverance.

The Lord Jesus does not condemn the woman in John 8, but with a word He brings

out into the light the sinful state of those who accuse her.

2. The Desires of Joseph

When a soul is brought to the Lord Jesus what are His desires for it? Joseph illustrates this in a striking way.

"Thou shalt be near unto me, thou, thy children, and thy children's children . . . and all that thou hast" (v. 10). David could say to young Abiathar, "With me thou shalt be in safeguard" (1 Sam. 22:23). The Lord Jesus wants His own to be near Him, whether individually or in the family or in the gathering.

"I will nourish thee" (v. 11). He desires to provide food for his own. When the daughter of Jairus was raised, the Lord commanded the parents to give her food to eat. By this incident He would underline that a soul made alive should be fed so that that life may be sustained and grow.

Joseph kissed his brothers and wept on them (v. 15). Kiss of reconciliation; assurance of pardon; for us certainty of salvation and peace; sympathies and tenderness of the Lord towards us.

"After that his brethren talked with him" (v. 15). A happy communion is established. Not only do they listen to Joseph and receive his pardon, but they can talk with him—communion, prayer, adoration.

Pharaoh, here a type of God, confirms: "Come to me; and I will give you the good of the land" (v. 18). Is this not the desire of the Father for those whom He gave to His Son?

3. The Journey

They must leave their country to come to Joseph. The Lord had already said to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land I will show thee" (Gen. 12:1).

What features will mark this journey?

"Regard not your stuff" (v. 20). When a soul is brought to the Lord it must leave many things. An unavoidable distance will establish itself between parents or friends who do not know Him (Mark 9:29, 30). In other domains, habits, relations, readings, amusements must be abandoned that would turn one away from Him. And this not only at conversion, but all along the journey that leads us to Him.

Pharaoh, then Joseph, gave wagons to carry the grandchildren, the women and Jacob, an old man. Beautiful example of the care the Lord Jesus takes of His own all along the journey. The good shepherd carries His sheep on His shoulders. He leads gently those that are with young.

Joseph gives them "provision for the way." Later on in the wilderness, the people will receive every day the needed manna. Resources are needed to move forward, to keep up the energy to go against the current of this world and overcome all discouragement.

"To all of them he (Joseph) gave each man changes of raiment" (v. 22). These raiments speak to us of the exterior testimony. The practical life of him who was brought to the Lord must change. He will behave differently

than before. His conduct will bear witness to Him to whom he belongs.

See that you do not quarrel in the way, says Joseph in verse 24. If the brothers started to reproach each other about their past conduct toward Joseph, there would be dispute. Rueben will say in triumph: Didn't I tell you! The others will blame Judah: Why did you incite us to sell him? But if, on the contrary, they converse together about how Joseph received them, his love and his goodness, there will be communion between them.

There is a goal to the journey. When his sons have told everything, including without doubt, their past behavior toward their brother, Jacob is at last persuaded that Joseph lives, and exclaims, "I will go and see him before I die." What a touching moment when Joseph went up to meet Israel, presented himself to him, fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. The old man can say: "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (46:30). This vision of seeing the Lord Jesus face to face will not be accorded to us before death but when He comes again, when resurrected or changed, we shall be caught up to be with Him.

Finally Joseph "placed his father and his brethren . . . in the best of the land" (47:11). No doubt, this is our heavenly dwelling at the end of the course, but also down here it is dwelling already in the midst of those gathering around Him, which is the best part we can have in this world, and there we find nourishment (v. 12) and blessing. If we have

tasted the value of such a gathering in spite of all the imperfection connected with its realization, would we abandon it?

Though he has such a high position with Pharaoh, Joseph is not ashamed of his brothers. When the rumour comes to the palace, they don't say: the persecutors of Joseph have come, or those who have sold him formerly to be a slave have arrived, but Joseph's brethren are come" (v. 16). When all the family is transplanted in Goshen, Joseph is not ashamed to present five of his brothers to Pharaoh, though they are "shepherds . . . an abomination to the Egyptians" (46:34), semy-Nomad and little used to the splendor of the court. It is the beautiful picture of Hebrews 2: "He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: . . . Behold I and the children God hath given me" (Heb. 2:11-13).

4. Doubts (Gen. 50:15-21)

How is it possible that seventeen years later (47:28), after such a pardon, and so many years of care and goodness, Joseph's brethren doubt his love? To think that he would hate them and avenge himself on them (v. 15), only shows they didn't really know their brother.

And if we wonder at this, it is because we do not know ourselves. Have we never doubted the Lord's love since we belong to Him? Were there not some dark days, some cold seasons, when He seemed to be very far away and as if we were forgotten?

But if we wandered far from Him, or if we

have had doubts perhaps not of our salvation but of His faithfulness, it is because we didn't really know Him. He abides the same. When Joseph revealed himself to them, he did not reproach them, he attributed his captivity to God. He repeats the same thing now. "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good" (v. 20). At two instances he repeats, as the Lord Jesus did so many times: Fear not. He confirms the promise made to Jacob "I will nourish you and your little ones" (v. 21). He comforts them and speaks to their heart; they learn to know him as a brother who does not change but is always faithful, who now as well as formerly seeks only to restore them.

But was he insensible to their doubts? He wept! (v. 17). When on their pilgrimage with the Lord here on this earth the disciples doubted His power or love, how much it grieved Him. If He brought a calm in the tempest, He had to show them their lack of faith. Is it not with a shade of sadness that He said to Philip who was asking Him to show them the Father: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" (John 14:9).

What assurance to think that, if, as is too often the case we get at a distance from Him, letting obstacles come between Him and us, He abides the same:

Still sweet 'tis to discover,
If clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed, eternal Lover,
Toward me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright.

THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

The Ineffable Name

It is apparent, even to the ordinary reader of the Scriptures, that the revelation God has been pleased to make of Himself is gradual and progressive. Now believers walk in the light, as He is in the light; but in a former day clouds and darkness were round about Him, and necessarily so as long as righteousness and judgment were the habitation of His throne. But when Christ had accomplished the work of atonement, glorifying God in all that He is, having been made sin for us, the veil behind which God had dwelt, and which had concealed Him from His people, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and God could righteously gratify His own heart in coming out into the full display of what He is as revealed in Christ, on the ground of redemption. These are cardinal and fundamental truths; and they are stated as preparatory to a brief consideration of the several names of God, under which He revealed Himself in the various dispensations found in the Old Testament histories. That God is the same in nature and attributes in both the Old and New Testaments; that, in other words, He is immutable, is a necessity of the perfections of His divine being; but it is yet true that the aspects under which He is presented in different ages vary, and it is these aspects which are embodied in His several names.

Elohim is, as often remarked, the common name for God, viewed as the Divine Being with whom men as men have to do, and as the One to whom they are accountable. It is a plural word. The singular is Eloah, and this form is often used, especially in the book of Job. Heathen sometimes used the word for their deities, and doubtless from this fact arises the question in Psalm 18:31, "For who is God (Eloah) save the Lord (Jehovah)? or who is a rock save our Elohim?" That is, the true Eloah was Jehovah, and the only rock was Elohim. The reason for the use of the plural word (Elohim) is variously explained. There are those, as might be expected, who contend that it is simply, according to Hebrew usage, a plural of excellence, that the word in this form conveys the excellency or the perfections of the One spoken of; there are others who maintain that it is divinely intended to set forth the Trinity, the unity of the Godhead in the three Persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In support of this the devout reader will not fail to notice the language of Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Inasmuch, indeed, as the term expresses all that God is, all the persons of the Godhead must be included.

It is quite true that this could not be comprehended at the time. It was not indeed until the baptism of our blessed Lord that the whole truth of the Trinity came out. Then God spake from heaven; His beloved Son was on the earth; and the Holy Ghost descended

and abode upon the Son. But now that the full revelation of God has been made, and the Holy Spirit has come, who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10), we can go back, as led and taught of Him, and discover much that could not before have been understood. It is one of the perils of the present moment that the Old Testament scriptures are being limited to the light possessed at the time they were given. The truth is, that their latent meaning can only be apprehended when looking back upon them from the full shining of the light of Christianity. There is no incongruity whatever, therefore, in affirming that God chose the special word Elohim to express the truth of the Trinity. For example, we read in Genesis that God created the heaven and the earth; and in John's gospel it is said of the Word, the Word who afterwards became flesh, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). We know consequently that the eternal Son is comprised in the word 'God' in Genesis, and as we ponder upon it we learn more of the glory of the Person of our Redeemer.

To the patriarchs God made Himself known under another appellation. The first mention of this is found in Genesis 17:1, "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God;" that is, El Shaddai—God Almighty. But the meaning of the word El is said to be strength, omnipotence; and Shaddai is thought by some to signify the same thing, while others prefer the rendering of all-sufficient, or self-sufficiency. The com-

bination of the two words will, in either case, import divine attributes, as omnipotence and all-sufficiency can only be found in God. These two words are used, for example, in the passage, "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them" (Ex. 6:2, 3. See also Gen. 28:3; 35:11, etc.) When the word 'Almighty' stands alone in our translation it generally represents Shaddai. There is a beautiful combination of this name with that of Jehovah in 2 Cor. 6:17, 18, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The God who was known to Abraham as Shaddai, and to Israel as Jehovah, was now declared as Father in that blessed and intimate relationship into which, in His precious grace, He had taken His people in association with Christ.

From what has been already said, it will be understood that Jehovah is the name God specially took in His covenant relationship with Israel. It is not, as the reader may easily ascertain, that the word was not used before God communicated it to Moses, but it was now first employed in connection with the chosen nation. The following remarks may help as to this: 'In Genesis 2 and 3, it was of all importance to connect Jehovah, Israel's national God, with the one only Creator, God. So in Exodus 9:30, the God of the Hebrews, whose name was Jehovah, is de-

clared to be Elohim. . . . Otherwise Jehovah is a name, Elohim a being; only Jehovah is Elohim, but the former is a personal name"—the name He took in His dealings and relationship with men, but especially with His people. The word signifies the self-existent One, and, as another has observed, is practically translated, "Which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. 1:8). Derived from the verb "to exist," it expresses the eternity, and, consequently, the immutability of His being; and it thus brings before our souls the One who eternally is, who existed before all time, endures through all time, and continues after all time has passed away. He is thus the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and the use of these expressions (Rev. 22:13) proves, beyond all contradiction, that the Jesus of the New is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

El has been referred to in connection with Shaddai, and it is also used with Elion, and is then translated the "Most High God. An examination of the various places in which this name is found will show that it is God's "millennial name above all idolatrous gods, and demons, and all power." It is in this character that God is said to be "possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:18, 19). Hence it was that Nebuchadnezzar was to lie under God's judgment until he should "know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will"; and that this end was accomplished is seen in that, when his understanding returned, he blessed the Most High, etc. (Daniel 4:25-34). Balaam

in like manner uses this title when about to speak of the future glory and supremacy of Israel among the nations. In Psalm 91:1 it is found in connection with Shaddai (the Almighty). It says, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High (Elion) shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Shaddai), and in Psalm 47:2 it is seen in combination with Jehovah; and it is added, "He is a great King over all the earth." These instances are interesting as proving that it is God, the one God, who reveals Himself to men under these different names in distinct relationships.

Most readers of the Scriptures are familiar with the term Adonai as another divine name. It is translated in our English version as Lord, but is generally distinguished from Jehovah, which is also rendered Lord, by the use of small letters instead of capitals. It means, as to the root of the word, Master, Ruler, or Owner; but the form Adonai is only used of God, and of Him as One who has taken power and is in the relationship of Lord to those who call upon His name. It is therefore especially applied to Christ in His exaltation at the right hand of God. This may be seen from a reference to Psalm 110, and to the Lord's citation from it when confuting His adversaries. "The Lord (Jehovah) said unto my Lord (Adonai), Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (v. 1). In Matthew 22 the Lord expressly applies this scripture to Himself, to Himself as Christ the Messiah (vs. 42-44), and employs it to demonstrate that David's Son was

also David's Lord, that, in a word, He was the Root as well as the Offspring of David. In Genesis 15:2 Abraham addresses God, not as given in our version, Lord God, but as Adonai Jehovah. This example will suffice to show once again that all these divine names are used of the one God, even that of Adonai, which is specially reserved for Christ in His exaltation on high. (The full Adonai character of our blessed Lord is displayed in Philip-
pians 2:9-11).

There are other divine titles which it will suffice to mention for the reader's consideration. In the poetic books 'Jah' is often employed, and it is this word which is embedded in the term Hallelujah, or "Praise ye Jah." Its significance has not been determined; it is generally supposed to be a shortened, or a poetic form of Jehovah. Then there are the words God used when sending Moses for the deliverance of His people; the first is given as 'I am that I am,' and the second as "I am" (Ex. 3:14). Both of these are forms of the same word signifying existence; the former is sometimes, and perhaps rightly rendered, "I will be that I will be." The thought expressed in both is akin to the meaning of Jehovah (and necessarily so as coming from the same verb), and speaks of unchanging being, or existence. There is yet another term, not in itself perhaps a divine name or title, but one which from its frequent and special application to God is almost to be so regarded. It is Atta Hu, and it is found in such phrases as, Thou art He, etc. The equivalent is employed in Hebrews 1:12 "Thou

art the same", which indeed is given as the translation of Atta Hu in Psalm 102:27. This term speaks also, as will be at once perceived, of the immutability of God, of the One who always is, and who is ever unchangeable.

We need not further pursue the subject, as enough has been said to point out the various ways in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself under these different names. It is a mark of His tenderness that He has done so; and it proclaims at the same time His unspeakable grace in thus displaying what He is in Himself to His people. He might have concealed Himself for ever in the blissful solitude of His own allsufficing existence; but long before the foundation of the world, in the far distance of a past eternity, He chose us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Before however these eternal counsels were communicated, the first man, Adam, was brought upon the scene; and after he, the responsible man, had failed, God continued for four thousand years to wait upon man to see if fruit for Himself could be produced. His trial of man went on until the cross, and then when God had demonstrated that man had lost everything on the footing of responsibility, He revealed all the grace which was in His heart in "the gospel of God . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:1, 3, 4).

In Him, as we may yet see, God has been fully revealed; and He is also the man of God's counsels, and in Him all the thoughts of God's heart will be accomplished. The partial unfoldings of the Old Testament have passed away before, or rather have been merged in Him, who is glorified at God's right hand; and this is told out in the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

—E. D.

I Don't Believe in Hell

'I don't believe in hell!'

"Oh! don't you? I'm sorry for that. Why don't you believe in it?"

'It is against all reason to believe that God will put men into such a place forever. Its a libel on God. 'God is love,' and such a horrible and eternal doom for men, however bad they may be, is inconsistent with the idea of a loving Father. Do you think that you would put your children to torture even if they were a bit wild? And do you think the great divine Father will put any of His children into such a place? Never! I don't believe it!'

"Well, in the first place, we must not forget that we can have no knowledge on such a subject apart from the revelation that God has given us in His word. And in the second place, if God has revealed that there is such a place, and told us that the unbelievers shall have their portion in it, then your refusal to

believe it does not alter the fact; it only places you in conflict with God.

"But let us examine your reasons. You say, 'It is against all reason that God should put men into such a place forever.' It is evidently not against God's reason, for He says He will do it, 'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal' (Matt. 25:46), and He does not do unreasonable things. For my part I do not think it is unreasonable. Is it reasonable that God should take men who have sinned against Him, broken His laws, set Him at defiance, lived in self-will and pandered to their lusts, and, in some cases, lived in debasing sin, and give them a place in heaven with the sinless and unfallen angels?

"What right or title have such people in themselves to such a place and portion? None! Absolutely none! Is it reasonable then for such people to expect to get there? Surely not! But they all hope to, all the same; and you would put everybody there, no matter what their lives have been. Is that reasonable? I certainly do not think so."

"When we think of man's state and actions as a sinner it certainly is not reasonable that any one should be there, unfitted as they are for either the place or the company. Why, it would be a perfect infliction to compel a skeptic to sit in a prayer-meeting for a couple of hours. What would it be to put him in heaven? Yet though it is not reasonable that any sinner should go there because of lack of title in themselves, blessed be God it is a fact that multitudes have gone there, and

any sinner may still go there if he will believe the gospel which tells us how, through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, God can 'be just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus' (Rom. 3:26). Wonderful! marvelous story of infinite grace, to lost and guilty man."

"Very well then, is it not a fact, made known in the Scriptures as plainly as the gospel, that all who reject the gospel suffer eternal punishment? "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Then a long list of characters is given us in Rev. 21:8, among which are the 'unbelievers,' who 'shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' And 'whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire' (Rev. 20:15). I need not quote more passages.

"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" (Rom. 2:2).

"Is it not then reasonable that they should go to hell? Why they have graduated for it by their sinful and wilful lives. They have refused the provided way of escape, and yet they are bold enough to charge God with unrighteousness because He tells them the penalty for their disobedience and self-will. There is certainly reason in the judgment, and man's conscience admits it however much his will may reject it. But there is grace—unbounded grace and goodness in the blessing.

"You say it is 'a libel on God.' What are your grounds for such a statement? You reply, 'God is love.' True! But it is God that

is love, not love that is God. Do you not see the difference? You have deified love—but love is not God. Now 'God is light' (1 John 1:5) as well as love. How comes it you never speak of God as light? Then God is holy, and righteous. Can He be holy if He takes no notice of sin? Can He be righteous if He does not punish it? You are like a ship with its cargo shifted, it has a list to one side and is in great peril in a storm. You talk about libelling God, and pose as champion for Him, but you have lost the God of the Bible, who is 'of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst look on iniquity' (Hab. 1:13). His holiness made Him turn His back on His Son when made sin for us on the cross, that He might righteously be able to save you; but you have set up a god of your own imagination called love; hence your idea of libelling God is simply an idea of your own, based on a one sided view of God.

'You say, 'Such a horrible doom is inconsistent with a loving Father'; and that 'the divine Father will never put His children into such a place.' Here, again, you confound things that differ. Of course the divine Father will never put His children into such a place. Never! They know that, and rejoice in the fact. They 'shall not come into condemnation, but have passed from death unto life' (John 5:24). This is their comfort.

'But here again you are assuming. You assume that all men are children of God. This is a grave mistake. Scripture says—and it must be right—speaking to the saints in Galatia, 'Ye are all the children of God by faith

in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:26). Not from the fact of our being human beings, but by faith in Christ. We are born again into the family of God on our reception of Christ as our personal Savior (John 1:12, 13).

"All men stand in relationship to God as their Creator and are responsible to Him. But no one is a child of God, in relationship to Him as Father, except a converted soul. When God has to exercise judgment on men, it is not on His children, but on those who refuse to be made such; preferring their sins and their own thoughts, to being saved and blessed through the blood of Christ. Yet, certainly, they challenge the right of the Almighty to punish them!

"You most emphatically say, 'God will never do such a thing,' and you 'don't believe it.' But He says He will do it. 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' So that it is a question between God and you, and I presume He knows best and speaks the truth! You are really knocking your head against a wall and you will only hurt your head. Your unbelief does not undo the fact. It does not remove hell. It stands spite of your refusal to believe in its existence.

"Now don't you think you would be a wise man to take God's way and escape hell, rather than let Satan persuade you there is none, until it is too late and you drop into it? I think so. I am aware that men fancy they have got so much light they have quite outgrown those old Puritan ideas, as they style

them. What kind of light can it be that leads men to question the statements of the living God—persuading themselves they know better than He does? 'The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple,' we read in Ps. 119:130. But the light that puts men in conflict with God, and leads them to refuse what He says, is the false light, leading them on to their eternal destruction. God's word warns the impenitent of that solemn and awful truth, 'After death the judgment' (Heb. 9:27). And after judgment at the great white throne comes doom — 'the lake of fire' (Rev. 20:11-15). Your supposed light has not undone all that, and dying Christless you will be in it, lost forever.

"Do not pose as champion for God. He needs you not. His character is not at stake by teaching eternal punishment for the impenitent. It would be were there none! He is as holy and as righteous in the execution of His judgment as He is in the activities of His grace, and it will be seen and owned by the lost in the lake of fire by-and-by as much as by the saved in glory.

"Remember this, the man that lands in hell does so because he refuses the Christ of God who died on Calvary to give him a place in heaven. There is a Savior, and the gospel makes Him known. The man that rejects Him will have eternity to bewail his folly and admit the awful truth that he committed soul-suicide, and proved the truth of what Jesus said, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life' " (John 5:40). —W. E.

Why Repent ?

All men are commanded to repent. It is meet and right they should. How could it be otherwise? How can we look at that accursed tree on which the Son of God bore the judgment of sin, and not see the absolute necessity of repentance? How can we harken to that solemn cry, breaking forth amid the shadows of Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and not own, from the deepest depths of our moral being, the moral fitness of repentance? If indeed sin is so terrible, so absolutely hateful to God, so perfectly intolerable to His holy nature, that He had to bruise His well-beloved and only-begotten Son on the cross in order to put it away, does it not well become the sinner to judge himself, and repent in dust and ashes? Had the blessed Lord to endure the hiding of God's countenance, because of our sins, and we not be broken, self-judged, and subdued on account of these sins? Shall we, with impenitent heart, hear the glad tidings of full and free forgiveness of sins—a forgiveness which cost nothing less than the unutterable horrors and agonies of the cross? Shall we, with flippant tongue, profess to have peace—a peace purchased by the ineffable sufferings of the Son of God? If it was a necessity that Christ should suffer for our sins, is it not morally fitting that we should repent of them?

Nor is this all. It is not merely that it becomes us once, in a way, to repent. There is far more than this. The spirit of self-judg-

ment, genuine contrition, and true humility must characterize everyone who enters at all into the profound mystery of the sufferings of Christ. Indeed it is only as we contemplate and deeply ponder those sufferings that we can form anything approaching to a just estimate of the hatefulness of sin, on the one hand, and the divine fulness and perfectness of remission, on the other. Such was the hatefulness of sin, that it was absolutely necessary that Christ should suffer; but—all praise to redeeming love!—such were the sufferings of Christ, that God can forgive us our sins according to the infinite value which He attaches to those sufferings. Both go together; and both, we may add, exert a formative influence, under the powerful ministry of the Holy Ghost, on the Christian character, from first to last. Our sins are all forgiven; but "it behoved Christ to suffer"; and hence, while our peace flows like a river, we must never forget the soul-subduing fact that the basis of our peace was laid in the ineffable sufferings of the Son of God. —C. H. M.

What A Moment !

"For two years" said my friend as we walked together, "I had felt uncomfortable, sometimes miserable. I knew I was not fit to die and go to my account with God. At that time a camp-meeting was held in the neighborhood and I heard many an eloquent sermon, but nothing in them all had reached my need.

"When the invitation was given to go to the 'mourners' bench' I went, and there I groaned, and moaned, and still belabored myself after others had gone and left me there in my unabated misery.

"Suddenly I felt some one at my side. He laid his hand on me and said, My friend, why do you spend your strength here in bemoaning yourself? It will avail you nothing. Do you not know that Jesus has done all the suffering for your sins? Commit your soul to Him, then, and you are safe forever.

"What a moment this was in the history of my soul! I seemed lifted out of myself and all surroundings; and the next day, while working as hard as ever among my companions, I could not stop preaching to them about the love of Jesus in coming here to suffer for our sins. Many years have passed since but the love of Jesus is as sweet as ever."

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). How clear it is that our peace is made by no doing, feeling, suffering of ours! The ground of it is the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which God can be just while justifying the ungodly; and we in believing this find, or receive the peace. "Suppose," said one, "I were to go to a provision shop, and buy for you all that would relieve and supply your wants, and should pay for it, and tell you to go and fetch it, would you need to take any money with you?" "No; it has been paid for." "Would you need to make any promise about paying back at some future

time?" "No; I was sent to get it for nothing." It is even so with pardon of sin and our peace with God. Go for it to Christ; do not attempt to bribe or persuade God to be at peace with you. Speak and think of taking peace, but never more speak or think of making peace.

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But How Can I Believe I Am Saved Till I Feel it?

Feeling flows from faith, not faith from feeling. Take an illustration. A fond mother gets a letter from an unknown hand. It comes from a medical man in New Zealand, and the substance of it is the pleasing tidings that her only son, just recovered from a dangerous illness, is on his way home. How happy the news makes her! Indeed, so intense is her emotion that she even weeps for joy. But where did the feelings of gladness spring from?

She knew that her son was coming. How did she know he was coming?

She believed the doctor's letter.

Why did she believe the doctor's word?

She had heard how kind he had been to her son, and she knew he would not try to deceive her.

So you see there were four distinct things in connection with it.

First. She got the letter.

Second. She believed it, because of who it was that sent it.

Third. She knew her son was better, and on his way home, because she believed the letter.

Fourth. She felt happy about it, because she knew he was well in health and coming home.

Do you not see that the happy feelings come last, while you would put them first? She did not say, I know he is coming home, because I feel so happy; but, I cannot help feeling happy, since I know my boy is coming.

And have we not got God's letter, telling us of Christ's accepted work, and what is true of those who trust in Him? Faith accepts the glad message, and rejoices.

Jesus did it—on the cross.

God says it—in His word.

I believe it—in my heart.

I believe it (not because I feel it, but) because God says it; and God has said it because Jesus did it.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

Faith boldly puts her Amen to what God says, because God says it.

May my reader do the same.

How Does the Believer Know He Is Justified?

Certainly not by looking at his feelings. His feelings are as changeable as the wind.

Nor yet by looking at his prayers, or his good works; all that he does is mixed with sin. If he looks at himself in any way, he can find nothing that will afford a sure ground of certainty that he is justified; that is, that he is clear of sin, that nothing can be laid to his charge forever. Can you, my reader, with eternity before you, with the prospect of standing before that Judge, who knows every secret of your life, can you say that you are clear of all sin, so clear that nothing can be laid to your charge? Are you not ready to say, "How can any sinful man in this world know that he is thus clear of all sin?" You will be astonished at the believer's simple, yet certain answer. It is this—CHRIST IS RISEN.

But you ask, "What has that to do with a believer's justification?" It has everything to do with it. "If Christ be not raised, . . . ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). A saved sinner knows and believes the love of God in sending Jesus to be his surety and representative. His eyes have been opened to see Jesus bearing his sins in His own body on the tree. He knows that the blood of Jesus, his Surety, has met every claim of divine holiness to the uttermost. What love and mercy to lost sinners! Now the believer can say, "As surely as Jesus was condemned for me, was delivered to death for my offences; as certainly as God dealt with Him on the cross as my Surety for my sins, so assuredly did God raise Him from the prison-house of death for my justification." Now if a surety is cast

into prison on account of the person's debt for whom he is bound, and comes out of prison, having paid the full demand, is not the person for whom he paid it as clear of the debt as the very person who was his surety and paid it? And he knows he is clear of every claim. Why? Because his surety is now out of prison. Just in the same way does the believer look outside himself to Christ, his adorable Surety. Oh, ponder this well. It was an awful engagement when Jesus became the surety of all who through grace should believe on Him. Yet He trusted God. He knew that God would justify Him from all these sins and guilt, as He says. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:27). He did not leave His soul in Sheol; He raised Him from the dead, completely cleared from all our sins, no more to be forsaken, but to be received up to the highest glory. Now Christ had no sin to die for of His own; therefore His death was entirely for us. Likewise, He had no sin to be justified from of His own; therefore His resurrection also was entirely for us. He died as our Surety; He rose from the dead as our representative, so that whatever God did to Christ on the cross is reckoned unto the believer, and whatever God did to Christ at His resurrection, He did to us in Him as our representative. Christ is risen.

Is He perfectly and forever clear of all sin? Even so doth God justify every believer (see Rom. 3:24, 25; 8:29-34; Heb. 10:14, 17; 1 John 4:17). It is God that justifies.

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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JOSEPH

Chapter 5

Joseph and his father

Let us go over a few passages already seen in order to gain a more complete picture of the relation of Jacob and Joseph.

1. The love of the father for the son, and the son for the father.

At the beginning of these pages we have noted the words that marked the relation existing between Jacob and Joseph: "Israel loved Joseph" (Gen. 37:3). A love in which Joseph grew and blossomed, a love which followed him all along and which he was so happy to find again in the day of his glory.

Joseph reciprocated fully this love that his father bestowed upon him. When Jacob sent him to his brethren (37:14), it is out of love to him that he obeys and goes in spite of the danger to seek them. In Egypt, with what concern he thinks about his father. He learns that he is yet living (42:13); but when they came the second time with what anxiety he questions his brothers: "The old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" (43:27. And when he makes himself known, he had hardly told them his name, he adds: "Doth my father yet live?" (45:3).

With what haste he wants to see him: "Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say to him: . . . come down unto me, tarry not" (45:9). He promises to nourish him in Egypt and he

sends all the necessary food for the journey (45:11, 23).

How sweet it was to see each other again. Joseph does not wait until Jacob arrives where he dwells, but made ready his chariot and went to meet him. He presents himself to him and falls on his neck and weeps a long time. Then Israel could say, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face" (46:29, 30).

What a beautiful example to us. If it is important that the parents bestow affection upon their children that they may grow and develop in an atmosphere of love, how important also that the children lovingly "requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God" (1 Tim. 5:4). What comfort for Jacob to find a son whose love for him did not change after so many years, and is now going to take care of him in his old age, even to the end.

Joseph is not ashamed to present his aged father to Pharaoh, though a shepherd, semi Nomad and rather out of place in the court of the king.

2. The discipline of Jacob

During his long life Jacob was the special object of the fatherly discipline of God. He had deceived his father, circumvented his brother and he had to learn through a long schooling what it costs to do things with cunning and craft on his own rather than to trust God. While at Laban's home he was himself also deceived. His life was difficult and painful. How many trials and difficulties he en-

countered upon his return journey, of which the death of Rachel was the most painful. As we have seen this discipline continues in his family, and he must say with sorrow, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away!" (42:36). How hard it is for him to resign to give up his younger son. But he accepts this supreme discipline: "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved" (43:14).

Jacob bows his head and submits to the hand of Him who was forming him. Then God gives him back everything: he finds Simeon again, he finds Benjamin again, and above all he finds Joseph again.

What a touching interview Joseph arranges with Pharaoh (47:7-10), what a picture! The old shepherd, worn with age and the difficulties of life, presents himself before the monarch who was the most glorious of his time. What is he going to do? "And Jacob blessed Pharaoh." Conscious of his dignity as a man of God, knowing that he is in relation with Jehovah, he blesses one that seems so much above him; but in fact, Jacob is superior to him as the epistle to the Hebrews says (7:7), "the less is blessed of the better." Pharaoh asks, How old art thou? And Jacob declares, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been . . ." A hundred and thirty years is a long life; but how many years of these were lost because they had not counted for God. How many years were spent for self or spent in trials due to his own faults.

Let us remember that for God only those years lived with Him and for Him count.

Between the ages of sixteen and twenty years a young man is being formed, it is the time of study, or apprenticeship, of formation of character. It is the time when the purpose of life shapes up and for many definitely settles. There is decision made whether for the Lord or for the world. Amongst those that belong to the Lord Jesus, it is the period when the orientation of their path is more or less determined. Are we going to take advantage of it to be formed by the study of the Word in communion with the Lord, so that later on He will not be obliged to use the rod of discipline which we all must undergo in some measure?

Adulthood is reached at twenty years for some, twenty one years for the others. One reaches then the age of responsibility. You will have to give an account of your acts, of your signature. How important it is to have God's mind in all that we do.

As some one has said, at the age of twenty or thirty years is the start of the "thorn age"! These thorns which grow, and choke the Word: "And these are they which are sown among the thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mark 4:18, 19). Life is getting more complicated, obligations increase, obligations of family, of profession, diverse responsibilities. If we do not watch, we do not find the time needed to be at the Lord's feet, to

pray, to read the Bible with the family. Little by little the thorns grow up and tend to choke the Word and prevent it from bearing fruit. Yet the seed did sprout and a head of wheat was developing, what will happen to it? Cares burden the mind and the heart; yet the Lord Jesus said, "Your Father knoweth" (Luke 12:30). The "deceitfulness of riches" refers to the energy of a man who spends all his time and his efforts to acquire them. The "lusts of other things" is the immoderate desire to possess this or that, or to enjoy such and such occasion, or to make a show of such vanity. These "enter in" the heart and choke the Word. But here is the crucial point. No one is exempt from cares. Even one should apply himself to his work with energy and perseverance. The danger is that these things enter the heart and get possession of the inner being. Later on, when we look behind on the past years, we run the risk of having to say with Jacob: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been" (47:9).

However at the end of the conversation where he unveils somewhat of his errors, Jacob can again bless Pharaoh; this time it seems in the feeling of the boundless grace of which he is the object and which alone gives him the liberty in spite of everything, to bring blessing to others.

3. The inheritance

As we have already said, Joseph visited his dying father three times.

The first time is in Genesis 47:28-31. As

he felt the day of his death approaching the patriarch calls his son and makes him swear that he will bury him in Canaan and not in Egypt. Jacob's faith has laid hold of the promise made to Abraham and repeated to Isaac, then to himself and again confirmed at the time he was going down to Egypt (46:4). In this land promised to his seed, he wills to have his grave. The cave of Machpelah is rather an obscure sepulchre in contrast with the glory which would have marked his burial in Egypt, but his faith looks beyond the appearance of the world; it is fixed on the promise of God. "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." The believer worships and gives thanks in the face of death, fear is banished, chased by love. Hebrews 11:21 renders it, "Jacob, when he was a dying . . . worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." When reviewing at the end of his pilgrim journey all the ways of God in his behalf, he bows down and worships.

Chapter 48 gives us the second visit of Joseph to his father. Jacob is quite sick, his strength is leaving him. But when notified of the visit of his son, he gathered all his energy and sat on the bed (48:2). His spirit is clear enough to confirm to Joseph with precision the birthright and the double portion which shall be his in the person of his two sons whom Jacob considers as belonging to him (v. 5). Joseph under the name of Ephraim and Manasseh will have in Canaan the inheritance of two tribes, the double portion according to Deuteronomy 21:17. Even in the mil-

lennium this double portion is confirmed (Ezech. 47:13).

The faculties of the patriarch allow him to give in a precise form the direct adoption of the two sons of Joseph, then, as it often happens to the aged in their conversations, his vision goes back to the past. The most painful memory comes before his eyes, the death of Rachel on the way to Ephrath which is Bethlehem. Over forty years had passed since then, but the wound is still the same.

Then the aged man becomes conscious again of his surrounding and noticing Joseph's sons he says, Who are these? Joseph answers, They are my sons whom God has given me in this place. Bring them here to me, said Jacob, I will bless them.. What a scene full of touching reality. Once more Jacob's faculties are clear. He recalls the memory of the painful years when he didn't think of seeing Joseph's face any more (v. 11), "and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed." With discernment he gives the birthright to Ephraim, although according to nature it should have come to Manasseh.

What is especially of interest here is the blessing with which he blesses these young men. He recalls what God is under three different aspects.

He is the "God, before whom my fathers . . . did walk." Abraham and Isaac walked with God and before him. But Jacob cannot say this of his own life. He erred and sought his now will too much.

But he can add, "The God that shepherded me all my life long to this day" (v. 15, J. N.

D's trans.) if he, Jacob, failed, the faithfulness of God followed him all the way in spite of all. All along his long career the good Shepherd took care of him, in his infancy, in his youth, in the far country as in his return to Canaan and even in his sojourn in Egypt at the end of his life. The most precious memory of a long life is that of the mercy of the faithful God who was there every day of the journey.

He can add: "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil." Jacob did not merit this protecting care. However he experienced it because God is a God of grace.

"For Thy child, there is one souvenir only,
The souvenir of Thy tender mercy."

4. The blessing of Jacob upon Joseph

(Genesis 49:22-28)

A third time Joseph is called to the bed of his dying father. Jacob has gathered his sons and is going to let them know what will happen to them at the last days. We will leave aside this remarkable prophetic picture to look only at what Jacob says to Joseph.

The fruit (v. 22)

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well." This is the whole secret of him of whom it could be said so many times, "The Lord was with him." There was between his soul and God a secret life, a deep life such as the roots of the tree which reach out

to the water. The others could see the boughs, the leaves and the fruits; but all this was nourished by the roots which in seeking life, reached out to the source (Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8). Young and older, let us every day find a little time to be alone with the Lord, that in secret we may draw from the source, feed our soul and pray. The family devotion cannot replace this time. It has a place all by itself. The soul must in secret be alone with its Lord in close intimacy, in order that the inner life may be renewed, strengthened and bear fruit.

"Whose branches run over the wall." Joseph was a blessing not only to his own, but also to the Egyptians and to all the people of the world who came to Egypt to buy wheat. Beautiful type of the Lord Jesus whose love expands itself, not only to His people Israel, but far beyond to the nations.

Steadfast in suffering (v. 23, 24)

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him." How much suffering Joseph endured from the part of his brethren. They could not talk peaceable to him without showing him their hatred. "But his bow abode in strength, and the arm of his hands were made strong." Firmness marked him while in exile. In Potiphar's house he firmly said no; in the prison also he remains steadfast waiting during this painful time of trial the accomplishment of God's word. Firmness also was shown towards his brethren until God's work was wrought in their hearts, though anyone else would have been

much more hasty to see his father again, or to gain some personal advantage in making himself known sooner. From whence came this firmness? "The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." What a suggestive picture of the hands of Jehovah layed on those of this young archer to give them both steadfastness and suppleness in the combat of life.

The blessings (v. 25, 26)

Jacob pronounces on Joseph a special blessing. A blessing that goes so far that it spreads "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." We perceive at once from this verse even more than in the preceeding verses except in the case of Judah, that Jacob has in view a greater than Joseph, "he that was separated from his brethren": Christ took this position of a nazarite, separated to God, Christ who is also "crowned", "anointed . . . with the oil of gladness above his fellows." The archers provoked and hated Him still more than Joseph, but He stood steadfast in the sufferings and won the victory. Isaac at Moriah is a figure of Christ dead and resurrected (Heb. 11:19). But Joseph brought out of prison and set at the right hand of Pharaoh speaks to us of a Christ dead, resurrected and glorified. It is from a Christ lifted up in glory that flows the blessings which "have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors." Indeed, these blessings which are in connection with Abraham and Isaac and intended for Israel were earthly,

however glorious is the future of the people; but the blessings connected with a glorified Christ are heavenly and eternal.

"From hence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." Without a doubt Christ is the shepherd of His people and the foundation stone of Israel's future. In comparison with the branches which run over the wall, we love to think of Him as the Shepherd, who draws to Himself not only the sheep of the Jewish sheepfold, but also the "other sheep" the gentiles, that there may be "one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). He also is the stone rejected by those who built, that became the chief corner stone of the new building, His church.

This accumulation of blessings places before us the overflowing grace, as we have already considered in Ephesians, riches of His grace, exceeding riches of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

5. Joseph's bones

In his turn Joseph arrived at death's door. He has kept the assurance that God will surely visit His people and that He will bring them out of Egypt unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob (50:24). "And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (v. 25). The Epistle to the Hebrews underlines this final act of his long life as marking his faith: "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and

gave commandment concerning his bones" (Heb. 11:22). The faith of Joseph shone all along his career, but the Word of God delights to mention that after eighty years in Egypt in his elevated position his faith was just as keen as in his youth.

When the people left Egypt, "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Ex. 13:19); and they bury in Canaan at Shechem "the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt . . . in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem" (Joshua 24:32).

Genesis, which opens majestically with: "In the beginning God created . . .", ends with these words: ". . . in a coffin in Egypt": tragic picture of the fall. But out of the cave of Machpelah as well as out of the field of Hamor, the glorious bodies of the patriarchs will come forth, in the day of resurrection.

G. A.

THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus"

Matthew 1:21.

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law; and it is of this mystery, the ground-work of redemption, that Matthew writes in this chapter. There are indeed other characteristics of the divine and holy Child here mentioned. As this gospel

especially presents Christ as the Messiah, in the fulfilment of promise to the Jewish nation, His lineage, as born into this world, is traced down from the two great roots of Jewish promise, Abraham and David. Not only therefore does Matthew show Him to us as "come" of a woman, and "come" under law, but also as the promised seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and as Son of David, and hence as heir to David's throne and kingdom. It is thus a chapter in which the divine and human glories of our blessed Lord are mingled and displayed. By "mingled" we simply mean that the character of the Person of Christ is such that all that He is as God and as man is told out in His name and in His work. For example, if we think of Him as the Offspring of David, we are at once reminded that He is also David's Root, that David's Son is also David's Lord.

This will be very clearly seen by a consideration of the meaning of the name Jesus, which Joseph was instructed to give to the Child when He should be born. As may be seen from Hebrews 4:8, Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, or Jehoshua, which signifies "Jehovah is salvation," or "whose salvation is Jehovah." There is therefore ample justification for the common observation that the name Jesus means Jehovah the Savior. If so, what a subject for contemplation yea, and for adoration, is thus brought before our souls! A child born into the world, of lowly parentage in man's esteem, is declared, divinely declared, to be Jehovah the Savior! Yes, the

God who heard the groaning of His people Israel in Egypt, who saw their affliction, heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, knew their sorrows, and came down to redeem them out of Egypt, and to bring them up out to that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; He who said unto Moses, "I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by (the name of) God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them" (Ex. 3:6-8: 6:2, 3); it was He, the same God, the same Jehovah, the El Shaddai known to the patriarchs, who now came into this world as a Babe. But if a Babe, He came, blessed be His name for ever, as the Savior of His people. Surely we may say that the shadows were fleeing away, and that the darkness, which had hitherto shrouded God from His people, was fast disappearing. It was indeed the blessed dawn of the day of grace.

The moment we speak of the birth of Jehovah the Savior, the mystery of the incarnation constrains our attention. It had long been foretold, and, so far from its being veiled under dubious language, it was exactly and minutely described, so that Matthew could write, "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1: 22, 23). Even the very place of His birth had been foretold: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah,

though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Moreover, the holy nature of His humanity was by no means dimly shadowed forth in the type of the meat-offering, especially in the unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, telling out as it did the truth communicated to Mary by the angel, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). It is the miracle of miracles, and for that very reason the revelation of the heart of God, when looked back upon in the light of the purpose of His coming into the midst of sinful men.

Before entering upon the purpose of His advent, it may be profitable to dwell upon some of the circumstances of His birth. There was the greatest contrast imaginable at the time between heaven and earth. All heaven (and what wonder?) was astir and in movement; but the whole earth, save a few pious souls, was still and almost unexpectant. The angel of the Lord sped on his joyful way to apprise, not the governing powers, or the great of the earth, but a few godly shepherds, of the marvellous event; "Fear not," he said unto them, "for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10, 11). The angel of Jehovah

was not alone, for as soon as he had announced the glad tidings, a multitude of the heavenly host praised God and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill (or "pleasure," or "delight") toward (in) men." As has been strikingly said, "God had so manifested Himself by the birth of Jesus, that the hosts of heaven long familiar with His power, could raise their chorus . . . and every voice unites in sounding forth these praises. What love like this love? and God is love. What a purely divine thought that God has become man." And yet this stupendous event had nothing in it to compel the observation of men. Busy with their own thoughts and objects, they did not even perceive it, though it took place in their midst; and so absorbed were they in their self-seeking that there was no room for the infant Savior in the inn! Such are men, although among them were the objects of God's eternal counsels in grace, which He was about to accomplish through the One who, while the Creator of all things, was yet born into the world a homeless stranger!

The name Jesus was given in connection with His work, "for," it was added, "He shall save His people from their sins." The term "His people" will, in this gospel, undoubtedly mean Israel; and indeed, in the angelic announcement to the shepherds in Luke, it says that the good tidings of great joy were for all the people; i. e. for the Jews. Not that the object of the Lord's coming into the world is in either case to be limited to the chosen people, but in these scriptures they only are

in view. The wider aspect is stated by John when, in allusion to the prophecy of Caiaphas that "Jesus should die for that nation," he adds, "And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." This makes it plain, moreover, that the death of Christ—His finished work, which He accomplished in, and through, His death—is the only foundation on which He will save His people from their sins. We thus read in Leviticus 16, after the details given concerning the rites and sacrifices, together with the confession of the people's sins by the high priest on the great day of atonement, "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (v. 30). Nor can this foundation truth be too constantly insisted upon; for as it is written concerning sins in the old dispensation, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22), so now it is equally true that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, alone cleanseth from all sin.

When, therefore, the angel said, "He shall save His people from their sins," he looked onward, or at least the mind of the Spirit had respect in the words, to a time beyond the cross. For Israel could not be saved, as the prophets plainly testified, apart from repentance and the efficacy of the atonement. Simeon, when he enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of holding the Lord's Christ in his arms, plainly foretold also that the glory of Jehovah's people Israel would be accomplished

through the rejection of the holy Babe on His presentation to the people. The sufferings of Christ must precede His glories, whether in heaven or on the earth; even as He Himself said to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" It was this fact that tested the hearts of men, and called forth their determined enmity. If they could have taken Jesus by force and made Him a King, and if He would but have placed Himself at their head and led them, all carnal as they were, against their enemies, and delivered them by His power, they would gladly have hailed Him as their Messiah, even if they had immediately later rebelled against His authority. But He who came as Jehovah the Savior must first stand in, and repair the breach which the sins of His people had made between them and their God. And so fully did He take up their cause and responsibility that, as in their place, He cried, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee" (Ps. 69: 5). Blessed Lord, we cannot fathom Thy sorrow and grief, but we can thank Thee in that Thou madest the sins of Thy people Thine own, and hast borne them away for ever!

Considering then, this scripture in its application to Israel, it will refer to the salvation of the earthly people from their sins—from their sins and their consequences—and to their restoration and blessing in a future day in the land of promise. It is indeed in one aspect what Zacharias prophesied, when his tongue was loosed at the circumcision of his

child, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David . . . that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us . . . that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:68-75). First, then, Jesus will save His people from their sins before God; for a part of the new covenant runs, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34); and, moreover, He will save them from the consequences of their sins in delivering them out of the hands of their enemies, in gathering them out from every land where they have been scattered, and in establishing them in their own land in blessing under His own peaceful and glorious reign. All this would have been fulfilled to them at once had they but received their Messiah; and even after they had crucified Him, had they but owned their guilt, and bowed in heart to the testimony of the apostles, their sins would have been blotted out, and the times of refreshing would have come from the presence of the Lord in connection with the return of Christ (Acts 3); but, alas! through their unbelief they forfeited all these blessings, and they have now to wait until, wrought upon by the Holy Spirit of God, they will cry, in the gladness of their hearts, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Still, beloved reader, while it is true that

this promise refers primarily to Israel, let it not be forgotten that the same glorious work, which constitutes the foundation on which their sins will be removed, is the only ground on which any of us can know forgiveness. Through Israel's fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, and hence it is that the apostle could write to the Corinthians that it was delivered to him "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4). Well then may we praise God continually for His wondrous grace, the grace which took occasion through the unbelief of Israel to reveal all His purposes concerning those who should be heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ; and well, too, may our hearts be filled with gratitude at the mention of the name of Jesus, for He it is who has secured everything for us.

The Personal Interest of Christ in His Own

It is a happy and an encouraging thing for the soul to be habitually impressed with the every-day interest which our beloved Lord takes in His own while here in the world. Probably nothing is more conducive to the deepening and unfolding of our affection to Himself, and to consistency in our walk, and to diligence in His service, than the discovery of what an object we are to Him all along the road to the Father's house, and how He loves to disclose to us the sweetness, the

reality, and the constancy of His personal interest, notwithstanding that He is the glorified One at the right hand of God!

In John 15:1, this affection term is used, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"; i. e. not merely to the end of His sojourn below, nor as to time in any sense, but right through to the uttermost. Thus we have present title to this endearing expression from the lips of our blessed Lord, and to the unmeasured love and faithfulness, and the unwearied service, which He connects with it for the gratification of His devoted affection for His object. For we rejoice in the thought that He has graciously wrought in us by the Holy Ghost so as to win our confidence for ever and make Himself an object of eternal rest and joy to the hearts of His own, but also He would have us regard Him as the eternal Lover of His saints, whose interest in us never needs to be re-awakened, but continues unflagging as the consummation in glory draws nigh!

We are then, each in his own measure, no less truly an object to Him than He is an absorbing and satisfying one to us. And even when as a poor sinner it was my first duty to let Him have His own way according to all the service He had rendered me on the cross, so now as a believer is it equally my first and my abiding obligation (oh, what a privilege too!) to allow Him to fulfil His cherished service from the glory, in the delight of His heart to enrich and adorn me with His own graces, as well as removing the

hindrances in me to that moral transformation He is effecting. Every child of God is a distinct and personal object to Him. Each has his own personal history day by day. He is working out for each one every day his own cherished plan as He looks down fondly upon each one from the glory. And whether we be regarded as pupils under tuition, or as patients under treatment (alas! the more frequent case), it is He alone who can discern, and supply by the Holy Ghost what is needed for each saint's daily path and progress. And apart from this, alas how frequent are the occasions in which our failures bring His blessed advocacy into active exercise, if indeed He has not already anticipated them in praying for us as He did for Peter (Luke 22:31, 32).

Can He whose glory we shall one day be the medium of displaying, and towards which all is so rapidly and definitely tending, be otherwise than intensely interested in the forming of His own by the Word and by the trials and testings along the way?

If we survey the interests of Christ, we have to remember their present two-fold character: first, the evangelizing in the world which has to be completed that the rapture may be effected: and second, the transformation going on in the saints in view of the "revelation of the sons of God" with the Lord Jesus in glory. If every soul that is saved hastens the rapture, equally so does every little bit more of Christ wrought in a saint as fruit of the Spirit add a further ray of beauty to the glories of Christ in the day of His

manifestation ! Whether then we look at the world as to evangelization, or the saints as to transformation, what a field is presented for the tender interest of Christ in the service of His saints. To deny or to doubt the intensity of His present personal interest in His saints would be seriously casting a slur upon the deep perfections of His character and of His ways of love !
—W. R.

God's Way with Jacob

Genesis 32:32

There are three parts in the history of God's ways with Jacob which are important on account of the deep moral instruction they convey to us, in the man who was called out to walk with God and the heir of God's promise of blessing. The first is in Gen. 18, called "Jacob's vision at Bethel"; the next in chap. 32, where "an angel wrestles with him"; and the third in chap. 35 when "Jacob is again summoned to Bethel."

God works in grace in all the way by which He led him to correct him and teach him that human policy and cunning only complicate the path of faith. Simple faith finds all sufficiency in the Promiser alone. One great lesson we all have to learn, who have to do with "the living God," is that the ways and means by which He accomplishes His purposes touching our "birthright," and also our "blessing," are as distinctly His own care as the things He promises. It must redound to the praise of the glory of His grace that

God should take up sinners such as we are and form and mold us for a place with Him in His own eternal glory that He has promised us in the gospel. Human contrivance and cautions planning which goes with self-reliance which are the open faults in Jacob, necessarily create a moral distance between himself and the "God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac" which must be corrected.

His first lessons were when "the sun was set, and he tarried all night in a certain place" (Gen. 28:10-22), in the day that he fled away from Esau to Laban, at the advice of Rebekah. It seems to me that the ladder, whilst it allows of communication between parties at the top and at the bottom, yet marks as plainly the distance which it maintained. In John's gospel "the ladder" is done away for how could there be a ladder when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"? (chap. 1:14).

God will not, however, allow anything in the man at the foot of the ladder to interfere with His purposes and objects; on the contrary, the promises are repeated and confirmed to Jacob, without condition or reserve on the part of God; for who or what can withstand Him when He is risen up out of His place? Still, as regards Jacob, when he awaked out of his sleep it was to say, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." Does not this mark his state? and is not his moral distance and lack of intimacy with God confirmed by what follows? "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and

this is the gate of heaven." Nevertheless, Jacob does not lose the relationship of a worshipper, for he took the stone pillow, and "set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it," and changed the name of Luz into Bethel—the house of God.

The ruling passion of the supplanter and the bargainer breaks out even in this intercourse with God at Bethel. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; . . . then shall the Lord be my God: . . . and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Man at a distance from God always fears the circumstances he is in, so Jacob here, under this form of piety makes a vow seeking to find relief in God. There may be a measure of faith in all this; but the stipulation is for God to be with Jacob in the way that he takes, so that he may come again to his father's house in peace. He does not pray like the Psalmist in Ps. 25:4, "Show me thy ways, O Lord: teach me thy paths." God had promised, "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad . . . and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land." Instead of getting out by the exercise of faith into the largeness of God's thoughts about him, which embraced "the whole earth" in ultimate blessing, Jacob would have been content with the measure of his own individ-

ual safety, and satisfied if the Lord would have limited Himself to the littleness of the vow that he vowed.

Chapter 32 seems to me the final correction of this readiness of the flesh to rely on its own devices by the angel wrestling with him. The beginning is significant—"And Jacob went his way"—which introduces us his methods and plans for appeasing the wrath of his brother Esau, whom he feared. Faith strengthens itself and can be at home only in the revealed purpose of God, and is so free from self before God as to be able to occupy in intercession for others as Abraham did for Lot. But this is far above Jacob's level here. Unbelief and carnal policy, with the fears that goes with it, betray by the very expedients to which one has recourse, and in one's way of action. The resources which would have commended another man in Jacob's eyes are the things to which he turns so that he may find grace in the sight of his brother. All this fleshly cunning mixes itself up too with a certain dependence upon God, expressed in his prayer, though he has not confidence enough to be quiet in the hand of God for protection and deliverance. So far away is the heir of promise from the dignity that attaches to him as appointed by the Lord, that he is lost in the sense of the guilt of his own act, by which he supplanted his brother, and cringes before him as a servant in the presence of "my lord Esau." Lower than this he cannot well go; and at this point it is, when at his wit's end, that the Lord takes him in hand for gracious discipline: "Jacob was left

alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day" (vs. 24:31).

The beginning of a deep lesson was introduced here, when the wrestler prevailed not, but put forth his hand, and "touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him" and his resistance thus broken. It was in the weakness of their own flesh, when so intimate with the Lord that the disciples broke down, and Peter denied Him in the hour of His own danger and death!

Paul caught up to the third heaven, was given "a thorn in the flesh," the messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure.

It is well to remember, too, that in this struggle "the name of Jacob," the supplanter, was refused and a new name given him, for he said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Nor is it without meaning that Jacob on his part called the name of the place Peniel. "For I have seen God face to face," said he, "and my life is preserved." And further we may notice what is pointed out to us, that as Jacob "passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh." Resistance broken down, God seen face to face and the light now shines for him. Precious combinations were these in the experience of Jacob; and still more so are they to us who have the deeper truth of the cross, where we reckon "the old man crucified," and know in effect that we are "alive unto God

through Jesus Christ" and we see God face to face in our risen and ascended Lord: "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

In chapter 35 the ladder is gone, and with it Jacob in his original character of supplanter and bargainer is gone too. God Himself can come in and take His own place now that the wrestling is over. Refreshing it is to the heart that knows anything of itself and of the ways of God to find Him take all out of our meddlesome hands into His own. This chapter begins: "God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Quite in character with this gracious direction are Jacob's own proceedings; for it is not only himself who is once more in the presence of God, but, like Abraham, he commands "his household after him" to judge themselves according to what becomes the face of God, whom he saw at Peniel. "Then Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise, and go up to Bethel."

This entire change from the garments they wore, to the altar of their worship, and the stripping themselves of their ornaments, as well as the denial of the strange gods that were in their hands, and their burial "under the oak, (type of the cross) which was by

Shechem," stamp another pattern upon Jacob. "Be clean" is now his word (1 John 1:7).

So "God appeared to Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him; and said, Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name." Thus the whole circle widens, and is filled with the light of God's own presence; and in grace Jacob, and all that his name implied, is buried as it were at Shechem for "He called his name Israel." And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. All is now as it should be, without hindrance; "and God went up from him in the place where He talked with him," God meets with Jacob and talks with him without ladder or angels on His part, and in the absence of all terror and fear on Jacob's part for the distance that produced both is gone. There is remarkable progress and advancement here, as amongst any in our day, when there is growing "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Arranged.

For Worship the Will Must Be Yielded

Worship always supposes the will yielded. In Genesis 12:10, Abraham goes down into Egypt of his own will, and it is to be remarked, that so long as he was there he built no altar but instead he got himself in trouble; God in mercy delivered him out of it. But and then having abandoned Egypt, he could build an altar to the Lord.

David in 2 Samuel 12:15-23 sees the child sick who is dear to him; he fasts and prays, and wrestles with God; his will was not submissive. When the child was dead, David changed his apparel, ate, drank, and could come to worship before the Lord, because the struggle that existed in his heart had ceased, and his will was submitted.

Job, after those heavy afflictions, which are set before us in the first chapter, the loss of his substance and of his family, rends his mantle (chap. 1:20). He did not sin in that, the Word tells us. His grief was lawful, he was permitted to grieve for the loss of his children; but he arises and worships before God. He can worship Him, because his will is submissive, and he can say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (v. 21).

But in Genesis 22, we find something far above what we have in Job and David. They acquiesced in God's will, but their submission was passive; it required of them no act. Not so in this chapter of Genesis. Not only must Abraham accept God's will, but, moreover, he must act against himself; he must, so to speak, sacrifice himself, for the sacrifice of his son was nothing short of that. God says to him, Offer up to Me thy son, thine only son. The name of an individual contains in it for us all that concerns him and all our relations with him. "Thy son"—this word kindled in Abraham the tenderest of feelings; and he had to sacrifice that son! Nay, more: this name recalled to him the promises of God, and it was in this son they were to be

fulfilled, for God had positively told him, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called' (chap. 21:12).

But he whose will is subjected to God is satisfied of these two things. God will provide for it, and I am with God. Every look to the flesh in the way of expectation for the fulfilment of the promises, must be given up, and God alone Himself remain as the sole source of the life, the blessings and the promise as the One who never comes to the end of His resources, even when He orders and leads us by testings that seem contrary to what He promised.

God thus proves the heart, that all confidence in the flesh may be destroyed. But at the same time, He knows that the heart needs to be sustained under the trial, so He sustains it by a fuller revelation of Himself which enables it to triumph. Thus, we see in Hebrews 11:19, that Abraham, on the occasion of the sacrifice required of him, counted that God was able to raise him up. Thus he gains a fuller revelation concerning the resurrection, then so little known. It is thus God, in His infinite mercy, causes us to gain in Himself what we lose in the flesh. It is thus that, in the secret of communion with God, we learn much of Him while being tested and tried.

In Jesus, the true worshipper of the Father, the will was always submissive. The cup was full of bitterness as we know; but, in His desire to fulfil the will of God, He in spite of this bitterness, cries out, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

—Arranged.

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

"They shall call His Name Emmanuel"

Matthew 1:23

It has already been pointed out that the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem was in fulfilment of this prophecy. Not that the birth in and by itself contained its accomplishment: it was rather its pledge and guarantee. The meaning of the name, as divinely interpreted, is "God with us"; and this enables us to see that it looks forward to the full consequences for Israel of the introduction of their Messiah into this world; that, in other words, the Emmanuel name of our blessed Lord will only be realized in connection with the establishment of His glorious throne on earth, when He will make good all that God is in government, and when, as with His people, "His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. 72:17). It carries with it, therefore, the fruition of His death for "that nation," and the promise of His personal presence with His earthly people. It is of that time the prophet speaks when he says, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12:6).

A reference to the prophecy itself, together with its context, will make this abundantly evident. Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was at that time upon the throne of Judah. He "did not that which was right in the sight of

the Lord his God, like David his father. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel" (2 Kings 16:2, 3). However, notwithstanding his wickedness and apostasy, God still waited with much longsuffering, and forebore to deal with His guilty servant. Yea rather, on Ephraim and Syria entering into a confederacy against the house of David, and going up to besiege Jerusalem, Jehovah sent His servant Isaiah with a message of encouragement, assuring Ahaz that the designs of his enemies should not prosper. The prophet added, at the same time, the warning word, 'If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established' (Isa. 7:9). Ahaz might be delivered from the present peril, but unless he turned to, and stayed himself upon, the word of the Lord, he should not escape his merited chastisement. (See 2 Chron. 28.)

Yet again the Lord sought, in His tender mercy, to reach the heart and conscience of the offending monarch. God would condescend, if Ahaz requested it, to give him a sign, either in the depth, or in the height above, to certify him of the sure fulfilment of His word. The heart of Ahaz had turned to false gods, and thus hardened, he refused, though under the pretext of piety, he offered intervention, saying, 'I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord' (Isa. 7:12). The Searcher of hearts was not to be deceived, and, after a solemn admonition, the prophet announced that the

Lord Himself would give a sign. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (v. 14). It is in this that the depth of the riches, both of wisdom and knowledge of God, is unfolded. David's house might fail in their responsibility, as they grievously did, and forfeit everything; but, thereon God, acting from His own heart, and according to His purposes, could step in, and through the advent of Jehovah the Savior—through His rejection, death, and resurrection—accomplish all the counsels of His grace. The birth of Immanuel would thus change everything. Those who were false to their trust would be punished as was Ahaz; but Immanuel would secure everything, and vindicate and glorify the name of God in government upon the earth.

But there lies a long, weary path for Israel, because of their unbelief, between the birth of Immanuel and the glory of the kingdom. This was plainly foretold by the prophet in connection with the very prophecy under consideration. The careful reader will observe that the first invasion of the land by the Assyrian, bringing in utter desolation in its unchecked success (v. 17), does but shadow forth another assault in the last days, when he and his confederates shall be utterly broken in pieces. They may take counsel together, but it shall come to nought; they may speak the word, but it shall not stand; "for God is with us" (Immanuel). Before that time—the final destruction of Israel's enemy—He who is born of the virgin, and named Immanuel, is seen in rejection. The transition to

this is exceedingly beautiful. The prophet was instructed of the Lord not to "walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread" (chap. 8:11-13). But this instantly brings in separation, distinguishing as it does a remnant from the mass of the people. Accordingly we read, "And He shall be for a sanctuary" (for all those who sanctify and fear Him); "but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (v. 14). As indeed Simeon prophesied "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34, 35).

Immanuel came. The sanctuary of those who had waited for Him, He is the true centre around whom His people are gathered; and here, for the first time, He Himself speaks and calls them "my disciples." And He names them such in connection with "the testimony," and plainly states that the truth of that day, the law as well as the testimony, is entrusted and confined to the remnant, now His disciples. It was so also in the day of David's rejection. In the cave of Adullam, when everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, had gathered themselves unto him, and he became their captain, we find

that the prophet Gad was also there, and immediately after Abiathar the priest is driven to the same company, which now possessed all the forms of God's testimony in the persons of the king, the prophet, and the priest. In like manner Anna the prophetess was with the few who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. It must be ever so, that those who are in separation from evil, and are in communion with the mind of God concerning His Christ, and concerning the state of things round about them, should be the depositaries of the testimony for the times in which they are living. The reason is that Christ Himself is with them. He loves all His people; but He only identifies Himself with the separated remnant, as in verse 18 of this chapter. That here and there much truth may be found outside of them is unquestionable; but only with them will be seen God's special teaching for the moment, or the truth held and presented in its due proportions. The testimony will be bound up, and the law will be sealed up, amongst the Lord's disciples in an evil day, because as already said, He Himself is in their midst.

The state of things at the time of which Isaiah speaks is unfolded in the following verses; and let it again be recalled that it is Christ Himself who is the speaker. He says: "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion." In the Epistle

to the Hebrews, parts of these two verses are quoted to show the Lord's complete identification as Man with His people, with the true remnant gathered out from among the Jewish nation (chapter 2:13); and this as preparatory to the object of His death, viz., to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." But we will not pursue these interesting circumstances further than to call attention to the wondrous fact that the One who was thus as regards God in perfect dependence as Man, and hence waiting upon Jehovah, and as regards men despised and rejected, was at the same time, no less a personage than the Immanuel of Isaiah's prophecy; and that, in this path of rejection, He was experiencing some of those sufferings which must precede His glories.

In chapter 9 the people that walk in darkness see a great light, and "they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (v. 2). For the fulfilment of this glorious prophecy, Matthew records that Jesus left Nazareth, and came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim. (See Isaiah 9:1.) The moment Isaiah proclaims the appearance of the Messiah as light in the midst of darkness, he contemplates its full consequences in the results of the deliverance which the Messiah will accomplish in the last days. The yoke of the Assyrian being broken, all the brightness of the glory of the divine person of the Messiah

shines out in the blessing of His people. And all this blessing is connected with the birth of Christ into this world. "For unto us," the prophet says, "a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." All these names are given in connection with His kingdom in this world, for the prophet proceeds: "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (vs. 6, 7).

It is evident, therefore, that Immanuel, "God with us," is the name belonging to our blessed Lord in connection with the earthly people, and that they will not enter into its full and blessed significance until after He has taken His great power, and when He shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.

Who, then, is Immanuel? His birth is predicted in Isaiah 7:14, and, after detailing the circumstances of His rejection in the following chapter, the prophet foretells the establishment of His kingdom in chapter 9. Together with this he takes occasion, in a passage already quoted, to present a series of titles, or names, which are expressive of the infinite and divine character of Immanuel's person. Let us pass them briefly under review. The first is "Wonderful," a word used oftentimes for that which excites astonish-

ment, or admiration. Sometimes it is employed to denote a miracle, and nothing so awakens the attention as a miraculous display of power. And what miracle is so great as that of the Incarnation? What could produce such wonder as the fact that Immanuel could be born of a virgin? Then He is called "Counsellor." Divine wisdom is indicated by this word, as, for example, where it says, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (chap. 11:2). The appellation "The mighty God" proclaims its own significance, for there could not be a more distinct declaration of His Deity; nor does the following term, "The everlasting Father," speak less plainly, inasmuch as it sets forth the eternity of His being. Finally, He is "Prince of Peace," a title which indicates the Solomon character of His reign, so admirable described in Ps. 72.

It may be permitted to us, in conclusion, to inquire why such a number of names should be combined. The answer surely is, that it is only by the contemplation of the rays of Immanuel's glory separately and singly that any conception can be formed of the truth of His person. However He may be presented, in whatever aspect or relationship, all that He is is there under the special aspect; and we are reminded of this by such passages as the one under consideration. It is indeed one of the fatal mistakes of these modern days to take some one feature of the life or person of our blessed Lord, and to regard it as the whole truth. He is the living Word, and it is

only in all that speaks of Him that He can be fully discovered; and it is because of our feebleness that the Spirit of God calls our attention now to one aspect, and now to another; now to one feature, or trait, or attribute of His person, and now to another. But He is still beyond all our thoughts, seeing that He is divine, "very God and very Man"; and hence it is written, 'No man knoweth the Son, but the Father' (Matt. 11:27). —E. D.

Joy, and How to Keep it

We who are children of God can well remember the first days of our being brought to know Him, through that blessed One whose very Name filled our hearts with rapturous delight. How relieving, and how sweet to the soul to confess that Name before men; how marvelous to realize that His blood was shed for me, that His sacrifice for me was a sweet smelling savor to God, and because of it nothing could separate me from "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39). With fond remembrance we recall the sparkling freshness and joy of heart that issued forth in adoration for our Lord, when like the leaves of the trees stirred gently by the wind, our very being seemed alive with praise to Him.

But in so reflecting, not a few of us have sorrowed as we see that those affections have grown cold with time: the ardor of delight

that once was there seems lost forever, and we wonder why, despite our efforts, it can not be regained. Here many stumble and are led astray.

A Wrong Thought

Some have claimed that to answer the question, it requires a wonderful and mysterious experience that they call "sanctification." By this they profess to attain a higher level than Christians who are not (as they say) "sanctified." However the honest inquirer into Scripture will find that we are not sanctified by an experience, but by the truth, the Word of God. (John 17:17.) Moreover, when we look for, and find, some experience that stirs us to excitement, we may be stimulated for a time, but always shall drop back again into a still deeper dissatisfaction, the same effect that is left through drinking too much wine. In Scripture, joy is typified by wine; it may exhilarate, but I do not, could not, feed on it: that would leave me a total wreck.

True Joy Found Only in the Lord

Is the Christian then, denied joy? Indeed he is not, for true spiritual joy is of God, both exceedingly precious and important. But let me ask, What gave you the joy at conversion? Was it through thinking of that joy? "Certainly not," you will say, "It resulted from the knowledge of the Lord Jesus as my own Savior, and of His very near presence always with me. I was feeding on real sub-

stantial food, and rejoiced in doing so."

Yet think, have you so greatly treasured that joy as to lose sight of the need of feeding? Depending largely on the joy, have you forgotten how dependent you are on the Lord? Surely this is the true answer to the coldness and lack of growth in more than a few cases. The eye is on self, and on what is going on within, instead of being fixed steadily on the One who only can give real gladness of heart.

Christ, not Joy, Feeds the Soul and Satisfies

I believe the condition of soul that many of us have experienced is aptly described in Psalm 107:4, 5, "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them." These were the children of Israel, sometime after singing the glorious song of deliverance from their enemies, by the passage of the Red sea. There was a longing not satisfied, a desire not filled: the joy that had been theirs before could not sustain them now. What then? "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (vs. 6-9). Let this sink deeply, dear reader, into your heart and mine; joy does not satisfy, does not feed the soul, but He, our Lord does.

Nor could it be otherwise, for has He not said, 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven'? (John 6:51).

The Scripture the Only Source

Now, where did I learn of Him at first? What gave me my first taste of the bread of sweetness? Only Scripture: without that I had been in darkness still. How then can I neglect that precious Book, and expect my thoughts to be of Christ? Impossible! and yet how many think to keep their joy while heeding not the only place from which true spiritual joy can come.

'It is hard to understand,' someone is bound to say, 'and I seem to get so little from it.' Well we rejoice to know that the most profound students of Scripture have marvelled at its depths of wisdom and its beauty of perfection. So, although our first impulse is to wish we knew it all, we are steadied by the thought that there is food here for many years to come, and too much at once will give indigestion. You would not think of refusing a meal simply because you were denied a year's supply of food at once! Take a meal at a time and be sure you digest it well.

Little by Little . . . Steadily Learning

Once a start has been made in searching the Scriptures, Satan will employ many means of discouraging you. Perhaps it will seem difficult and wearisome, and doubts arise as to whether there will be any fruit from it at

all. This is a "trial of faith," and faith is simply implicit trust in God. Then ask yourself this question, "Is God not able to carry me through this test?" and go to God about it. Then remember that faith acts! "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." "He that gathereth by labor shall increase." "In all labor there is profit." "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but honor of kings is to search out a matter" (Prov. 10:4; 13:11; 14:23; 25:2). "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). With time and diligence, you will learn little by little, and each lesson will be truly learned in the heart. Moreover, when the heart has learned something for itself, a joy will result much calmer and deeper than was known before. But guard against relying on that joy. Go on steadily, learning more of Christ: only thus is the soul kept fresh and alive.

***Read with Reverence,
Seek to Learn of Christ
In Both the Old and New Testaments***

If you have real joy in reading, always remember never to open that precious Book except in a spirit of reverence and lowliness. And then in every word you read, listen to the voice of "The High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity," as speaking directly to your soul.

Further, do not go to the Scriptures with a selfish motive—not merely to get something for yourself—but with Christ as the Object

of your heart. This is the only key that will open them to you. When walking with the two on the way to Emmaus, the Lord Jesus "expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). How sweet their consequent testimony: "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" Nothing can preserve the beauty and freshness of the Word to the soul like a mind alert to find something of Christ everywhere.

It may be, as in the Gospels, a direct contact with Him, or in the Epistles, doctrine concerning His Person, His Work, His glory, or of His interests on earth in the Gospel going to the unsaved, and in His Body, which is the church.

The Old Testament we shall find abounding with types of Christ in His various characteristics; as Son of God, as Son of Man, as Prophet, Priest, King, Servant, Shepherd, the Lamb of God, and others. Also types of His birth, spotless life, suffering on earth, rejection by men, substitution for the sinner, bearing God's judgment, voluntary "obedience unto death", resurrection, exaltation, coming for His saints, coming in judgment, and reigning over the earth are to be found. In the Psalms, too, and the Prophets, He is supremely preeminent. Everywhere it is so. Let us then be the more earnest in finding this precious "hid treasure," ever keeping in remembrance that if Christ is really the Object, the heart will lack nothing. Then truly we may say, "His joys our deepest joys

afford," and with the prophet Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16). —L. M. G.

A Peace the World Cannot Give

If God has satisfied Himself about my sins, I may be satisfied also. I know I am a sinner—it may be, the chief of sinners. I know my sins are more in number than the hairs of my head. I know—because God's Word tells me—that a single speck of sin can never enter His holy presence; hence, so far as I am concerned, there was no possible issue save eternal separation from God. All this I know, upon the clear and unquestionable authority of that Word which is settled forever in heaven.

But, oh the profound mystery of the cross!—the glorious mystery of redeeming love! I see God Himself taking all my sins—the black and terrible category—all my sins, as He knew and estimated them. I see Him laying them all upon the head of my blessed Substitute, and dealing with Him about them. I see all the billows and waves of God's righteous wrath—His wrath against my sins—His wrath which should have consumed me, soul and body, in hell, throughout a dreary eternity,—I see them all rolling over the Man who stood in my stead, who represented me before God, who bore all that was due to me, with whom a holy God dealt as He should have dealt with me. I see inflexible justice, holi-

ness, truth and righteousness dealing with my sins, and making a clear and eternal riddance of them. Not one of them is suffered to pass! There is no connivance, no palliation, no slurring over, no indifference. This could not possibly be, once God Himself took the matter in hand. His glory was at stake: His unsullied holiness, His eternal majesty, the lofty claims of His government.

All these had to be provided for in such wise as to glorify Himself in view of angels, men and devils. He might have sent me to hell—righteously, justly, sent me to hell—because of my sins. I deserved nothing else. My whole moral being, from its profoundest depths, owns this—must own it. I have not a word to say, nothing but of a sin-stained life from first to last—yes, a life of deliberate rebellious, high-minded sin.

Others may reason as they please as to the injustice of an eternity of punishment for a life of sin—the utter want of proportion between a few years of wrongdoing and endless ages of torment in the lake of fire. They may reason, but I thoroughly believe, and unreservedly confess, that for a single sin against such a Being as the God whom I see at the cross, I richly deserved everlasting punishment in the deep, dark, and dismal pit of hell.

But—eternal hallelujahs to the God of all grace!—instead of sending us to hell because of our sins, He sent His Son to be the propitiation for those sins. And in the unfolding of the marvelous plan of redemption, we see a holy God dealing with the question of our sins, and executing judgment upon them in the

Person of His well-beloved, eternal, and co-equal Son, in order that the full flood-tide of His love might flow down into our hearts. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Now, this must give peace to the conscience, if only it be received in the simplicity of faith. How is it possible for a person to believe that God has satisfied Himself as to his sins and not have peace? If God says to us, "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (Heb. 10:17), what could we desire further as a basis of peace for our conscience? If God assures me that all" my sins are blotted out as a thick cloud" (Isa. 44:22) "that they are cast behind His back" (Isa. 38:17) forever gone from His sight, should I not have peace? If He shows me the Man who bore my sins on the cross, now crowned at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, ought not my soul to enter into perfect rest as to the question of my sins? Most assuredly.

God raised from the dead the selfsame Man on whom He Himself had laid the full weight of our sins. Thus all is settled—divinely, eternally settled. It is as impossible that a single sin can be found on the very weakest believer in Jesus as on Jesus Himself. This is a wonderful thing to be able to say, but it is the solid truth of God, established in manifold places in Holy Scripture, and the soul that believes it must possess a peace which the world cannot give nor take away.

—C. H. M.

Rest, my soul, the work is done,
Done by God's beloved Son;
This to faith is now so clear
There's no place for torturing fear.

With belief in Jesus blest,
We are entering into rest;
He Who God's salvation brought
In us all our works hath wrought.

M. B.

Christian Marriage

(Gen. ii. 18-24; Matt. xix. 4-6; Eph. v. 22-33)

Marriage possesses the unique feature of being an institution established by God from the very beginning of human history. God's authority is, therefore, behind the prominent place it occupies in man's social life. The first marriage was ordained in the Garden of Eden for the increase of Adam's comfort and the consummation of his bliss.

THE MARRIAGE OF ADAM

Adam was created in sinless perfection, and was surrounded in Eden with everything he needed for his satisfaction and delight. The whole scene, animate and inanimate, was subject to his will and pleasure; but he himself was alone, and the isolation made inevitable by his supremacy was a drawback

to his perfect felicity. "And Jehovah Elohim said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate, his like (or counterpart)."

Accordingly, the woman was formed by Divine handiwork, not from the dust of the ground as Adam had been, but out of Adam himself, so that literally the woman was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Eve was the Creator's provision for Adam. Discerning the incompleteness of Adam in his solitude, God provided for him a consort designed exactly to meet his deficiencies. Accordingly, in their marriage the two became one flesh, each being the complement of the other.

The marriage of Adam is the prototype of the marriage of all his sons. In every case of true matrimony, God arranges the union. Divine wisdom observes the moment when the loneliness of the man is no longer good for him, and He provides a bride who is the complement of his nature with its personal characteristics. Adam had no choice of brides; there was but the one that would suit him, and she was prepared of God especially for him. Adam had no rivals for the possession of Eve. Nor can such a thing be imagined in Eden, where each of the two found in the other everything required to complete their enjoyment and to perfect their capacities. There was no alternative that either could have chosen or found.

The primitive marriage in Eden was remarkably simple and exclusive. Two only

shared the delights of the occasion. And this mutual reserve is a character marriage still retains. In matrimony two hearts, two lives become one exclusively in each other. At every wedding a new little world is formed with a total population of two numerically, but administratively of one only. How happy the new experience, and how momentous!

INSTITUTED BEFORE THE FALL

It is a fact of the highest significance that the marriage relationship was established between Adam and Eve while they were still in a state of innocence. At the time of their union, sin had not entered the world, nor its just penalty, death, incurred. But the entrance of sin through their disobedience did not set aside the holy character of marriage which its divine origin and sanction had originally imparted to it.

This, indeed, was the ground upon which the Lord Jesus long afterwards vindicated the primeval institution and affirmed the abiding sanctity of marriage. It was not a relationship introduced by the law of Moses, for instance; but wedlock was God's purpose for man from the very start of his history. So the Lord in replying to the cavils of the Pharisees, said to them, "Have ye not read that He Who made them, from the beginning made them male and female?" (Matt. xix. 4). And had they not also read in the same connection, "And the two (man and wife) shall be one flesh"?

It is true that, having been united in wedded bonds, Adam and Eve jointly disobeyed the commandment of the Lord, and fell into and under sin. Nevertheless, the holy and divinely-sanctioned character of marriage which it received in the state of sinlessness remained after the entrance of sin. God had made the single pair, and He made them the one for the other exclusively. As our Lord said, God had joined them together by bonds that are indissoluble by man. This character of permanence attaches to marriage still, as it ever has done. In every union under divine superintendence, God binds together the two hearts and lives by a tie that none can sever.

THE HUMAN CREDENTIALS OF MARRIAGE

Another aspect of the marriage tie may now be considered. As a relationship established by God in the original circumstances of man's creation, it possesses a pure and holy character. It is obvious, however, that in Eden there were necessarily no human witnesses to the first marriage contract. But with the multiplication of the human species, there arose the necessity that each matrimonial alliance should have a propriety in the eyes of men generally, and should receive public confirmation and approval.

From the days of Noah, God set up among men forms of government for the maintenance of civil order and social well-being. The "powers that be" in the com-

munity are ordained of God, and their regulations are to be recognised and obeyed by the Christian (Rom. xiii. 1-7; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14). It is seemly, therefore, that Christian marriage should conform to the requirements of the law of the land. Indeed, it is expressly enjoined upon the believer to "be subject unto the higher powers," and to submit "to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake." Where this is done in the case of marriage, the act of union is formally and legally recognised, and its validity established in the eyes of all men.

THE INVOCATION OF GOD'S BLESSING

The ceremony of marriage required by civil laws to bestow a wedded status upon the persons concerned is altogether distinct from the spiritual union of husband and wife which results from the exercise of God's own will and guidance upon the hearts of the same two persons. The latter is the most serious and yet the most happy side of the undertaking. For this reason, the married couple, realising the solemn nature of the initial step they have taken in the united life to which they have committed themselves, seek the fellowship and prayers of the assembly of God on their behalf. Thereby, they openly confess that in their new relationship, their joint desire is to receive divine help that they may walk together in the fear of the Lord, in obedience to His word, and in the furtherance of the glory of His name.

ON THE WIFE'S PART, SUBMISSION

In Ephesians v. 22-33, there is given to those who are married much advice, embodying the leading principles which should govern their new and peculiar relations to one another.

The injunction laid upon the wife in this passage is that of submission to her husband : " Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." This habit of feminine subjection is unpopular in this twentieth century, nevertheless the Christian wife is exhorted by the highest authority to practise it; and, however unfashionable in worldly society such obedience may be, she cannot escape her responsibility to render it as unto the Lord to Whom she is accountable for her conduct.

But the submission thus solemnly enjoined is not the blind mechanical obedience of a slave to the owner, such, for instance, as that of an Israelite to an Egyptian taskmaster. Rather is it the glad subjection which springs involuntarily from a passionate devotion to the loved one, a ready submission to the will of the beloved man, needing no compulsion, nor even prompting.

" AS UNTO THE LORD "

To a believing woman there is one authority from which there is no appeal. Hence the apostle brings the Lord Himself before the wife in the matter of her sub-

mission in her married relationship. She must submit to her own husband "as unto the Lord."

The Lord Jesus is the pattern to all His own of that perfect obedience which is well-pleasing to God. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Though continually accompanied by sorrow and suffering in the course of His subjection, it was a joy to Him to obey. Our Lord ever delighted to do the will of Him Who sent Him. Love to His Father was the mainspring of everything He did as the obedient Servant. In like manner, the believing wife should in her love, devotedly fulfil the "law" of her husband.

But the injunction here is coupled with the name of the Lord, not so much as the pattern of obedience, as the One from Whom her husband's authority is derived. She is to submit to her husband "as unto the Lord." She is exhorted to recognize the Lord Jesus behind her husband as the directing, governing authority in family life. As the "head of the woman is the man," so the Head of every man is Christ (1 Cor. xi. 3). Thus the godly decisions of the husband will express the will of the Lord for her, and to these she will render obedience with all readiness and cheerfulness. "As the church is subject unto Christ", so will the devout Christian wife be subject to her own husband in everything (verse 24).

ON THE HUSBAND'S PART, AFFECTION

As the distinguishing feature of the wife's conduct should be subjection, so that of the husband's should be love. "Husbands, love your wives." The form in the original tongue of both exhortations to the married pair indicates that the act enjoined is to be constant and characteristic. Both the submission of the wife and the love of the husband must be a continuous habit, not an occasional occurrence.

In these guiding principles of piety in the two pillars of the home, it is significant that love is particularly enjoined upon the husband, and not, as might almost have been expected, upon the more tender and susceptible partner, the wife. The husband, therefore, needs, in entering upon his new responsibilities, to consider this distinction carefully in order to grasp the special force of the exhortation addressed to him.

It is clear that, while the wife should regard her husband as the fountain of authority in the affairs of the household and in the conduct of their joint lives, the husband in the exercise of that authority should express his advice and judgment to her in the terms of love and endearment befitting a channel of the divine will. The real unity of married life will be most fittingly displayed by this blending of authority and affection. The authority of the husband will be conveyed by the expres-

sions of his love, and the obedience of the wife will be prompted by the impulses of her affection.

CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH THE HUSBAND'S MODEL

In this passage, the husband is instructed to regard the intimate relation of Christ to His church upon which the apostle dwells, as the model of his own relation to his wife. Two features of this relation may be mentioned specially in this connection, *viz.* : (1) Christ's self-sacrifice, and (2) Christ's devoted care.

In the first place, the husband is to practise his love in the form of entire self-surrender in order to secure his wife's highest welfare, for, "Christ also loved the church, and delivered Himself up for it." The blessed Lord surrendered up Himself altogether, without reserve, to promote the best interests of His church. And this whole-hearted sacrifice to ensure the present blessing and future glory of the church of His choice is set up as the model for the husband's imitation.

In the ideal marriage of scripture, therefore, the wife becomes the enthralling object of her spouse's affection and devotion to a degree which deepens in intensity as the years pass. Self is set aside in the home-life, and he that is married is solicitous in everyday matters how he may please his wife rather than himself. And while he may forget his own little lordship in the

absorbing self-sacrifice of his love, he finds that his wife does not forget his authority over her nor omit her ready obedience to him, just because he is so lavish in his love toward her.

But, secondly, the husband's love should be manifested by a continual care for the well-being of his wife. This pleasant duty is impressed upon him by the present service of the love of Christ in sanctifying and cleansing the church with the washing of water by the word (ver. 26). Whatever the behaviour of the church towards her Lord, Christ is faithful and unremitting in the activities of His love that she may be purified from everything that is inconsistent with her new status as His chosen bride and the sharer of His coming glories.

Guided by the lofty standard of Christ's concern for His church, the husband studies to promote the welfare of his wife, as his own body (ver. 28). He helps her, first of all in her spiritual life, in the exercises of worship and prayer and service in the home. He lightens her labours in household affairs, shoulders her burdens of family responsibility, shields her from anxieties and fears, comforts her in hours of sorrow, and ministers help to her weakness without telling her so. Neither will he forget to note her acts of devotion to himself in response to his love, nor to praise her many excellences, as the scripture enjoins (Prov. xxxi. 28, 29) if he should be so negligent as to need this injunction.

MAKING A NEW HOME

Another feature of pious marriage life made prominent in this passage is that matrimonial union involves the establishment of a new household. The apostle says, "Because of this a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh" (ver. 31). By entrance into the marriage relationship, two parental homes are vacated, and a new Christian home set up by the married pair.

The advantages and far-reaching influence of a truly pious dwelling-place cannot easily be over-rated. As a national feature, home life is not cultivated on scriptural lines now to the degree that it was formerly. Families thoroughly united in the bonds of piety and walking together in the fear of the Lord are not found so frequently as they should be.

It is a striking testimony to the value in the divine estimation of the home that in the scriptural history of man, family life is given precedence to national life. A great part of the Book of Genesis is devoted to the record of family life set apart in the world as a witness for the living and true God against the corrupting influence of idolatry; while national history begins in the Book of Exodus.

This form of effective witness for God is sorely needed to-day. And it devolves upon the newly-married couple to organize a home which shall in its primary purpose

be entirely controlled by the will of the Lord. Under such management, the home will become a centre from which the light of God's truth will shine upon the darkness and ungodliness of the surrounding world. Its occupants will be recognized as the servants of Christ.

A home is not to be confused with a house. An architect plans the house, but love and order construct the home. It is important that in the new Christian home an agreed policy between husband and wife should predominate; "and they two shall be one flesh." Particularly in things Godward concerted action should prevail. The former spiritual habits and activities hitherto practised by each need not cease, only they may now be prayerfully pursued with the enhanced energy that concord and consultation supply to Christian service. The two happy persons will unite as they never could before in "labour for and with the Lord." And the former effect for good and blessing will not diminish, but will rather be increased by the intimate wedded union of two hearts devoted to the Lord.

JOYS DOUBLED

The shepherd in our Lord's parable sought in solitary places for the sheep which was lost, and his success in finding it was a joy to him. But in the loneliness of the wilderness this joy was restricted. He wanted some hearts to share his joy. And "when he cometh home", he called his friends together, saying, "Rejoice with

me; for I have found my sheep which was lost”.

Home is the sphere of joy, especially of private and personal joy. The joys of married life are more than doubled in intensity just because they are shared by the two who have become one, and who are now everything to one another. Small matters bring great joys in the intimacies of home life, in which strangers may not meddle.

The daily offering of praise and thanksgiving to God, no longer strictly personal to each, has fresh fervour to which each contributes from a grateful heart. The joint prayers of husband and wife are the more powerful in their intercession, seeing they are offered from the hearts of those whom God has joined together. These devotional exercises carry with them their own peculiar and almost inexpressible joys, which are all the sweeter to the taste because they are shared together in the new home.

In service to the Lord each is strengthened by the other, and what otherwise might be lacking in either is supplied. New forms of service become possible through joint desires and efforts. When an Apollos needed instruction in the things of the Lord, the house of Aquila and Priscilla was opened to receive him; and the husband and wife united in expounding the way of God to him more perfectly (Acts xviii. 24-28).

They agreed to use the convenience of their house for the spiritual benefit of one who, though not lacking in zeal and

ability, was immature in the faith. And the pious pair had the joy of finding that the hospitality and the Christian atmosphere of their home was turned to good account in the after-life of Apollos. The newly-married might well seek to emulate the home service of Aquila, of Gaius, and of Lydia, as recorded in the New Testament. It will be a new form of service for them, and is well within their reach.

SORROWS HALVED

New homes are so bright and fresh and joyous that it may seem churlish to suggest that some day sorrow will be an uninvited visitor. But it must be so. Tribulation of some sort is inevitable in every household; but if the Lord is there, the inmates will have His peace. Dark thunder-clouds may steal across the bright blue above, but the believer knows that the sun still shines in the heavens, and that the rainbow is in the rain.

Moreover, in married life there are two hearts to bear one sorrow, and each striving to take the greater share of grief and loss. The strong man shields his partner from the impending stroke, and the loving wife hides in her bosom many a pang lest her dear man should have still more to bear. But sharing is better than concealment. Men and women are made strong in hours of sorrow by sympathy; and there is no sympathy so choice and so effective as that which dwells in the Christian home-life.

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

Thy Name Is as Ointment Poured Forth

Song of S. 1:3.

In this language is portrayed the preciousness of Christ (as the Bridegroom) to the bride. This will be at once perceived if the context be examined. "Let Him kiss me," cries the bride, "with the kisses of His mouth: for (now addressing Him directly) Thy love is better than wine" (Song of Sol. 1:2). It is not so much the love itself, as the enjoyment of the love, of which she speaks; this it is which is "better than wine." Every renewed heart will respond to this statement, for while the love of Christ is ever beyond all our thoughts, infinite and unspeakable, it is only as we enjoy it that we in any measure enter into, or appreciate it. But when the heart expands in the power of the Spirit to its blessed influences and constraint, when it opens, without let or hindrance, to the inflowing of its mighty tides, then the soul learns experimentally the marvelous character of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Another thing is equally true, the more we taste of the love of Christ, the more we desire it. Every experience of it begets an ardent longing for a larger measure of it. Thus, if the bride had not previously known something of the Bridegroom's affection, she would never have uttered this passionate desire.

It is, moreover, through the heart that all divine knowledge is received; and hence, as here, the bride passes from the expression

of her estimate of the enjoyment of the Bridegroom's love, to a declaration of the effect of His excellencies and perfections. Her heart apprehends, through the enjoyment of His love, the savor of His "good ointments." Still, it may be remarked, in the language of another, that "however strong" the bride's affections may be, they are not developed according to the position in which Christian affections, properly so-called, are formed. They differ in this respect. They do not possess the profound repose and sweetness of an affection that flows from a relationship already formed, known, and fully appreciated, the bonds of which are formed and recognized, that counts upon the full and constant acknowledgment of the relationship, and that each party enjoys, as a certain thing, in the heart of the other. The desire of one who loves, and is seeking the affections of the beloved object, is not the sweet, entire, and established affection of the wife, with whom marriage has formed an indissoluble union. To the former, the relationship is only in desire, the consequence of the state of heart; to the latter the state of heart is the consequence of the relationship."

This distinction should be well weighed and apprehended, for it contains the key to the interpretation of the "Song of Songs." But it is still true, whether in the heart of the bride, or in that of the Christian, that love is the means of, the capacity for, divine knowledge; that, in a word, he that loves most knows most. (See 1 Cor. 8:1-3; Eph. 1:18—reading "heart" instead of "understanding.") Mary

Magdalene is a striking illustration of this point. Peter and John had more light than she, for they (or certainly John) had seen that the sepulchre was empty, and had believed, while she was in utter darkness as to the resurrection. And yet it was to Mary that the Lord revealed Himself. The two disciples, having satisfied themselves that the sepulchre was bereft of its prey (and John, at least, believing that the Lord had risen Victor over death), "went away again unto their own home" (John 20:10). But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping. Engrossed, in the intensity of her affection, with her Object, she was rooted to the spot; having lost Christ she had lost everything, and all the world was but a sepulchre to her if Christ were not living. The state of her heart was right, although her spiritual understanding was not enlightened; and hence it was that the Lord could come and disclose Himself to her, and make her the glad messenger of the blessed tidings that henceforward He associated His brethren with Himself in heaven, before His Father and God, in His own place and relationship.

If the reader have understood the divine principles which have been enunciated, he will easily comprehend the language of the bride, which must now be considered. "Because of the savor of Thy good ointments," she says, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." The "good ointments" will represent for us the blessed fragrance of His excellent perfections, as seen in His life, in His acts of tenderness and grace, as well as in His words,

and in His walk of entire dependence and obedience before God in His pathway through this world. They will, doubtless, be apprehended and enjoyed in the intimacy of His own presence, in His manifested relationships with the soul, in His ways and personal dealings. The bride, indeed, could not have known the savor of His good ointments in any other way. And it is ever true that the nearer we are to Christ the more fully we enter upon the experience of the beloved disciple, who was admitted to the intimacy of reposing upon the Lord's breast, and the clearer will be our perception of His beauty and grace. We may be much impressed by report and testimony, even when at a distance like the Queen of Sheba, but it is only when, like her, we hear and see for ourselves, that we are lost in adoration in the presence of the fragrance of the good ointments. If, therefore, we would be absorbed with the sense of His graces and beauties we must press on with the two disciples, drawn onward by His attractions, to the place where He dwells. Having part with Him there, the savor of His excellencies will constitute the perpetual joy and rejoicing of the soul.

Before proceeding further it should be noticed that the sweet savor of the life of Christ, as may be gathered from Leviticus 2, was first and foremost for God. The priests might eat of the fine flour, mingled with oil, of which the meat-offering was composed, but all the frankincense thereof was to be burned with a part of the offering upon the altar, to

be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord. How blessed to know this! If there had not been a single soul upon the face of the earth to delight in the savor of the good ointments of Christ, His life would not have been in vain, inasmuch as it brought glory to God and filled His heart with infinite joy. No! our blessed Lord could not have wasted His sweetness "upon the desert air," because there was One whose eyes ever rested upon Him with unspeakable complacency, noting with joy the perfection of His every thought, and act, and word, and step. It was this which drew forth from the overflowing heart of God the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5). And the more Christ was tested—and He was tested in every variety of way, even by the holy fire of the altar itself—the more abundantly did His sweet savor flow forth to gratify the heart of His God. We call attention to it, because if the bride is, if we ourselves are, permitted to participate in the enjoyment of the sweet savor of His life, to feed upon the perfections of His entire devotedness to the glory of His God, it is only because God has first had His portion, and because He, in His ineffable grace, has called us to share in His own delight in the pathway and person of His beloved Son.

Remark also that it is through the savor of the good ointments that His name, the revelation of all that He is, is spread abroad, as the fragrance of ointment poured forth. In this way, as expressed in the hymn—

*"Like fragrance on the breezes
His name is spread abroad."*

Illustrations of this abound in the gospels. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria" (Matt. 4:23, 24). As we read in another place, "And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but He could not be hid" (Mark 7:24). No! blessed Lord, the savor of Thy good ointments had gone abroad on every hand, making Thee everywhere known, so that Thy name had become as the sweet fragrance of ointment poured forth to all who were burdened with distress and sorrow, to the weary and needy souls amongst Thy people.

This is doubtless only one side of this precious truth; for what our scripture brings before us is rather the soul's entrancement with the preciousness of Christ through the apprehension of His various excellencies as displayed in Himself and His ways. Still it is always through our needs that we first get to Christ and learn what He is in His love and grace. Then, when our needs have been met and satisfied, we are at leisure, set at liberty from ourselves, and at liberty in His presence, to contemplate Himself. The savor of His good ointments, indeed, scarcely steals into the soul with its gladdening refreshment until every question affecting ourselves and

our relationship with God has been settled. In rare cases Christ Himself may be known at the commencement of the spiritual life; but generally speaking, it is a troubled conscience which has to be appeased, through the efficacy of the blood of Christ, before we are free to survey His glorious perfections. Then, as these, surprise and awaken the soul's delight, His name, even the very mention of it, will fill our hearts with the sense of its sweetness and fragrance, and produce such emotions as can only be expressed in adoring worship at His feet.

Another thing should be mentioned. The savor of the good ointments of Christ may flow out through the holy lives of His people. Every trait, every perfection exhibited by Himself in His walk through this world may be reproduced in those that are His. Look, for example, at the precepts and exhortations of the epistles. Every one of them has been perfectly exemplified in Christ; and unless this is remembered, so that they may be associated with Himself as the living Word, they will become hard and legal obligations. Christ in us, Christ our life, as set forth in Colossians, is to be followed by the display of Christ through us, in the power of the Holy Ghost. For this we need to be much in His company; for the more we are with Him and occupied with Him, the more we shall be transformed into His likeness, and the more certainly will the savor of His good ointments be spread abroad. And this will be a mighty testimony to what He is; for in this case His name will, through us, be as ointment poured

forth; the sweet savor of the name of Christ will flow forth from our walk as well as from our words. The apostle Paul uses the very words in speaking of his preaching, when he says, "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ: (2 Cor. 2:15); and in chap. 4 he points out that testimony is connected with the life as well as with the lip. As we meditate upon it, may we not say, "What a privilege! What a mission, to be sent out into the world to make known the savor of the good ointments of Christ, that His name may, through us, be as ointment poured forth!"

The effect of this has yet to be noticed: "therefore do the virgins love thee." The fragrance of the name of Jesus attracts the hearts of the virgins—not of all God's people, be it observed, but only of the virgins. A very distinct thought is connected in Scripture with the virgin. It is character, moral character, speaking as it does of the absence of defilement, of uncontamination with the polluting influences of the world (See Rev. 14:4). Virgins, therefore, stand in this scripture for those who have been enabled, through grace, to maintain a holy separation from the defilements of the scene through which they are passing, those whose hearts have been kept true to Christ, and guarded in loyalty to Him through the sense of His claims, and of His love. A heart possessed of Christ is fortified against the most seductive allurements of the world. It is absorbing affection which always distinguishes the virgin; and this affection is ever intensified and deepened by every new discovery of the perfectness of Christ. In

other words, those who partake of the virgin character always respond to the display of the preciousness of Christ. He being the sole object of their hearts, they are in the condition of soul to enter into, and enjoy, His beauties. They will detect His presence, the blessed fragrance of His words and His acts, where others will observe nothing. They live in His presence; they are wholly for Him; and hence it is the delight of Christ to disclose Himself to them in such attractive ways as to increase and elicit their affections towards Himself.

It follows from what has been said that the state of our souls may be discerned by the effect produced upon us by the name of Jesus. If our hearts are careless and irresponsive when He is the subject of conversation or presentation, we cannot be in communion with the heart of God. Why even the name of a beloved object on earth will produce pleasurable emotions. How much more should the name of Christ, the object of God's heart—and also of ours if we know Him—awaken within us holy feelings of delight, which can only be expressed in praise and adoration! —E. D.

Peace the Fruit of Faith

God alone can speak peace to the conscience. But do not suppose from this that God will speak to you in an audible voice, or by some new and distinct revelation, additional to what you have already in His Word. God has

spoken already most fully in His Word. Fix, then, your attention on what God says in His Word, and trust Him, while thus considering what He says, to enable you to understand and receive it. In Acts 10:36, you read of God "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Is not that "speaking peace" by His blessed Word? When He preaches it—proclaims it openly—can there be any doubt of His speaking it?

But what is meant by peace? I am not sure whether we understand each other as to this. When you speak of not having peace you mean the feeling of peace within, the inward sense of assurance of being forgiven, and reconciled to God, and at peace with Him. Desirable and important as this feeling is, it is, however, only an effect of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and not that peace itself. Now what you need to understand is that which God has declared concerning that peace.

You and I, my friend, have both sinned against God. By nature we are sinners; and for a number of years we have lived a life of sin and rebellion against God. Well, God has had just occasion to be angry with us on account of our sins; and as a fact, He is angry with sin, and hates it with a perfect hatred. But though justly angry with our sins, He has loved us, and viewed us with infinite compassion. His heart yearned over us in mercy, and He is unwilling that we should suffer the just consequences of our sins against Him. But how could these consequences be averted? How could He smile upon us or receive us to His favor, while in our sins? And what could you or I do to get rid of sin, or to turn away

God's righteous displeasure on account of it? Clearly nothing. Whatever we do is defiled by sin, and so makes matters worse. Evidently we can do nothing fit to bring to God; and even if we could do right for the time to come, this could never stand against our past sins, and compensate for them. So far as we are concerned, the case is hopeless. But God so loved us, as to have reconciled us to Himself, brought us back to His favor, and made us happy under His smile. And though He could not let our sins go unpunished, and we could do nothing to get rid of them, what He did was to send His only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). This having been accomplished, God is now at liberty, if I may so speak, to satisfy His own love in receiving us to His bosom. What God sought was to have a just and holy ground on which to pardon and save us, and to receive us to heaven, notwithstanding our sins, and this He has found in the death of Jesus, in the shedding of His blood for sin. It is thus that Jesus has "made peace through the blood of His cross." This is not something yet to be done; it is done already; and God tells us it is done in His holy Word.

"As God is true," the Lord Jesus Christ has "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20); and it is thus that God "preaches peace by Jesus Christ." He "came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:17). To you, then, Christ preaches peace, the peace with God which He has made by the shedding of His all-precious blood. God says

that He is satisfied with the blood of Christ, that it justifies Him in receiving you to His favor. Why, then, should we be harder to satisfy than God Himself? What justifies God in justifying us may well satisfy our hearts and set our consciences at rest before God. I know the soul wants solid ground on which to rest; but what is so solid as the Word of God? "As God is true," my friend, you and I are sinners. "As God is true," He sent His Son in love for you to die on the cross, instead of leaving you to perish in your sins forever. "As God is true" He is satisfied with what Christ has done and suffered on your behalf. And this we know because He has raised Him from the dead. So now throw yourself into His arms of mercy, and live forever. Instead of any longer doubting, or fearing, or questioning, see how God is satisfied with what Christ has borne upon the cross on your behalf; and if you dare not say that it is not sufficient, if you feel that it would be awful to say this, why, go then to God and own to Him that it is sufficient. "Lord, it is enough! I am a sinner indeed, but Christ has died!"

Abide by this dear friend. If you feel no instant change, still keep to this ground. Rest your whole soul on this foundation before God. He will never tell you that you do wrong to trust His Word, and the precious blood of Christ. "By Him all who believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13:39); and rest thus on Jesus, to be satisfied thus with the blood of Jesus, is believing. —Abridged.

The Lamp and the Light

Did you ever in descending a dark flight of stairs suddenly reach the bottom before you expected to do so? If you did, you may possibly recollect with what an unpleasant jerk your descent terminated on account of the false step you took. If there had been a lamp for your feet, the shock would have been avoided.

Now in a spiritual way the Word of God is said to be "a lamp unto the feet" (Ps. 119: 105), and if you neglect to make use of its light you will stumble woefully. But there is no reason why a Christian should take a single step in the dark. The Lord Jesus said, "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). And it is by His word that the Lord affords you direction how and when to take the next step.

We have an instance of this guidance by the Word of God in the case of the Jewish exiles who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The people desired Ezra the scribe to read aloud to them from the book of the law that they might learn what the will of God was (Neh. 8:1). They found therein that they were commanded to keep the feast of tabernacles just at that time of the year (v. 14). The commandment of the Lord shone as a lamp for their feet (Prov. 6: 23); and the people at once obeyed His Word.

Later on, they read in the book of Moses that the Ammonites and the Moabites must

not come into the congregation for ever (Neh. 13:1-3). Their next step was then made visible, and they immediately separated themselves from the mixed multitude or foreigners among them.

Thus these Jews sought the lamp of God's Word, and they were led on, step by step, "line upon line, precept upon precept." And such will be the experience of all those who really desire to be guided of God every moment and in everything.

Let us take a practical illustration from what may occur to you. You may meet an agreeable person to whom you are attracted and whom you think would form a desirable companion for you. Now do not act hastily in the matter. Do not take a step in the dark, which may cause you many regrets. Allow the light of the divine lamp to fall upon the question. Consider what the consequences of the companionship may be. Is the person such a one as the Word of God commends? If you wait patiently on the Lord in this sincere manner, you are sure not to be led astray.

But you will remember that in the same verse from which I have already quoted, the Word of God is compared to a light as well as to a lamp. The verse reads, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." You will observe that the lamp is useful for the feet, while the light shines upon the path. For the Word of God not only supplies direction for your next step, but also the principles which should govern your conduct generally. The light shines on the way ahead of you.

When you have been guided in the matter

referred to above—whether such and such a person is a suitable companion or not—you will have proved for yourself the value of the Word as a lamp to your feet. But when you also gather from its pages that unbelievers and even worldly-minded Christians are unsuitable associates for a child of God, you have the Word shedding its light on your path. It gives you a general rule for your conduct, since this truth applies not to that one case only but to every such case that may arise in the future.

The Word of God gives you a sort of bird's-eye-view of the path before you. Its light shows you what to do, as well as what not to do; what to follow as well as what to shun. This is helpful for it tells you what is expected of you daily.

Take, for instance, the fact that believers should be continually looking for the personal return of the Lord Jesus, according to His own promise (John 14:2, 3), and according to what is taught in the Epistles of the New Testament. These passages tell you of what is your constant duty, lest when the Lord comes He may not find you ready and watching. This is light for our actions not on one day alone, but on every day and all the days.

Then, again, there is another cardinal truth which illuminates the path of every Christian, and will preserve from many a misunderstanding those who heed its light. The believer is instructed in the Word of God that his journey through this world will, of necessity, involve a course of self-denial and of endurance of many hardships. As you look

along the shining pathway, you see a stiff bit of climbing ahead, and that it is uphill all the way. But then it is sunshine all the time, and that makes all the difference. Who would walk in the darkness?

The Word of God makes it clear that directly you become a disciple of Christ, a cross is laid upon your shoulder. Indeed, the Lord expects you to take up the cross. He said to His disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Note the Lord said, "his cross," not My cross. There is a cross, which is your cross. The light of the Word shows you that there is a cross for you, lying in your path. Do not be surprised nor stumbled; but take it up.

The Scriptures show us very plainly two great features of the Lord's pathway (Luke 24:25, 26; 1 Peter 1:11), and they throw a broad beam of light upon the path of Christians also. These features are:

- (1) sufferings in this world;*
- (2) glories afterwards on high.*

You recollect what the Lord said to His followers, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord" (Matt. 10:25). Therefore you may be sure that if you are faithful to the Lord Jesus, your path is where the light shines:

- (1) suffering in this world for Christ's sake;*
- (2) glory to come with Christ on high.*

If you grasp this line of truth at once, you will have an explanation in readiness for a great many things that are likely to befall you; and you will not count it anything strange if a great many trials of one kind and another overtake you just because you belong to the Lord Jesus. It will help you to read the life of Christ in the four Gospels and to "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. 12:3). He has left you an example that you should follow His steps, and in the track of His footsteps you will have "the light of life."

I earnestly trust that you will assiduously cultivate the habit of consulting the Word of God:

- (1) as a lamp to guide you in every circumstance of difficulty and distress;
 - (2) as a light to counsel you in the plans and purposes you make for your general conduct.
- YOD.

"Our God is light; and though we go
Across a trackless wild,
Our Savior's footsteps ever show
The path for every child.

"At every step afresh we prove
How sure our heavenly Guide;
The faithful and forbearing love
That never turns aside."

In His Steps

"Follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:21-23).

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:29, 30).

While the Lord Jesus Christ is the great theme of all Scripture, yet every several portion presents some special aspect of His Person or work. The above passages bring before us, very blessedly, the lowly grace that marked His pathway of suffering as the perfectly subject Man.

In one passage we are exhorted by the apostle Peter to follow His steps: in the other, believers are invited by the Lord Himself, to learn of Him. Good for each one to heed the exhortation and to respond to the gracious invitation. To do so, however, we need to reverently enquire, What are His steps that we are exhorted to follow? and, What is it that the Lord would have us to learn of Him?

1. His Steps (1 Peter 2:21-23)

First, let us listen to the exhortation of the apostle. There came a day in the history of Peter when the Lord had said to His restored disciple, "Follow me" (John 21:19).

Now the apostle passes on these words to each one of us, as he says, "Follow His steps." In Christendom, and even by true believers, the words, "Follow His steps" are often used in a vague and loose way.

It is evident then that in Scripture there is no exhortation to a sinner to follow His steps in order to obtain salvation. Apart from the sacrificial death of Christ, and faith in His precious blood, there can be no salvation for a helpless sinner. In Scripture God never uses "His steps" to set aside His work. A great deal that the Lord did in His marvelous life we cannot, and are not asked to, do. He did mighty works, even to raising the dead; He spake as never man spake. In these ways we are not exhorted to follow His steps. The four steps we are exhorted to follow are possible for all believers, from the youngest to the oldest.

First, we are reminded that He "did no sin." We know that He went about doing good; and, in this same epistle we are exhorted, again and again, to "good works," and to "do well." Here, however, the exhortation takes a negative form; we are to follow His steps in this respect that He did no sin. Whatever happens, whatever circumstances may arise, whatever rebuffs we may have to meet, whatever wrongs we may have to suffer, whatever insults we may have to endure, we are to do no sin. It is comparatively easy to do good as a benefactor, meeting the needs of others; but seeing we have the flesh in us, it is at times difficult to do no sin. It is a greater thing to do no sin in trying circumstances

than to do good in easy ones. The Lord was perfect in all circumstances, and, whatever the circumstances we have to meet, our first care should be to follow His steps, and maintain His character, in this respect, that we do no sin. It is better to suffer wrong than sin; better to loose your coat than let go the character of Christ.

Secondly, we read, 'neither was guile found in His mouth.' However sorely tried by wicked men, no question that He asked, no answer that He gave, no word that fell from His lips, was ever marred by any trace of guile. Alas! with us, at times, malice and envy may lurk behind words that are "smoother than butter" and "softer than oil." With Him no evil motive was ever hidden under fair speech. Guile lurked behind the apparently innocent question of the religious Pharisees when they asked "is it lawful to give tribute to Ceasar or not?" for we read they were seeking to "entangle Him in His talk" (Matt. 22:15-18). With the flesh in us it is all too possible to seek to entangle one another with smooth speech and innocent looking questions. Alas! we can even covertly attack one another in the very words we address to God in public prayer. How good then, and necessary the exhortation to follow in the steps of the One in whom no guile was found in His mouth.

Thirdly, we are reminded that the Lord was One, "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." In the presence of insults, false accusation, and malicious charges, He remained silent. When falsely accused before

the Jewish Council, He "held His peace." To the accusations of the Jews, in the presence of Pilate, "He answered nothing." To Pilate himself, "He answered never a word." The mocking Herod may question Him in many words, "but He answered him nothing" (Matt. 26:63; 27:12-14; Luke 23:9).

How good for us to follow in His steps and, in the presence of the malicious words of men, come from what quarter they may, to keep silence. From other Scriptures it is clear that the Christian may "entreat," "exhort," and even "rebuke," but never is he to revile or threaten.

Fourthly, He "committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." To do no sin, to speak no guile, to keep silence in the presence of malicious words, have a negative character. This last step is positive. If we keep silence in the presence of insults, it is not that there is no answer to evil and malice, but rather that the answer is left with God. We are never to attempt to take vengeance upon the wrongdoer. God retains all vengeance in His own hands. He has said, "*Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.* And again, *The Lord shall judge his people*" (Heb. 10:30). Our part then is to follow in the steps of the Lord Jesus, and in the presence of insults to commit ourselves unto Him that judgeth righteously, remembering that word which says, "Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, *vengeance is mine: I will repay saith the Lord*" (Rom. 12:19). Again we may recall the words of the prophet,

"Jehovah is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that one should both wait, and that in silence, for the salvation of Jehovah" (Lamentations 3: 24-26 N. T.).

Here then we have four steps, taken in perfection by the Lord, that we are exhorted to follow. In all these steps there is no word as to ministry, or any form of service, that would make any show in this world, or bring us into prominence amongst the people of God. This being so we might thoughtlessly say, as we read these exhortations, that to do no evil, speak no guile, to keep silence in the presence of insults, and commit oneself to God, does not seem after all very much, and is a little disappointing. If, however, we put these things into practice, and follow His steps it will assuredly be found that our brethren will not be disappointed in us. Could we but take these steps others would see in us the most wonderful sight that can be seen in this world—they would see a Christ like man.

God forbid that we should belittle true service for Christ, but let us not forget that we may travel world-wide in service, and preach to thousands, and our names be well known in religious circles, and our service duly recorded in religious papers, and yet all be of little account in God's sight, if these four steps are lacking. Let us remember that we may speak with the tongues of angels and yet be nothing. So that, in the day to come it is possible that a thousand of our fine sermons, on which perhaps we prided

ourselves, and for which our brethren may have praised us, will be found to be but dust and ashes, while some little bit of Christ in our lives, which we may have entirely forgotten, will shine out in all its beauty and receive its bright reward. Thus these steps may not take us into the public gaze to-day, but they will take us far into the kingdom glories in the day to come. It is a word we do well to remember, "Many that are first shall be last; and the last first" (Mark 10:31).

2. Learn of Me (Matt. 11:29, 30).

It will greatly help us to carry out the apostle's exhortation to "follow His steps" if we heed the Lord's own words, "Learn of me." To learn of the Lord, we must "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners."

In the early chapters of the Gospel of Matthew we see the Lord in the midst of Israel, on every hand dispensing grace and power in relieving men of every pressure under which they are found. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, delivered from the power of Satan, forgave sins, and raised the dead. In result men fought against Him without a cause, rewarded Him evil for good and hatred for love (Ps. 109:5). They laughed Him to scorn; they said, "He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils," and that He was "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber" (Matt. 9:20, 34; 11:19).

In the presence of the contradiction of sinners, of the hatred that spurned His love,

and the evil that scorned His goodness, how did He act? In the presence of all this enmity we read, that He gave Himself unto prayer (Ps. 109:4). Instead of turning upon His opposers and reviling those that reviled Him, He turned to God in prayer and committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

In scorn, neglect, reviling,
Thy patient grace stood firm:
Man's malice unavailing
To move Thy heart to haste.

Thus in this wonderful scene described in Matthew 11, which sums up the effect of His mighty works in the midst of Israel, we are permitted to see how the Lord acts when He is despised and rejected of men. We see Him turning to the Father in prayer, and we hear Him say, "Even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke 10:21). He submits entirely to the Father's will and takes everything from His hand. Then, with Himself before us as the perfect Example, we hear Him say to us,

Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.

In Scripture the "yoke" is ever a figure of submission to the will of another. From the beginning to the end of His wonderful path through this world, the Lord, as the perfect Man, was here for the will of the Father. Coming into the world, He could say, "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7). Passing through the world He could say,

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6:38); and again, He says, "I do always those things that please him" (8:29). Going out of the world, He could say, in view of the cross, "Not my will but thine be done" (Luke 22:42).

Our little circumstances, however painful and trying at times, are as nothing compared with those the Lord had to face. But whatever they may be we are exhorted to take the Lord's yoke by quietly submitting to what the Father allows.

Moreover, the Lord says, "Learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart." He was not only meek and lowly in manner, but He was "meek and lowly in heart." The right manner that men can see is comparatively easy to put on, but the right condition of heart, that the Lord alone can see, can only result from turning to the Lord in prayer and submitting to the Father's will. Naturally we are neither meek nor lowly. Instead of meekly giving way to others we assert ourselves; instead of having low thoughts of self we are naturally prone to self-importance. To correct all these natural tendencies of the flesh the Lord engages us with Himself, as He says, "Learn of me." As we gaze upon Him, and admire these lovely qualities, we insensibly become changed into His image. We become morally like the One we admire. Alas! the fact that oftentimes we are so little like Him tells, only too plainly, how little we have Himself before our souls—how little we learn of Him.

Taking His yoke and learning of Him we shall find rest unto our souls. Dwelling upon the trying circumstances we may have to meet, fretting our souls over the insults that may be flung at us, the betrayal of false friends, the malice of jealous persons, will bring no rest to the soul. Submitting to what the Father allows and catching the beautiful spirit of Christ, in all its meekness and lowliness, as we learn of Him, we shall enjoy the rest of spirit that was ever the portion of the Lord in a world of unrest.

Moreover, if we take His yoke, and thus submit to the Father's will we shall find that His yoke is easy and His burden light. For in following His steps, doing no sin, speaking without guile, keeping silence in the presence of insults, and committing ourselves to God, we shall have His support as yoked with Him in submission to the Father's will. And with His support, and in fellowship with Him, we shall find how true are His words,

My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

Thus, as we read these Scriptures, we are made conscious that Peter does not exhort us to take impossible steps; and the Lord does not ask us to learn impossible lessons. Peter exhorts us,

To do no sin,

To use no guile,

To be silent in the presence of insults, and

To commit ourselves to God.

The Lord asks us to learn of Him, in subjection to the Father's will, in meekness that

thinks of others, and lowliness that does not think of self.

We wonder at Thy lowly mind,
And fain would like Thee be,
And all our rest and pleasure find
In learning Lord, of Thee. —H. S.

At the Feet of Jesus

There is one character brought before us in the Gospels for whom Christians have a specially kindly thought. Her name is Mary of Bethany; and the reason why we remember her with affection is because the Lord Jesus meant so much to her. And yet we only get her mentioned three times in the whole of the Gospels. But on each of those occasions she is found in a most becoming attitude; she is to seen at the feet of Jesus.

She does not seem to have had any great place in the world; she was probable the younger of the two sisters (we read that the house was Martha's). But no heart was more devoted to Jesus, and none, not even the favored apostles, learned more from Him. Let us consider the three occasions where she appears.

At His Feet to Learn

On the first occasion where she is mentioned, and it looks like being the first occasion when our Lord went to the house where

the two sisters lived, we read this: "Mary . . . also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word" (Luke 10:39). The phrase indicates the true humility of heart with which she listened, giving rapt attention to the wonderful teachings of the greatest of all teachers. All that He had to tell her of Himself and His Father she would listen to, lay hold of and treasure up. And the result of this learning we see later, when her intelligence as to His death and resurrection exceeded that of everyone else who had to do with Him.

"One thing is needful," said our Lord, "and Mary hath chosen that good part" (v. 42). He was not unmindful of the service that Martha rendered for His comfort: He knew rightly how to value that, as He does all that any believer does for Him. But let us learn this lesson. We must "hear His Word," and that "at His feet" in true humility and subjection. This is necessary and preparatory to anything we can do for Him. He Himself says "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29:). The Old Testament prophet had learned the same lesson, "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16). There is a tendency for us to miss this in our Christian life; we may be ever so busy in His service; or we may be idle and listless. Let us remember His searching words, "One thing is needful," and let us see to it that we spend time "at His feet" to hear His words. Do you say, "How does this apply to me to-day?" Surely by reading His Word in that

attitude of mind, the attitude of humility and complete subjection to it as His Word, and thinking over it consciously in His presence.

At His Feet in Sorrow

The next occasion on which Mary is mentioned is in John 11, when her brother Lazarus had been snatched out of that happy home by death. When Jesus came after the unlooked-for delay, Mary "fell at His feet," in the fulness of her sorrow, saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And how her sorrow touched the tender heart of Jesus! It is here we get that marvelous verse, the shortest in the Bible, "Jesus wept." It may be true that He looked beyond the particular sorrow and saw all the ravages that sin and death had brought into the world; but surely too His tears reflected deepest, fullest sympathy for that dear heart in grief. He was going to do a thing perhaps beyond her wildest dreams; but He will let His tears flow, as He sees her weeping.

Here we will say that "at the feet of Jesus" implies submission to His will—to the will of God. It is indeed the submissive heart that will find "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1: 3), a heart that rebels will surely miss the consolation that aboundeth by Christ. So, dear friend in deep sorrow and anguish, may we say to you in all tenderness, take it to the feet of Jesus. He may not work a miracle for your relief—that may not be His way—but you will experience that sweet and loving sympathy and comfort which none but He can give.

At His Feet for Worship

We have thought of Mary at the feet of Jesus to learn; and for comfort. Now let us see her there in a more wonderful way still. In John 12:1-8 is that exquisite account of the feast they made for Jesus at Bethany, where Mary took occasion to pour upon Him her most costly treasure. That pound of precious ointment, so often treasured by the Eastern woman against some momentous occasion, was brought out, and the whole of it lavished upon Jesus. Why had she not poured it out upon her brother's body when he died so shortly before? We do not know what kept her from doing so, but it was reserved—reserved for Jesus.

"Well," you say, "we cannot do anything like that now." True, that was a matter of material ointment poured out upon the person of our Lord as a Man here on the earth. He has gone back to heaven now. But we can bring Him the worship of our hearts now.

*"Lord Jesus, we love Thee,
And joyfully pour
The praises of worshipping hearts
At Thy feet."*

It is very wonderful that we can bring and give to Him anything that He cares for: He is the upholder of all things, who giveth to all life and breath and all things. Yet He values that praise and worship from us; and not only values it, but misses it when withheld. He said on the occasion of the healing of the ten

lepers, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" (Luke 17:17, 18). We may see how much He valued Mary's action by the reference in Matthew's Gospel, where He promised that wherever the gospel should be preached throughout the world, her deed should be told.

In passing, we may here justify a statement made earlier as to Mary's intelligence concerning the Lord Jesus. He says, "She did it for my burial"; all the other people who came to anoint His body were too late; He was risen before they got to His sepulchre. But Mary had that peculiar honor; she must have understood something of His death and resurrection, and that had come from "sitting at His feet and hearing His word."

Let us see to it that we find time to learn of Him; and let us not rob Him of that worship and thanks which is indeed His due, in which no creature can have a share. While in sorrow and grief, there is no comfort like that which we can find "at His feet."

H. W. M.

Lord Jesus, we love Thee and joyfully pour
The praises of worshipping hearts at Thy feet;
Lord Jesus, we love Thee, we love and adore
The Name that to God and to us is so sweet.

Oh, Name of sweet savor, a savor of rest,
The Name of the Victim. the Lamb that was
slain!

Oh, Name of God's loved One, in whom we are
blest!

Oh, Name ever worthy all homage to gain!

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

A Name which Is Above Every Name

Sometimes the question is raised as to what this name is; but whether it be the name of Jesus—as seems probable, if the amended reading be adopted—or not, its significance is very apparent. A passage from the Ephesians will explain this. In connection with the display of the exceeding greatness of God's power "to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead," the apostle proceeds, "and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (chap. 1:19-21). Here the meaning evidently is that, whatever the exaltation or dignity of any of the heavenly hierarchies or intelligences, Christ as the glorified Man has been set above them all. Among the vast number of celestial beings He is absolutely supreme. The rendering "far above" may not be exactly justified by the word used; but we cannot doubt that our translators seized its spirit in seeking to express that there was no second to the glorified Christ, that His exaltation is so unspeakable that all the highest gradations of angelic existences are far beneath His feet. Similarly in Philippians "the name which is above every

name" will betoken the absolute supremacy in the whole universe of the glorified Christ as Lord. Nothing short of this will satisfy the terms of this scripture.

This will be more readily understood if we consider the place and connection in which these words are found. In a sense the passage from v. 5 to 11 is complete in itself. It grows out of precious exhortations; and herein is the marvel that all this blessed unfolding of the person, of the character, of the incarnation of Christ, His humiliation and consequent exaltation, should be given to enforce the apostle's exhortation that the mind "which was also in Christ Jesus," seen in His coming "from Godhead's fullest glory, down to Calvary's depth of woe," should be before believers as their example! Let us then ponder upon it, for the more it is considered the more deeply will it impress itself upon our souls. In a past eternity He, who has been down here as the humbled One, was (subsisted) in the form of God. Such a statement, however far beyond the utmost range of all our thoughts, cannot signify less than His absolute and essential Deity. It speaks of His eternal existence as God, even as John says of the Word, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (chap. 1:1). On this blessed truth hangs the whole truth of revelation and redemption. To surrender it would be to lose the sun from the solar system, and thus to bring in darkness, chaos, and destruction. On this very account controversy has raged in all ages around the person of Christ. Now His human-

ity, and now His Deity, has been obscured if not denied. Faith meets all the arguments of man by the simple statements of the Word of God.

If, however, the Deity of our blessed Lord is here introduced, it is but to magnify His grace and self-humiliation; for the assertion of it is followed immediately by words of transcendent importance. First, He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but," secondly, "made himself of no reputation," or, more literally and exactly, "emptied himself" (Phil. 2:5-8). The first clause will mean that although He subsisted in the form of God, He did not use it for self-exaltation, "did not," as one has translated it, "esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God." It is, doubtless, a contrast to Adam, who fell into Satan's snare of seeking to exalt himself, to be "as gods, knowing good and evil." Adam being a man sought to exalt himself; Christ being God humbled Himself. How blessed the contrast! This was the mind which was in Christ Jesus; and the next clause—"but emptied Himself"—contains the first expression of that mind. It must be with unshodden feet (for the place is holy) that such a statement must be approached. Of what, then, did He who subsisted in the form of God empty Himself? It has been lately written that He emptied Himself of "divine prerogatives"; others have taught that the "emptying" included His divine attributes. Far be the thought! To admit it is certainly to becloud the essential truth of His Deity, and to open the door to rationalism in its worst forms.

For what are attributes? They are the characteristics of Deity, so that to empty Himself of the former is to lay aside the latter. No! a thousand times, no! As another has said, "The essential being of Godhead cannot change. His emptying Himself applied to the form."

The next sentences will make this plain, describing as they do the process and the effect of the emptying: He "took upon Him the form of a servant and was made (rather, became—it was His own voluntary, and, indeed, divine act) in the likeness of men." It was as God He emptied Himself, and now these words present Him to us after He had done so; for we see Him in the likeness of men, and in form as a "bondsman." This includes the whole truth of the incarnation, and through it we are enabled to form some estimate, however inadequate, of the immensity of the descent from "the form of God" to "the form of a servant." None but God was equal to such condescension and grace, for it was really the exhibition of divine love in the midst of sinners, and none but God could have made such a stoop, for man is limited to his own form and mode of existence. In the fact of the incarnation, therefore, we behold one of the glorious mysteries of redemption. And while unable to grasp its full and far-reaching significance, we yet learn that the lower Christ went down, the more brightly the effulgence of His divine glory shone forth! For God is light and God is love; and where do we behold this? Surely in Him who took upon Him the bondsman's form. In every step of His path-

way, in His words of grace and truth, in His works of power and mercy, light and love in all their perfection may be perceived by the opened eye; and the divinely-instructed heart is constrained to exclaim, Lo! God is there.

As God, it has already been said, He emptied Himself, and now we learn that as man He humbled Himself. Indeed, the whole life of our blessed Lord as man is compressed into the words, "He humbled Himself"; for it is not, as in our translation, "and became obedient unto death," but "becoming" so, that is in humbling Himself: and then, to bring out the full character of the humiliation, it is added, "even the death of the cross." It was a low place indeed He took when He assumed a bondsman's form; but how much lower when, "being found in fashion as a men," He went down to the shameful death of the cross! And let us again remind ourselves in our meditations, while we wonder and adore in the presence of such infinite condescension, that Christ is here presented as our example. The question may well be asked, in the beautiful language of another, "Are not our affections occupied and assimilated in dwelling with delight on what Jesus was here below? We admire, are humbled, and become conformed to Him through grace. Head and source of this life in us, the display of its perfection in Him draws forth and develops its energies and lowliness in us. For who could be proud in fellowship with the humble Jesus? Humble, He would teach us to take the lowest place, but that He has taken it Himself, the privilege of His perfect grace.

Blessed Master, may we at least be near to, and hidden in, Thee."

Such is the wondrous foundation on which the present exaltation of Christ is based. That there is a direct connection between the two is seen from the word "wherefore," which also expresses to us the estimate of God's heart of the self-humbling of Christ. Many grounds of the glory of Christ are given in Scripture. His worthiness, for example, is celebrated in Revelation 5, in virtue of the redemption which He had secured through His death, and through the efficacy of His blood. He Himself claims to be glorified in John 17 because He had glorified the Father on the earth, and had finished the work which had been given Him to do. Here it is quite another aspect. It is God Himself stepping in, in the joy of His heart, in His delight in the One who had so humbled Himself, and raising Him to those heights of glory which He now occupies; and the act proclaims aloud throughout the whole universe that no other position would have been commensurate with His deserts, that He who went down the lowest of all must have the highest place. Morally it is the exemplification of the principle, in all its perfection, which the Lord Himself enunciated—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It may then be said that His being highly exalted was but His meed and crown. The apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians touches upon another side of this great subject. There he tells us that He who descended into the lower parts of the earth is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens,

that He might fill all things. (Chap. 4:9, 10.) While we may not be able to fathom this profound language, it cannot mean less than that, in virtue of the humiliation of Christ, and of the work He thereby effected for the accomplishment of the counsels of God, He will eventually flood the whole universe with His own redemption-glory. And this, and nothing short of this, will be God's answer to the humiliation of His beloved Son.

Returning to our Scripture, we learn that "the name which is above every name" is given Him as a part of His exaltation: nay, that it is God's own estimate of what was due to the One who had humbled Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is thus the worthiness of Christ shown out by the place which God has given Him to occupy. We say, "given Him to occupy," because the presentation here is that of His exaltation as Man, as the consequence of His perfect obedience and entire devotedness to the glory of God through the whole of His pathway on earth up to, and including, death. What "the name" is, or whether it is the name of Jesus, it has already been remarked, cannot be decided; and, indeed, it is the thing signified to which the Spirit of God would direct our attention. The significance, let it be repeated, is that, whatever exalted beings may surround the heavenly throne, the glorified Jesus is above, and beyond, them all. The name accorded to Him, in virtue of His humiliation, bespeaks a dignity which far transcends the most exalted ranks of the celestial host, and tells, moreover, that He is

supreme in all the worlds which constitute the universe of God. If then this position which He now fills is expressive of God's delight in the once humbled Christ, will it not also awaken the delight of God's people, as they contemplate Him in that state and glory? It is in the grace of our God we are called to share in His own delight in His beloved Son; and the enjoyment of this, however feeble its measure, is really the foretaste—the commencement—of heavenly joys, which, filling the heart, even while treading the sands of the wilderness, can only find an outlet through the channel of worship and song.

E. D.

Precious to the Lord's Heart

"And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance" (Luke 7:37, 38; 8:2, 3).

In the case of the poor sinner we see deep personal affection as the fruit of conscious forgiveness or healing; here, in this company

of women, devoted attachment and service. In the poor sinner, all the hidden fountains are opened at the bidding of the grace of Christ. She knew that He had accepted her, sinner as she was, and this commanded her heart. It left her without an eye for the Pharisee's feast, or an ear for his scorning, for Jesus had drawn her apart from every thing; and to come near Him, as near as love and gratitude and worship could bring her, was all her concern. And at the same bidding of His healing love, this company of women attach themselves to Him. They follow to serve Him. Grateful love told itself out in her silently; in them it was busy. It would be with Him wherever He was, that it might give Him whatever it could minister.

Various fruit, but each blessed. And Jesus can understand both, and receive the secret tears of the one, and the active services of the other.

The beauty of either case would be sadly soiled, if these were not the fruit of conscious healing. What affection, what service, as pure as that which comes thence? The publican may smite on his breast in conscious guilt, and that in its place is surely a right and godly affection. But how are the beauty and the attractiveness of this outshone by tears and services, the love and the devotedness, that spring and flow forth from conscious acceptance! Nothing so precious to God, nothing so lovely even in our own thoughts, when we consider it for a moment. And, on the other hand, how sad when (instead of tears and services) self-satisfaction, high-

mindfulness, slight and contempt of others, or the mere unspiritual pursuit of knowledge and the busy competition of party, mark the heart and the ways.

May we all, beloved, cherish these simple patterns which the Spirit here records, and which so meet the approving presence of the Lord!

—J. G. B.

What Is Grace?

I remember a person once saying, "he did not like the word Grace; he thought the word love meant the same and was much better." This is a mistake; grace goes a great deal further than love. Man loves that which in some way he thinks worthy of love, and he thinks God is the same as himself, and therefore says he, "I must turn to God some day and try to be worthy of His love; and then He will love me." Now the Grace of God is the very opposite of this human thought. I do not know anything like it in the whole world. "What is Grace?" said I, the other day. "Mercy," was the reply. Well, it is true the love of God and the mercy of God are both, very wonderful. "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins"; and both the mercy and love of God are thus in grace, that is in pure unmerited favor. Yet this grace of God goes further, yea, far beyond the reach of all human thought.

Let us suppose a criminal, guilty of such

crimes as to make him an object of the deepest abhorrence, standing condemned before the judge. Mercy would be a great thing shown to such an one; but if it were possible in the heart of a human judge to love such an one, so utterly worthless and undeserving, that would indeed be a wonder. But what would be thought if the judge so loved the poor guilty one, as to put himself really in the place of the prisoner; bear the full penalty of all his crimes, and then take him into his own house, make him partner with himself, and say, "As long as I live, all that I have is yours." Oh! tell me where amongst the cold-hearted sons of men, where was ever grace shown like this? No! No! The glory of this grace belongeth alone to my God. Oh, how shall I tell of His wondrous grace!

My reader, you may have heard of it by the hearing of the ear, but has this grace ever reached your heart by the power of the Spirit of God? That God should thus love and pity, and show mercy to the guilty; yes, the ungodly! the guilty! the lost! as to send His own dear Son in sweetest grace, to take the very place of the lost and the guilty, in purest grace to bear all their sins in His own body on the tree! Oh look at the cross. God in grace meeting man's utmost need. Ah! Do you in your very heart believe it? Then you may cast yourself before such a God, confessing all your sins, your wretchedness, your misery, spread it all before Him. Do not try to make yourself a bit better than you are before Him. He will pardon the confessing sinner in faithfulness to the blood of Jesus.

Jesus died for the purpose that God might be just, not only in pardoning, but in justifying every sinner that believeth. But oh, that is not all; God in pure grace takes the utterly unworthy sinner, pardoned and justified, into perfect partnership or oneness with Himself in the ever blessed Lord Jesus. In this grace He met the murderer Saul; from that moment Paul became the partner or joint-heir of Christ. What a change! From that day he could say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Right well did he know that nothing could ever separate him from such love as this. Yes, and God by this very little paper, can, in the wonders of His grace, meet a murderer, a drunkard, a harlot, or worse than all, a deceived Pharisee. Yes, and from this moment the days of your partnership with Satan may be ended. Oh God, grant it. May this be your happy portion; pardoned, justified, for ever one with Christ. This was grace, not only to take the sinner's place, but to give the guilty worm an everlasting place with Himself in resurrection glory. This salvation is wholly of God. —C. S.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES

Christ our Savior

This is the first character under which Christ is apprehended. Son of God, Son of Man, the Christ of God, etc., all these are

titles and glories of which we have but little, if any, conception until after we have been enabled, by the grace of God, to apprehend Him as meeting our need as sinners, and by faith to lay hold upon Him as our Savior. Then, at peace with God, our hearts are at leisure; and, led by the Holy Spirit, we delight to trace out, study, and feast upon, every aspect in which He is presented for our contemplation in the Scriptures. This order is maintained in Matthew's gospel. Thus when the angel visited Joseph, to direct him in his perplexity concerning Mary, he said, "She shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). It is true that we have His royal lineage and His miraculous conception previously set forth; but still the first announcement concerning Him is in His character as Savior. So in the Epistle to Romans. After the salutation and introduction, we have first of all the state and need of man—whether Gentile or Jew—set forth; and immediately thereon the blood of Christ as meeting man's guilt is introduced; i. e. Christ as Savior. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation (mercy-seat) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:22-

26). It is not forgotten that the Lord Jesus can only present Himself as Savior on the ground of accomplished redemption. Hence, in this respect, He is first Redeemer and then Savior. But we speak here of the order of apprehension.

In considering Christ, then, as Savior, two things are mainly included: viz., His person and His work. Besides this there is the action of God in raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand. But this is rather declarative, being the response of God to what Christ had done—God's estimate of His work, of what was due to the One who had glorified Him on the earth, and finished the work which He had given Him to do. (John 17:4.) Thereby God both exhibits and declares Him to be Savior in virtue of His finished work—in virtue of the cross.

The person of Christ as the Savior may first engage our attention. In the scriptures already cited His person claims the precedence. Thus in Romans it is "the gospel of God concerning His Son (I quote the true order), who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:1-4). In Matthew also He is said to be the Son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1); and then to have been begotten of the Holy Ghost—before He is announced as the Savior. It is the person that attracts the gaze before we can consider His work. It is otherwise with the sinner. As a rule he first learns the value

of the work of Christ before he considers the truth of His person. The blessed Lord Himself, in His conversation with Nicodemus, first declares the mysterious dignity of His person; and then proclaims His rejection and death. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:13-15).

There are, then, two sides to the person of Christ. He was God manifest in flesh. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The Word was the Eternal Son, and the Eternal Son became man. He was thus God and man—a union of extremes which was not possible in any other, and rendering His person so unfathomable, so incomprehensible, that He Himself said, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11:27). But it is essential that we hold fast both His true divinity and His as equally true humanity. For had He not been true man, He could not have been a sacrifice for sin; and had He not been God, His sacrifice could not have been available for all. Satan knows this, and hence, in every age, he has sought to undermine the one or the other of these truths, insinuating doubts sometimes concerning His humanity, and sometimes concerning His divinity. But it is the glory of the person of Christ that He is both divine and human, that

He is, in His one person, both God and man. This truth lies at the foundation of, and indeed gives its character to, redemption.

How vast a field is thus opened for our contemplation! Following Christ in His pathway down here, from the manger at Bethlehem to the cross at Calvary, we see the unfoldings both of the human and divine. As we behold Him, His lowly guise, "His visage so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14); as we mark Him in companionship with His disciples and see Him weary and resting, eating and drinking, weeping with those who wept (John 11), and sleeping, too, on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship (Mark 4:38), we cannot doubt that He was man. It was, indeed, the proofs of His humanity which, meeting their eyes, confounded His adversaries, and blinded them to His higher claims.

On the other hand, the evidences of His divinity are no less clear to the anointed eye. Who but God could cleanse the leper, open the eyes of the blind, raise the dead to life, and control the wind and the waves? Hence He said to Philip, in answer to his demand to show him the Father, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: *or else believe me for the very works' sake*" (John 14:10-11). And what He was, what He is declared to be in the Scriptures, is, if possible, still more conclusive. "In the beginning was

the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:1, 18). He is said to be "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3). In another epistle He is described as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:15-17). Consider moreover His own words: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9); "I and my Father are One" (John 10:30); "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58); and who can doubt that He claimed to be divine?

We cannot too often bless God for the four Gospels, in which are blended these two aspects of the person of Christ. Hence they are the profoundest of all the Scriptures—because they contain the unfoldings of a divine-human life. No doubt the narratives are simple on their surface; but as we are led on by the Spirit of God we begin to discover that there are depths of which we had never dreamt, and into which we must gaze, and continue to gaze, if we would behold the treasures that are therein contained. And the more we are familiarised with their contents, the more shall we be impressed with the

majesty of the person of Christ as the God-man, God manifest in flesh. And it should never be forgotten that there can be no stability where there is any uncertainty as to the person of our Savior. What strength it gives to the soul to be able to say (to quote the language of another)—"The pillars of the earth rest upon that Man who was despised, spit upon, and crucified!" It is the knowledge of what He is, no less (if not more) than what He has done, that draws out our hearts in confidence, adoration, and praise. For indeed He is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Romans 9:5).

We may now pass to the work of Christ. By it we generally understand what He accomplished on the cross—His death. In a larger view of it, there would be included His life as well as His death; but there is a broad and essential distinction between these two things. *It was in His death alone that He bore the sins of His people* (1 Peter 2:24). His life revealed what He was, showing, if we may so speak, His qualification to be an offering for sin, and proved Him to be the Lamb without spot or blemish—the Lamb of God; but it was on the cross alone that He stood in the sinner's place, met all God's righteous claims, and endured the wrath that was due to sin. It is the blood that maketh atonement. (Lev. 17:11; see also Lev. 1, 2 and 16). It was, therefore, on the cross alone that God dealt with Christ concerning the question of sin and sins. All through His life, though He was the "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3), He reposed in the consciousness

of the Father's love and smile: not a cloud ever passed between His soul and God. But when He was on the cross, there was a total change; for there it was that He was made sin; and in the unfathomable anguish of His spirit, when all God's waves and billows rolled over Him, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). He was thus forsaken of God—forsaken because of the place He had voluntarily taken as the sacrifice for sin. At that awful moment, therefore, God was dealing with Him, instead of us, about the question of sin; though He was never more precious to God than then, for it was on the cross that He proved His obedience to the uttermost. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (John 10:17).

It was, then, on the cross—by the shedding of His blood, by all, indeed, that He suffered there, by His death, that atonement was accomplished. Hence, ere "He bowed His head and gave up the ghost," He cried, anticipatively, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Then the work was completed which so glorified God, that on that foundation He saves, and is righteous, nay, He is glorified, in saving every one who believes. All the blessings of all the redeemed, the millennial blessing of the earth, the reconciliation of all things, the eternal happiness of saints of all dispensations, the perfection of the new heavens and the new earth—all these manifold blessings and varied glories will flow from the finished work of Christ.

This work, to speak generally, has two

aspects—towards God, and towards man. The first, and, we may add, the essential aspect is God-ward. Thus on the great day of atonement, the blood of the sin-offering was carried within the veil and sprinkled "upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times" (Lev. 16:14). This was done both with the blood of the bullock which was the offering for Aaron and his house (especially typical of the Church as the priestly family of God), and also with the blood of the goat of the sin-offering which was for Israel. Without entering here upon the characteristic differences and details of these sacrifices, *the point I press is that the blood in both cases was for God.* I do not say (for that would be to forget other scriptures) that the blood is never for us, but here it is wholly for God; for indeed it was sprinkled before as well as upon the mercy-seat, and sprinkled there seven times, so that when the worshipper drew near he might find its perfect testimony in the presence of God. Still it was for God, atonement being made therewith according to the requirements of His holiness, and the righteousness of His throne. It made propitiation for the sins of the people. So with Christ, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). The efficacy, therefore, of the blood of Christ is according to its value in the eyes of God; and that is infinite. Thus if the blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat availed, on the one hand, to make propitiation for the sins of His people; on the

other, because of its unspeakable preciousness before God, inasmuch as He had been glorified by it, and at such a cost, it became the foundation on which God is able to deal in grace with the whole world, and to send out His servants with the entreating message, "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The other aspect to which we have alluded is that of substitution—shadowed forth by the live goat. After the blood had been sprinkled, according to divine direction, it is said, "He shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (Lev. 16:20-22). This exactly answers to what we have in Romans. At the end of the third chapter Christ is shown as the mercy-seat through faith in His blood (v. 25); and then at the end of the fourth we read, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (v. 25). Thus not only has propitiation been made to God through the blood of Christ, but, if we are believers, we can say that He was delivered for our offences, that He has borne our sins in His

own body on the tree, and carried them away into a land not inhabited—and left them there—where they can no more be found; for if He was delivered for our offences, He has been raised again for our justification.

One other thing may be added. Our sin, as well as our sins, has been dealt with in the cross. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Thus not only has God been glorified, but the whole case—both the need and the state of the sinner—is met by the work of Christ. The truth of all the sacrifices is embodied in it—the burnt-offering as well as the sin-offering, the paschal lamb as well as the sacrifices on the day of atonement. All these were but adumbrations—shadows of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world—of that one sacrifice which, in the consummation of the ages, was accomplished on Calvary. But it is only after we know Him as our Savior that we learn these things. Then, at peace with God, we delight—as we shall do throughout eternity—to contemplate the death of Christ, and to trace out, even though we may see but in part, the wondrous outlines of the work it effected, and its manifold relations both to God and ourselves.

The resurrection of Christ has a particular and special significance. "Him," says Peter, "being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the

pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2:22, 23). And, again and again, he emphasises the fact that God had raised up, and exalted at His right hand, the One whom they had rejected and crucified. (See Acts 3:14, 15; 4:10; 5:30, 31.) The apostle Paul likewise enforces the same truth. (See Acts 13:27-31; 17:31 etc.; also Rom. 4:24, 25; 1 Cor. 15; Eph. 2 etc., for his doctrinal teaching on the whole subject of the resurrection of Christ.) The point I would here dwell upon is, that the resurrection of Christ was God's declaration of satisfaction with His work, that setting Him in the glory at His right hand was the expression of His estimate of its value—the response of His heart to the preciousness of the One who had done it, as well as to the claim which Christ had established upon Him by it. Our blessed Lord Himself presents this truth. Thus He said, after the traitor had gone out to accomplish his evil work, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. *If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself*, and shall straightway glorify Him" (John 13:31, 32). Accordingly, when, in the seventeenth chapter, He takes His place in spirit beyond the cross, He pleads His work as constituting a claim upon the Father, to glorify Him with the glory which He had with the Father, before the world was (vs. 4, 5). God's righteousness, indeed, was thus displayed in glorifying the One at His right hand, who to glorify Him "had become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8-10).

But this fact has another voice to the believer. If Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, went down into death under the wrath and judgment which were our due, the fact of His resurrection by God shows, proves indisputably, that our sins are gone. For where is our substitute? In the glory of God. If, then, He is in the glory of God, we know, not only that our sins are left behind, but also that God rests in perfect complacency in the One who expiated them by His death, inasmuch as He has given Him the supreme place in heaven. To borrow the language of another—"I cannot see the glory of Christ now without knowing that I am saved. How comes He there? He is a man who has been down here mixing with publicans and sinners, the friend of such, choosing such as His companions. He is a man who has borne the wrath of God on account of sin; He is a man who has borne my sins in His own body on the tree (I speak the language of faith); He is there, as having been down here amidst the circumstances, and under the imputation of sin; and yet it is in His face I see the glory of God. I see Him there consequent upon the putting away of my sin, because He has accomplished my redemption. I could not see Christ in the glory if there were one spot or stain of sin not put away. The more I see the glory, the more I see the perfectness of the work that Christ has wrought, and of the righteousness wherein I am accepted. Every ray of that glory is seen in the face of One who has confessed my sins as His own, and died for them on the cross, of One who has glorified God

on the earth, and finished the work that the Father had given Him to do. The glory that I see is the glory of redemption. Having glorified God about the sin—"I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"—God has glorified Him with Himself there. When I see Him in that glory, instead of seeing my sins, I see that they are gone. I have seen my sins laid on the Mediator. I have seen my sins confessed on the head of the scapegoat, and they have been borne away. So much has God been glorified about my sin (that is, in respect of what Christ has done on account of my sins), that this is the title of Christ to be there, at the right hand of God. I am not afraid to look at Christ there. Where are my sins now? where are they to be found, in heaven or on earth? I see Christ in the glory. Once they were found upon the head of that blessed One; but they are gone, never more to be found. Were it a dead Christ (so to speak) that I saw, I might fear that my sins would be found again; but with Christ alive in the glory the search is in vain. He who bore them all has been received up to the throne of God, and no sin can be there."

How, then, we may ask in conclusion, are we brought into possession of the blessings of salvation? It is by the grace of God, through faith. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Again, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). "Being justified by faith, we

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). God, in the gospel, presents the Christ, of whom we have spoken, as the Savior. It is therefore the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4), as well as of God's grace. Receiving His testimony, bowing before Him in self-judgment exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, we are saved, linked with Christ, and are brought to God in all the acceptance of Christ Himself. Every believer is thus associated with Christ before God, and is brought into the enjoyment of all that Christ is for us, as well as of all the blessings which He has secured for us through His meritorious death and resurrection. How unspeakably blessed, then, is it to be enabled by the Spirit of God to say, Christ our Savior. Beloved reader, are you able to claim Him as such? If not, how unspeakably sorrowful is your position. But God, even now, in the tender yearnings of His grace, meets you, as He directs your gaze to Christ at His own right hand, and proclaims by His word, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." If you are able to call Him your Savior, then we have no words to express your blessedness; but we may remind you of the obligation under which you are thereby placed, to show, by word and life, that you are saved, and to testify to that grace which has called you out of darkness into God's marvellous light.

"Oh, draw me, Savior, after Thee!
So shall I run and never tire;

With gracious words still comfort me;
Be Thou my hope, my sole desire.
On Thee I'd roll each weight and fear;
Calm in the thought that Thou art near.

"What in Thy love possess I not?

My star by night, my sun by day,
My spring of life when parched with drought;
My wine to cheer, my bread to stay,
My strength, my shield, my safe abode,
My robe before the throne of God!"

E. D.

The Glory of that Light

Nothing but the apprehension of Christ Himself—Christ in glory—can detach us from this present scene, or blind us to its beauty and fascination. This is strikingly illustrated in the apostle's account of his conversion. On his way to Damascus, armed with worldly authority against the saints of God, and filled with bitter enmity against the name of Jesus, "suddenly," he says, "there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And He said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all

things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus" (Acts 22:6-11). A complete revolution has been effected. The one who had been animated by the most deadly hatred, both against Christ and His people, is now transformed into a willing slave. "What shall I do, Lord?" expresses his changed condition, as well as the after attitude of his whole life. Besides this, we learn that he could not see for the glory of the light that had flashed upon him; and while this is to be understood as a matter of fact physically, it yet symbolises the spiritual effect upon the apostle of the revelation to him of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Trace out his pathway from this moment, and it will be seen that thenceforward he has no eye for anything but Christ; that the vision of his soul is filled with this one blessed, glorious object. Every thing that had hitherto engaged and occupied him, every thing to which he had clung, and every thing which he had cherished, now lost their attractions, faded into dimness and nothingness before the surpassing beauty and glory of the One who appeared to him when on his way to Damascus. All his precious things were seen to be but wretched tinsel by the side of the fine gold—divine righteousness—which he beheld in a glorified Christ. As he himself tells us, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have

suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (have Christ as my gain) (Phil. 3:7, 8). The estimate he formed at first was the abiding estimate of his life. Christ was all to him, and he wanted nothing beside.

The history of the apostle therefore teaches most important lessons. First, as has been said, that nothing but Christ Himself can emancipate us from the power of present things. Many a soul is held in helpless bondage from ignorance of this truth. They desire to be freed from the influence and power of this scene, and they groan and struggle in their captivity, sighing for a deliverance that never comes. The reason is, that they begin the wrong way. Instead of looking to Christ, and being occupied with Him, they look to themselves, and are occupied with their circumstances. The consequence is, they become more enfeebled and powerless every day; whereas, if they but accepted the truth of their own utter helplessness, and directed their gaze to Christ, instead of crying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" they would soon shout, in the joyous notes of victory, "I thank God that I am delivered through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:25). It is said of the Thessalonians, for example, that they turned to God from idols (1 Thess. 1:9). If they had sought to turn themselves from idols to God, they would have remained idolaters until the day of their death. But looking first to God, who was presented to them in the gospel of His grace in Christ, they were drawn by His mighty power

out from under the thralldom of Satan in the worship of false gods. Levi is another example of the same thing. Sitting at the receipt of custom, the Lord Jesus presents Himself to him, with the word, "Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him" (Luke 5: 27, 28). The attractions of Christ drew him away from all his associations, from all that might naturally have detained him, and constrained him to be, from that day forward, His devoted disciple. This is the secret of all deliverance for the soul. If the eye be but directed to, and fastened upon Christ, nothing can keep us. There is power in Him to emancipate the most abject and helpless; but the condition of its reception is to be occupied with Him. Whoever would therefore be lifted above his circumstances, and follow Christ in the joyous sense of liberty, must ever maintain the attitude of beholding the glory that is displayed in His unveiled face. (2 Cor. 3:18).

Together with deliverance from the power of this scene, in the way described, there will come another thing; viz., insensibility to its attraction. Saul could not see for the glory of that light. He was blind to all but the beauty of Christ. The light of day extinguishes all lesser lights; and the light of the glory, by the very outshining of its splendours, eclipses and extinguishes the brightest glories of earth. And just as when we have been gazing at the sun, we cannot for a time see clearly the objects of earth, so when we have been beholding the glory of the Lord, our eyes are dimmed for the things of this world. If there-

fore we are sensible of the fascinations of this world, it is a sure sign that Christ has not been the constant object of our souls; and, at the same time, it is a warning to us of the danger of allowing any thing to come into competition with Himself. When Peter, in his forgetfulness on the mount of transfiguration, said to the Lord, "Let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias," "a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God will have no competitors with His beloved Son; and thus "when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only" (Matt. 17: 4-9). Christ therefore is our only object, and in gazing at Him we not only have fellowship with the Father, but we also find deliverance from the scene, and the attractions of the scene, through which we are passing.

The Christian's Friend.

"Oh, fix our earnest gaze,
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,
That with Thy beauty occupied
We elsewhere none may see!"

* * *

How happy one is to belong to Him, and in His light to see light! How brilliant and glorious is this light to those who are from home, awaiting . . . the coming of this precious Savior, who will set them in heaven as the rays of His glory and jewels of His crown . . . as the bride of His heart. —J. N. D.

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

At the Name of Jesus

If God gives Christ the place of universal and absolute supremacy, He will have it owned, and in every circle of His dominions. Hence it says, after stating the fact that He has given Him the name which is above every name, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10). The language here employed must be carefully considered, if its precise significance is to be apprehended. And, first of all, the force of the words "at the name of Jesus" must be explained, inasmuch as much discussion has been raised upon this point. The phrase in the original is "in the name of Jesus" instead of "at His name," as in our translation. The question then is, Can this rendering be accepted? If "at the name of Jesus" were an incorrect representation of the original words, the other, whatever its attendant difficulties, would have to be adopted; but it is as exact as "in the name of Jesus"; and on this account we must be governed by other considerations. It is then submitted, that to bow before God in the name of Jesus, and to confess Him as Lord, is to appear there in virtue of what He is, in all the value of what He is through His death and resurrection (see, for example, John 14:13, 14), and consequently it would imply salvation for all

the classes named. In other words, if "in the name of Jesus" were insisted upon, it would make this scripture teach universalism, and a universalism, as will be seen later on, which would include demons as well as men and angels. Such a meaning would thus land us in direct contradiction to many other scriptures; and hence we are compelled to adopt the alternative rendering, "at the name of Jesus."

By this is meant, that it is God's will that every creature in the universe shall sooner or later acknowledge the supremacy and lordship of the exalted and glorified Jesus. If the heart goes with the acknowledgment, and the confession of the mouth proceeds from a real and living faith in Christ, it will be salvation for all who make it. (See Romans 10:8-13.) All therefore who, in this day of grace, receive the gospel, God's testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ, and confess Christ as their Lord as well as Savior, will be everlastingly saved. But the point of the scripture is, that all outside of this blessed class, all unrepentant and ~~un~~regenerate men, all the angels who have ever stood, or rather, who have been preserved, in their created perfection, all the angels who have fallen and have been "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," and all demons and infernal beings, will own, or be compelled by power to own, the authority and lordship of the glorified Jesus. God will not suffer, according to the teaching of this scripture, a single creature to be outwardly rebellious towards His be-

loved Son. They may hate Him in their hearts, as many of them will; but whether they do, or not, they will be made to bow the knee to the once humbled, and now glorified Jesus, and their lips will have to confess that He, Jesus Christ, is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And this is His due, as it is well expressed in the familiar lines—

"Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow."

It may be necessary, however, to explain this with a little more detail, as some may not have hitherto entered into the subject. Let us then examine the actual words of this scripture. It says, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.*" Things in heaven, as before said, will include all celestial existences—all the heavenly hosts—and things on earth will, as plainly, indicate men; so that the only difficulty lies in the phrase "~~under~~ under the earth." The word itself (for it is actually but one word) points admittedly to that which is subterranean. Conceding this, it is yet contended by some that only the dead are intended. But even in classical usage, it went further and comprised evil spirits, and when it is recalled that during the sojourn of our blessed Lord in this world, demons were compelled to own His authority and even to confess His name, and that, as James teaches, they "believe, and tremble," there is a strong

assurance that they are in view in this scripture. There is another scripture which, though apparently of the same significance, is yet quite different. In Revelation 5:13 we read, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." The term "under the earth" here is not the same as in Philippians; and it means—as the addition of the words, "and such as are in the sea," etc., shows—every animate thing under the surface of the earth. It thus looks onward to the fulfilment of the last verse of Psalm 150, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord," and anticipates the praise of the whole of creation.

Assuming then the correctness of our interpretation, it may now be asked, When will this universal acknowledgment of the authority of Christ, together with the confession of His lordship, take place? It is God acting from His own heart, let it be remembered, and also in righteousness, who has given to Christ this exalted place as Man. It is not a question here of His deity, although this is never to be forgotten, but rather of the place which God has accorded to Him as the Man who once humbled Himself here, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And together with His exaltation in this character the decree has been issued that all created intelligences must bow to, and own, His sovereignty. Where, then, the

question returns, will obedience to this decree be exhibited? In seeking to answer it, we may take the three circles of beings in their order; and, first, therefore, that of things in heaven. There are two scriptures especially touching this subject to which reference may be made. In Hebrews 1:6, "Let all the angels of God worship Him"; and this is in connection with the introduction of the First-begotten into the world. In Rev. 5 we are permitted to hear ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, when the Lamb takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sits upon the throne, "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (vs. 11, 12). When, moreover, the Son of Man comes in His glory, all the holy angels are with Him, as the executors of His throne; and we thus learn that their acknowledgment of His supremacy will be constant and perpetual—that, commencing with the moment of His exaltation, it will go on for ever.

The submission of the second circle, that of things on earth, will in one sense be more gradual and extended. It began on the day of Pentecost; for Peter's testimony on that day was, that God had made that same Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, both Lord and Christ; and every one who, through grace, received this testimony did in effect bow the knee to Christ, and confess His authority as declared by the apostles. So with every one converted since that day, and so will it be

with all who are brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, on until the close of the day of grace. After the Church has been removed, there will be still proceeding a mighty work of grace, as may be gathered from Rev. 7; and during the thousand years will be fulfilled the glorious prediction of the Psalm 72:8-11 "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him." There will therefore be, during His glorious kingdom on earth, universal subjection to His rightful claims as Supreme; so that, as we read in another Psalm, "Through the greatness of Thy power"—power displayed before the eyes of men—"shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee," or, as it is in the margin, "yield feigned obedience." During this reign of righteousness man will not dare, whatever the thoughts of his heart, to rebel against the sovereign rule of Christ, except at the cost of instant destruction. Outwardly, therefore, all will be in professed submission to His government. And is it not a delight to contemplate this prospect, when the once humbled and rejected Christ will be universally exalted even upon this earth? The scene that once witnessed His shame and ignominy, will then behold His exaltation and glory; and from millions of hearts will go up the glad confes-

sion that it is His rightful due, as they sing: "Blessed be His glorious Name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen" (Ps. 72:19).

In regard to the last circle we have fewer positive scriptures to guide us, although the fact is stated over and over again that nothing, no being in the universe, will be excepted from subjugation to His authority. (See, for example, Eph. 1:20-22; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.) The time when "the angels which kept not their first estate," will be dealt with is distinctly stated to be at "the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6); and we learn from Rev. 20 that the devil himself will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, immediately before the session of Christ—to whom all judgment has been committed—upon the great white throne, where all the dead, small and great, will receive their everlasting award. Demons are not here mentioned; but there can be no doubt that they are included in the judgment of their leader and chief. The final judgment, therefore, whether of the fallen angels, of Satan himself, or of the multitudes of the unconverted dead (for only such appear before the great white throne) will take place at the close of all God's dealings with this world. Before this last session of judgment commences, the earth and the heaven will have fled away from the face of Him who will sit upon the great white throne; for this final scene of the establishment of God's holy claims and righteous authority, is preparatory to the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell. God's

purposes concerning the glory of His beloved Son, His will that every knee should bow to Him, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord, will then have been accomplished. All evil will have been done away; for God will then have wiped away all tears from the eyes of all His redeemed, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Even the exaltation and glory of Christ has, if we may venture so to speak, an object. It is, as we read, "to the glory of God the Father." If His eternal counsels concerning Christ and His redeemed have flowed forth from His own heart, they will in their accomplishment and issue redound to His own displayed glory before the eyes of the whole universe. It is for the believer to anticipate this; and, indeed, the contemplation of this glorious end of all God's ways will so fill his heart with admiration and adoration that he will be constrained to exclaim, in the inspired words of the apostle "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36). And yet again, "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21). —E. D.

God Preaching Peace

"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus

Christ: He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36) "(He) came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Eph. 2:17.

One of the most momentous questions which can be put to a human being is this, "Have you peace with God?" It claims a direct and immediate answer from every heart. There is no reason why any true, anxious soul should continue for one moment without settled peace with God. Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. This is the divine basis of peace; and the more simply we build thereon, the more solid our peace will be. The reason why so many are in a state of miserable uncertainty is because they do not rest, in artless faith, on God's foundation. They are occupied with themselves, instead of building exclusively on Christ. They are looking to their experiences and feelings, in place of to a risen Saviour, and so are filled with gloomy doubts. They have no divine certainty.

If God sends us a message of peace, He surely means that we should have it. He has provided it for us, by the precious atoning death of His Son, and He declares it unto us by His Spirit, in the holy scriptures. Thus it is all of God, from first to last; and hence it is called the peace of God. We have nothing to do in making it. God Himself has made it through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20). We have only to receive it, with all thankfulness, and let it flow, like an even river, through our souls.

If the reader will turn to Romans 4:25 he will find the real ground of the soul's peace

set forth in two brief but weighty sentences. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Here we have the solid and imperishable foundation of the sinner's peace. Jesus Christ was delivered for our offenses. Let us carefully note who was delivered; who delivered Him; and for what He was delivered. All these are essentials to our enjoyment of peace.

Who, then, was delivered? The holy, spotless Lamb, the Son of God was "delivered." He stood charged with our offenses. He represented us on the cross. He stood in our stead and received from the hand of Eternal Justice all that we deserved. There was a regular transfer of all our guilt to Him who knew no sin, He died in our stead, charged with all our sins.

But who delivered Him? "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:10 and 6). "He hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21). God has done it. It will not do to say that "we lay our sins on Jesus." We want much more than this. If it were merely a question of our laying our sins on Jesus, we could never have peace with God, seeing that we do not know the extent of our sins, the depth of our guilt, the true amount of our liabilities, as God knows it. In order to have peace with God, I must know that He is satisfied. God was the offended party, the aggrieved One, and He must be satisfied. Well, blessed be His name, He is satisfied, for He Himself has found the ransom. He has laid our sins, according to His estimate of them, on the head

of the divine Sin-bearer. All that was needful, not merely to meet our condition, but to satisfy His claims, vindicate His majesty, and glorify His name, He Himself has provided in the atoning death of His own Son. Thus He is satisfied, and hence He can preach to us—peace by Jesus Christ. Jesus took our place in death and judgment, that we might take His place in life, righteousness, and everlasting glory.

And now, let us ask, for what was the precious Saviour delivered. "For our offences." For how many? For all, most surely. When Jesus hung on the cross, all the believer's offenses were laid upon and imputed to Him. Yes, all; although our sins were not as yet committed, when Christ bore them on the cross, yet is there no such distinction as past, present, or future with Him who spans eternity as a moment. All our sins were laid on Jesus; He answered for them and put them away forever, so that they are gone out of God's sight and instead of our sins, there is nothing before God save the Christ who bore them and blotted them out forever, and was raised for our justification. Who raised Him? Even the same that delivered Him. And why did He raise Him? Because all was settled for which He had been delivered. Christ glorified God in the putting away of our sins; and God glorified Christ, by raising Him from the dead and crowning Him with glory and honor. Most marvelous, most precious truth! Christ forsaken on the cross, because our sins were laid on Him. Christ crowned on the throne, because our sins are put away. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for

our justification." Such is the true, the solid, the everlasting ground of a sinner's peace in the presence of God.

And now one word as to the question of how the sinner can have this peace for himself. The answer is as simple as God can make it. What is it? Has the sinner to do aught? Has he to be anything but what he is—a poor, lost, worthless, guilty creature? No. He has simply to believe God's word—to receive into his heart the blessed message which God sends to him—to rest in Christ. God is satisfied with Christ, without anything else whatever. Is the reader satisfied? or is he waiting for something more—something of his own—his vows and resolutions—his feelings and experiences? If so, he cannot get peace. To be satisfied with Christ, is to have peace with God.

C. H. M.

The Lord of Life in death hath lain,
To clear me from all charge of sin;
And, Lord, from guilt of crimson stain
Thy precious blood hath made me clean.

JUSTIFICATION, What Is it?

Justification deals with the past, the present, and the future. It has settled the condemnation and guilt of the past; it settles the fear and doubt of the present, and guarantees a clear title to Heaven for the future.

How many people are trying to rid themselves of that feeling of guilt that lurks in

their souls. In spite of all their efforts to repress it, it keeps coming to the surface of their consciousness making them miserable and unhappy, uneasy and restless. What is the answer? Where can true relief be found? Justification is the answer and by that only can real lasting relief be found.

Justification is God's way of clearing away forever that guilt that weighs upon your soul to His entire satisfaction and your complete freedom.

Deep down in every moral being God has implanted a sense of fitness that makes one not only feel guilty when he has done wrong, but also instinctively to feel he deserves punishment. So he dreads to think of a holy, almighty God who has a right to call him to account for his wrong doings and fears that somehow his sin is going to catch up with him and its punishment overtake him.

But here is the marvellous fact of God's exceeding love to the sinner. Instead of condemning and punishing the sinner, God has sent His own Son to bear in his stead the condemnation and punishment of his sins on Calvary's cross. This suffering of the Son of God for sin on the cross is the basis of God's way of justification. No matter what you have done and no matter who you are God has already in love given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for you. And if you will accept Him as your substitute, who suffered in your stead the punishment due your sins, God will immediately forgive you and withdraw forever all charge of guilt that could be otherwise justly laid to your account. This

is justification. It proceeds from God's love and grace towards the sinner. The basis of it is the sufferings of Christ on the cross, where He stood in the room and stead of whosoever does by faith accept Him as his or her substitute. But not only is the sinner who accepts Christ as his substitute forgiven, but just as his guilt was imputed to Christ and He bore all the punishment due it, so in like manner the righteousness of Christ is imputed or accounted as belonging to him. All the value and eternal worth of that glorious act of righteousness of Christ in His obedience to His Father's will in giving up His life a ransom for sin on Calvary's cross is reckoned as belonging to the believer.

In God's court a sinner may be brought in guilty before God and there be justified and declared righteous. This does not mean that God has been lenient to sin or treats it lightly in any way. No, certainly not, but his sin and guilt have been perfectly and thoroughly dealt with in the person of another, Jesus Christ, when He was on the cross in the sinner's behalf. So when God justifies a sinner who believes in Christ he is not only acquitted, but his sin has been expiated, and he stands before God as clothed in all the value and virtue of Christ's perfect righteousness in His obedience to His Father's will in suffering for sin on the cross, which God has now reckoned as belonging to him.

Another great point is this: when God justifies a sinner he is justified forever, because he is justified on the grounds of Christ's sufferings for him on the cross, who suffered

once for all the sins of all who believe. We have past sins and if we live will likely have future sins. But for God the future is as well known as the past. God, who knew all the sins that all who would believe on Christ should ever commit, laid them all on Christ when He went to the cross to suffer there once for all their sins. So when God justifies a sinner He is justified once for all eternity. All doubts as to his eternal acceptance before God through Christ are forever removed and he can read his title clear to the glory to come.

—Reprint.

God's Answer to Fear and Doubts

Question:

As a young Christian I have a burden I would like to share with you. I have suffered for months but was afraid to seek advice for fear that I was lost and could not bear it. About six months ago I accepted Jesus as my Saviour and for a short time was very happy. However all at once terrible awful thoughts began to assail me. Blasphemy and filth crowded my mind almost continually. At first I fought with all my strength but the harder I fought the worse it was, finally I took it to the Lord in prayer and I prayed long and earnestly and I did find comfort, but one day I was reading in my Bible and I came to the caption in the Scofield Bible, "Unforgivable sin." Despair just poured over me and I have

been utterly desolate, for I think that in my mind I have committed that sin. Can it be true? What is the unforgivable sin? Could it be possible for a person who believed herself saved to have committed it? How can I rid myself of these awful thoughts that are making me so sick and miserable? I dared not tell anyone because I could not bear being lost and yet through it all I cling to God's Word where He says, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," and "Seek and ye shall find." Could you help me to understand this?

Answer:

Many believers have gone through an experience similar to yours and have been brought into great trouble of soul by it, due to their lack of a clear understanding of the truth of the Gospel. We have met with a number who have been thus troubled. We will seek, by the help of the Lord, to set forth in a simple way the truths that you need to understand for deliverance, so that your peace and rest of heart may become settled.

You need to distinguish between the believer's standing before God in Christ, and his state, or the experiences he is going through in his own soul. You will need also to see the fact that the believer, after being born again, has two natures—the new and the old. And again you should distinguish, too, between the evil that comes from the old nature within and those evil suggestions injected into our minds that come through

Satan from without. If you keep these distinctions clearly in mind, it will be of great help to you, as it is to every young believer.

The Believer's Standing Before God In Christ

When Christ was on the cross as the substitute of the believer, we read in Isaiah 53:6: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," and in 1 Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Though we were not yet born at the time, God, who knows the future as the past, saw every individual believer and knew beforehand their every evil thought, word, and deed from the time they come into this world until they leave it; and He who knew them all, laid them all on Christ, Who bore the punishment for it all in His holy body on the cross. Therefore, we read in Hebrews 10:17: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," and also in Romans 4:8: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." This simple statement of a man to whom the Lord will not impute sin, is astounding when we know that it tells us in another place: "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl. 7:20). Yet it means exactly what it says. God does not impute sin to the believer because He has already laid all of his sins on Christ, Who has undergone the full and complete punishment due them, so that before God the believer is through Christ's sacrifice on the cross completely and forever cleared from all guilt that could be laid to his

charge. This standing is perfect and complete and unchanging, because it is founded on that perfect work of Christ that has answered to God for all sin when He died once and for all for all eternity.

It is on the basis of this perfect work of Christ in atoning for all their sins that God justifies every sinner who comes to Him as a sinner, accepting in faith Christ as his substitute. God is fully satisfied with that work of substitution that He sent Christ to do in behalf of every sinner who accepts Him by faith; and on the grounds of this work, He declares him fully cleared forever from all guilt. This gives the sinner who puts faith in Christ a perfect and eternal standing before God.

The Two Natures

A believer's justification is an act of God's sovereign grace, putting to his account the merits of the perfect atoning work of Christ upon whom He had laid all our sins. This act of God is an answer to our faith in Christ when we come as lost sinners to Him and accept Him as our Saviour. But at the same time that the sinner puts faith in Christ and is justified, God also communicates to him by His Spirit a new and divine nature. He is made a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), or, to use the language of Christ in John 3:3, he is "born again," or as Peter calls it, becomes a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). This new and divine nature communicated to the soul when born again is a new and eternal life principle and

therefore is also called in John's writings, "eternal life." (See John 3:14-16, 36, etc.)

Every justified person is therefore born again and made partaker of the divine nature or eternal life. He now has a new nature which loves the things of God and delights in Christ and hates sin. This accounts for the transformation that takes place in the life of a sinner when he accepts Christ as his Saviour. But, besides this new nature, he still has his old nature, which has not been changed and will never be changed as long as he is in this body. This old nature is called "the flesh" (See Romans 8:5-13; Galatians 5:16-21.). "The carnal mind (or the mind of the flesh) is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So we read in Rom. 8:7. It is this two-fold nature that every child of God has that accounts for the conflict that goes on within. The evil nature still desires the evil things, but the new nature hates them. The Christian has not any power in himself against the old nature, though his new nature hates those things. He must look to the Lord continually for strength to overcome by the Spirit the old nature. Therefore we read in Galatians 5:16: "If ye walk after the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." It is only in the energy that the Spirit of God gives, as we depend upon Him, that we can overcome the evil tendencies of our old nature.

Christ also said to His disciples in John 15:1-5: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it

abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." This shows our absolute helplessness to do any good in our own strength. We're just as helpless as a branch that is not clinging to the vine and drawing the living sap. But it also gives us the secret of strength to bear fruit. It must all come from Christ. Just as the branch clings to the vine and draws the living sap continually and bears fruit in the energy of that living sap, so we must cling to Christ in our helplessness and draw the strength from Him to bear fruit for God's glory.

Thus we see that the believer is delivered from the power of sin only as he abides in constant dependence upon Christ, yielding himself constantly to the influence of His Spirit.

Satan's Assaults

Besides the evil from within flowing from our old nature that can only be kept down by the power of the Spirit, there is also a source of evil from without: that is, Satan. He is ever seeking to draw the believer away from Christ and into sin. But he is a conquered foe. The Lord has broken his power over all of those who depend upon Him for strength. So, we read in James 4:7: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Fellowship and Its Hindrances

We have seen that the believer's standing is eternal and unchanging, because it is based upon the blood of Christ that was shed once, purging away all our sin forever, but

the believer's enjoyment of fellowship with Christ and with the Father depends upon his walk. If he gives way to the old nature in indulging in evil thoughts or deeds, or if he gives way to the suggestions of Satan, his fellowship is at once broken. He is still a justified soul and he is still a child of God, but he cannot enjoy fellowship with Christ or with the Father for he is a disobedient child.

When fellowship is broken through allowance of sin in thought or word or deed, Christ intercedes as our advocate at the right hand of the Father (1 John 2:1, 2), and the Spirit of God works in our hearts to lead us to own our sin to God and thus judge ourselves for what we've done; that is, to take the side of God against our own sin, calling it what it is. When sin is thus judged, our fellowship is restored.

When we give way to the flesh, the Spirit of God is grieved and He cannot shed abroad in our hearts the joy of Christ which He delights to do, but, instead, has to make us feel the wrongness of our doings. That is the reason why a child of God, when he gives way to the flesh, is miserable. God cannot allow him to be happy, and he remains miserable in his soul until he is led to confession and self-judgment.

Sometimes Satan instills evil thoughts into the mind and then comes to the soul afterwards and seeks to harass it with doubts, or comes to it after it has sinned, but he must be resisted by faith and the sin judged so that we can have the joy of the

Lord's presence with us again and the strength that comes from fellowship with Him. We must never doubt for one moment our salvation when once we have accepted Christ by faith as our personal Saviour. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life" is God's eternal and unchanging Word and to doubt it is to brand Him as a liar (See John 3:36; 1 John 5:10.). Think of what dishonor it brings upon Christ to doubt the perfection of His work for us on the cross, or to think that He would let a soul for whom He died and who has put trust in Him ever to be lost again.

Dear friend, if you have carefully read what is written above, it ought to make it clear to you what has happened in your case. These evil thoughts that you resisted and hated were suggested to you by Satan. Though the old nature might find a certain delight in them, the new nature hates and abhors them. If you will but recognize that it was Satan and not yourself, and simply say to the devil, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and even if he does not leave you at once, just hold on in simple faith to Christ whose precious blood has atoned for **all** your sins, and if you have indulged in these evil thoughts instead of hating them, then confess it to God.

God's love to you is unchanging. It is proved to you in giving His Son to atone for all your sins once and for all there on Calvary's cross. Christ's love to you is also unchanging! He knew all about you, but He loved you so much that He died for you. Yes,

His love is unchanging and eternal. Think of it! Thank Him for it! Even though the devil may attack you or evil thoughts harass you, still thank the Lord for His love that is unchanging, and just think of Him and what He has done for you in atoning for your sins that you freely confess to Him, and Satan's power will be broken.

Sometimes after Satan's assaults or after we have failed, then the devil comes in a subtle way and tries to get us occupied with our own failures, saying, "See what you've done"; "Now you're not saved"; or, "You ought to do better"; and while we're thinking of our own failures, we get miserable and we have no strength because strength doesn't come from looking at ourselves or our failures. Our strength only comes as we look away from ourselves to Christ. The only thing to do is to judge the failure once for all, own it all to God, and then turn away from it all to God to be occupied with the Lord and to meditate upon His Word. His Word is food for our souls as it occupies us with the things of Christ, and it is a light to our path and a lamp for our feet.

You ask what is the unpardonable sin. If you will turn to Mark 3:22-30, you will see that the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, "He (Christ) hath Beelzebub (that is, Satan) and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils." This was the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It was deliberately calling the Holy Spirit that was in Christ the spirit of Satan. No child of God could ever do this.

—E. C. H.

The Song of Solomon

"The song of songs, which is Solomon's. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine. Because of the savor of Thy good ointments Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee. Draw me, we will run after Thee; the king hath brought me into His chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in Thee, we will remember Thy love more than wine: the upright love Thee"

(Song of Solomon 1:1-4).

This wonderful Song of Solomon, abounding in figurative language so rich in spiritual meaning, is called the song of songs; that is, it is the one song that surpasses all other songs for excellency and beauty. It is a love song, the greatest love song ever sung because it speaks of the most ardent love and the greatest lover the world has ever known. It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God, wooing to Himself a bride from among the children of men.

In its primary application it is a prophecy of Christ, the Messiah of Israel, wooing to Himself the heart of the Jewish remnant after the Church as been caught up to glory. It is a profitable study to take up this Song of Solomon in its prophetic application to Israel, and in fact some passages can only be rightly understood when considered in this connection. But when we realize that the love of the Lord to Israel, His earthly bride, is but a shadow or reflection of His deeper love to His heavenly bride, we find immense profit in ap-

plying these beautiful figures to ourselves. So while we should not forget that these figures have a direct application to the remnant of the last days, yet we will find that they have also a deeper, full and spiritual application to ourselves as members of the heavenly bride.

With these few introductory remarks we will now take up this Song of songs verse by verse.

"The Song of songs, which is Solomon's" (verse 1).

Solomon is the writer. His name means peace. Of him it is written, "And King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom" (2 Chron. 9:22). He is but a faint type of our great Prince of peace, who is the altogether lovely One, "fairer than the children of men," whom God has "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows," and "appointed heir of all things" (Song of Sol. 5:16; Ps. 45:2, 7; Heb. 1:2). How wonderful to have Him as the lover of our souls.

"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Thy love is better than wine" (v. 2).

Thus the Song opens abruptly with these ardent words of His loved one. She has Him before her eyes and heart. Transported with His beauty and His charming grace, how her heart is drawn out with a deep desire for more of those intimate expression of His love. The kiss is the expression of intimate personal love. One who has tasted that the Lord is good knows that there is nothing so delightful to the human heart as those sweet moments when one enjoys in the depth of the

soul that intimate, tender love of Christ. It surpasses all that earth can give. "Thy love is better than wine." Wine here is the emblem of earthly pleasure and mirth. There is something that is far sweeter and more satisfying than any pleasure that this world can afford. It is these moments of intimate exchange of love with our adorable Savior and Lord, whose love to us is stronger than death. He died in love for our souls, but now is alive forevermore, His heart pulsating for us with that love that passeth knowledge—a love that took Him through all those death throes of Calvary's cross, and ever lives and abides in His breast in its unchanging everlasting strength for us.

True Christianity is not a head knowledge of certain doctrines, but an intimate acquaintance with the living, loving Son of God. Alas, how many Christians seem satisfied with knowing that their sins are forgiven through His death, and fail to go on in fellowship with the living Son of God, whose love is better than wine. How much they lose in their own souls, for there is nothing that can compensate for lack of personal communion with the Lord. A soul that has been washed in the blood of Christ can never be satisfied with anything short of personal intimate fellowship with Him. No Christian can be happy, contented and satisfied who is not maintaining this personal touch with the living Lord. Notice how personal and intimate it is: "Let Him kiss me."

"Thine ointments savor sweetly; Thy name is an ointment poured forth therefore do the

virgins love Thee." So read verse 3 in J. N. D's New Translation.

Ointments speak of fragrant grace. "Thine ointments." Oh, how many and varied are the graces that abound in Him, each having its special charm and all savor sweetly. Ointments were not only used for perfumes but also for healing. (See Isa. 1:6.) There is not a heartache nor a wound that His ointments cannot soothe and heal. Come to Him with all your sorrows, disappointments and grief, you will find in Him a balm for every one.

"Thy name is an ointment poured forth."

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fears.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
It calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest."

Not only is the name of Jesus so filled with fragrance, but He has many names in Scripture and each name has a special fragrance of its own. Time does not now permit us to speak of the various sweet odors brought out by His different names.

"Thy name is an ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee." "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). It is His love that draws out our hearts to Him, and the more we are occupied with Him

and His love to us, the more we will love Him. There is no use to mourn over your lack of affection for Christ or to try and fan up a bigger flame of love for Him. Turn away from yourself to Christ and keep Him before your heart. Self-occupation will never deepen our affection for Christ, but occupation with Him will. We should feel how sluggish our affections are for Him, Christ, but it is not by mourning over our coldness, but by meditation upon His love for us that our hearts are warmed up. This is important to see. So turn away from your cold heart to the warm glow of His affection for you and you will find your heart warmed by it.

He loves us though there is nothing attractive in us. It is His nature to love. His heart of love cannot be satisfied without an object upon which it can bestow itself. But we love Him because 'He is altogether lovely.' There is no lack of attraction in Him, but alas how prone we are to let other things come in and take the place that should be only for Him. We all feel the need of this ardent prayer found in our next verse. 'Draw me, we will run after Thee.' But let it ever be accompanied with that sincere purpose of heart expressed in these words, 'We will run after Thee.'

The world is running after many things to-day, and all too often Christians are found running after this or that instead of Christ. No wonder their joy ebbs low and their light burns dim, and you see them restless and uneasy in soul. The things the world is running after can never satisfy an immortal soul cre-

ated for higher things. God has "called us unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). And He has given us a spiritual capacity, when He made us partakers of His own divine nature, to enjoy Him, and to find our delight in things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Think back over your past experience of your most happy moments. I am sure you will agree with me that it was always at times when Christ was much before your mind and heart—when you felt that He was near you. isn't it so? Then return to Him again with your whole heart and you will find your joy will return. Let us beware what we run after. May these words ever be the earnest prayer and purpose of our hearts: "Draw me, we will run after Thee."

"The King hath brought me into His chambers" (v. 4).

Here is the glorious climax when the Lord shall take His beloved bride to Himself. "I go to prepare a place for you," said the Lord, "and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). But while we wait that glorious day our hearts long for, we have Him in spirit with us now. So we may say, "We will be glad and rejoice in Thee, we will remember Thy love more than wine" (v. 4).

"We will be glad and rejoice in Thee." Here is a spring of gladness that will never dry—a source of rejoicing that can never be exhausted. It is a fountain of joy from which we can continually drink regardless of the

circumstances we may be passing through. The poor sinner has no pleasure except what he can find in the shifting circumstances of a passing world, but the Christian has a well of joy in Christ that is never touched by changing circumstances, therefore he can always be glad and rejoice. "Rejoice evermore" says the apostle in 1 Thess. 5:16 and in Phil. 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

If your joy is not full it is because you have allowed yourself to become taken up with your circumstances instead of with the Lord who is above your circumstances, ever looking down with infinite love upon you and having at His hand unlimited resources to take care of you. Oh, learn this great secret of true joy and contentment. True joy is found only in Christ.

"We will be glad and rejoice in Thee, we will remember Thy love more than wine: The upright love Thee." It is important, though, that our hearts be also upright, if we are to rejoice in Him. If you are not upright in your dealings with Him or even with your fellowmen, your conscience will not allow you to be easy before Him. Instead of rejoicing in Him you will shrink back from His presence until you judge and put aright what is amiss. One reason why so many Christians are so restless and dissatisfied is because they have allowed things to come in between their souls and the Lord, or between themselves and someone else, and are not ready to own it and put it right. If you would be happy in the Lord you must be upright before Him.

Let nothing come in between your soul and Him. If in an unguarded moment something does come in, go to Him at once about it and get it settled with Him. How lovingly He will receive you when you go to Him about it. He longs to have you happy and He knows you can only be happy in Him. He wants nothing to be in the way to hinder you

To be continued D. V.

Why Is it So?

Do you ask why your desires for the Lord and His things are not stronger with you? And why you do not enjoy more?

It is really not very difficult to answer your questions. The state you speak of is only too common among the children of God. The blessings are theirs, but they are not in the good of them. They are not living in God's presence. It may be that they are just too much taken up with earthly things. They do not take time to sit in the Lord's presence. Then it is natural for us to be more anxious to serve than to have the Lord serve us, and we are too busy to let Him do that for us.

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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The Song of Solomon

"I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon" (chap. 1:5).

A careful reading of this wonderful Song of Solomon will show that it is divided into sections, or parts, with each part having a theme of its own, taking up a certain point and developing it to a climax, which for the godly remnant of the Jews will only be reached in the millenium.

Verses 2 to 4 of this chapter are complete in themselves, beginning with the awakening of the affections of the bride-to-be, and leading on to the full joy and rejoicing in the person and presence of the King in His royal chambers. This forms, as it were, an introduction to the whole book, and gives the general theme which is taken up again and again in each section and brought through to the millennial climax of glory, only each time from a different angle, or from a different starting point, and enlarging on different details.

"I am black, but comely O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon" (v. 5).

This verse begins a new section which ends also with the royal palace in verse 17.

It opens with the confession frank and full of what she is by nature, "I am black," but also coupled with the full assurance of faith of what she is by grace, "comely." Black as the tents of Kedar by nature, comely as the curtains of Solomon by grace. The tents of

Kedar, made of coarse black goat's hair and seen in all their dingy blackness under the bright rays of the desert sun, is a fit picture of what we are by nature—full of sin; while the beautiful curtains, made for the temple of fine twined linen, blue and purple and gold interwoven, is the symbol first of all of what Christ is in the perfection and beauty of His Person, but also of the believer as God sees him in Christ, clothed upon with all the beauty and perfection of His Person and work.

It is not by our efforts we have this place in Christ, but by a sovereign act of God's grace. "But of Him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). The repentant prodigal in Luke 15 had nothing to do in making or arraying himself in the best robe. He had only rags and confessed it frankly to his father: "Father I have sinned . . . and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But immediately upon that confession the father gave the orders: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him" (vs. 21, 22). But wouldn't it be the height of discredit to his father if, after being clothed with that beautiful robe, the repentant prodigal would go about mourning about his rags or saying he was not beautifully dressed. True, he would feel how unworthy he was of it all, but that would make him love the father all the more and adore his love and grace that had provided him with such a beautiful robe.

The believer may and should always frankly own what he is by nature, "black"; but he

should never forget for a moment that God does always see him as "comely," clothed in that beautiful robe that He Himself has provided at the cost of the all-efficacious sacrifice of His Son. No sin or stain can ever spot that robe because the blood of Christ shed once for all has purged us from all sin.

It is important that the believer grasp this truth clearly. Otherwise he will lose much comfort and rest of heart and plunge himself into much trouble of soul and confusion of thought about his experiences.

And another important fact that one should understand also is that the old nature never changes. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). And it always will be as long as we abide in this mortal body. The flesh ever remains the same and it cannot be changed or educated into obedience to God. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The flesh is sure to show itself in the believer whenever he is off his guard or fails to walk in the Spirit and by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body. (See Gal. 5:16, 17; Rom. 8:6, 13.) But his standing before God is always perfect, unchanging and eternal because it is based upon that perfect sacrifice of Christ that has fully answered once and for all for all sin and failure of the believer. No sin or failure can come up in the believers's life but what the sacrifice of Christ has already met it, and God always sees him clothed in the perfection of that work of Christ that has fully atoned for all his sins.

The heart of the believer, however, cannot be happy in the presence of God where sin and failure has come in until it is owned and confessed. And why should we shrink back from owning all frankly to God, seeing God knows it all and has met it all in love and grace by the sacrifice of His beloved Son, and thus has made us always acceptable to Himself in that beautiful robe furnished us through the atoning work of Christ. We have nothing to hold back nor should we shrink back from the all-penetrating eye of a holy God, since He who sees all our blackness has clothed us in that beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness.

It is an humbling fact to admit that "I am black," but the soul can never be in its right state before God nor at rest in His presence until it learns and frankly owns this fact. Some mourn over every new source of evil they find in themselves, and are troubled and perplexed to find that it is there. But why is it? It is simply because they have not yet come to the point of admitting as to themselves that truth that the great apostle Paul had learned and frankly owned of himself: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). Accept that as a truth once and for all and you will never be perplexed at any new evidence of your evil nature within. You will not expect anything else or different from yourself; and so, while frankly owning it to God, you will turn away from yourself altogether as knowing there is nothing good there, and turn to Christ as the only source of power for any

fruit bearing for God. This is what the apostle Paul learned and tells us of in Gal. 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

"I am crucified with Christ," that is, he frankly owns and accepts that his old self has been seen of God as unfit to live, and has already had the death sentence put in effect against it in the crucifixion of Christ, who died in his stead. He is through, then, with any more looking to himself for anything good from that old life that God has, in the death of Christ, already executed sentence against.

What then was the source of that beautiful, devoted, Christ-like life of the apostle Paul? This is what he goes on to explain: "nevertheless I live, *yet not I but Christ liveth in me.*" It was no longer his old I, his old self, that produced such effect, but Christ, who had come into his heart as the source and power of a new life. He had a new life that was entirely of Christ and not of self at all.

This grand and glorious fact is true also of every believer. When as a sinner we received Christ by faith, we received in Him a new life, or nature, which is entirely distinct from the old self life, or nature, that we have by natural birth. The believer has two natures, one the old nature, the old I or self, the other the divine life, or nature, of which Christ is the source and power.

Now comes the practical question, How then is this new life to be lived out by us

while we are in this mortal body, carrying about with us all the time that old nature also? This great secret is what Paul goes on to tell us. "And the life which I now live in the flesh (that is, while in this body) I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." It was by faith. Not in any energy of his own; but, in the sense of his own helplessness to do anything by himself, he simply looked away from self altogether to the Son of God, who had given him a new life, for power and strength for every step, every word, every deed.

Christ illustrated this important truth to His disciples in the parable of the vine in John 15:1-8. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." How simple! how practical! Just as the branch bears fruit not of its own self but by clinging to the vine and allowing the living sap and energy of the vine to flow through it and produce the fruit, so the believer also can only bear fruit for God by drawing the power and energy from Christ.

Then the apostle goes on to tell of another great influence upon him, namely, the constraining power of Christ's love for him. As he ever looked up to the Son of God he was constantly filled with the sense of His great love in giving Himself for him, and was ever reminded also that that sacrifice gave him a perfect standing before God. He would not want to rest on any other ground of acceptance before God than that perfect sacrifice that answered to God for all his sin and failure.

So he goes on to say in the next verse, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21).

We have dwelt a little upon this truth contained in the confession of our verse in the Song of Sol. 1:5 because we realize it is of such practical importance to every believer; and until it is clearly grasped, the soul will not make much progress nor be able to appreciate the beautiful figures we are yet to consider in the rest of this wonderful Song of songs.

To be continued, D. V.

The Great Giver

(Luke 10:38-42)

The little scene which closes this chapter is peculiar to Luke, serving his general purpose of instructing us in great principles of truth. The two sisters here introduced were differently minded; and being brought to the trial of the mind of Christ, we get the judgment of God on matter of much value to us.

The house which we now enter was Martha's. The Spirit of God tells us this, as being characteristic of Martha; and into her house, with all readiness of heart, she receives the Lord, and prepares for Him the very best provision it had. His labors and fatigue called for this. Martha well knew that His ways abroad were the way of the Good Samaritan, who would go on foot that others might ride, and she loves

Him too well not to observe and provide for His weariness. But Mary had no house for Him. She was, in spirit, a stranger like Himself; but she opens a sanctuary for Him, and seats Him there, the Lord of her humble temple. She takes her place at His feet, and hears His words. She knows, as well as Martha, that He was wearied, but she knows also that there was a fulness in Him that could afford to be more wearied still. Her ear and her heart, therefore, still use Him, instead of her hand or her foot ministering to Him. And in these things lay the difference between the sisters. Martha's eye saw His weariness, and would *give* to Him; Mary's faith apprehended His fulness underneath His weariness, and would *draw from* Him.

This brings out the mind of the Son of God. The Lord accepts the care of Martha, as long as it is simple care and diligence about His present need; but, the moment she brings her mind into competition with Mary's, she learns His judgment, and is taught to know that Mary, by her faith, was refreshing Him with a sweeter feast than all her care and the provision of her house could possibly have supplied. Mary's faith gave Jesus a sense of His own divine glory. It told Him, that though He was the wearied One, He could still feed and refresh her. She was at His feet, hearing His words. There was no temple there, or light of the sun (Rev. 22:22, 23), but the Son of God was there, and He was every thing to her. This was the honor He prized; and blessedly, indeed, was she in His secret.

When He was thirsty and tired at Jacob's well, He forgot it all in giving out other waters, which no pitcher could have held, or well beside His own supplied; and here, Mary brings her soul to the same well, knowing that, in spite of His weariness, it was as full as ever for her use.

And, oh, dear brethren, what principles are here disclosed to us! Our God is asserting for Himself the place of supreme power and supreme goodness, and He will have us debtors to Him. Our sense of His fulness is more precious to Him than all the service we can render Him. Entitled, as He is, to more than all creation could give Him, yet above all things does He desire that we should use His love, and draw from His treasures. The honor which our confidence puts upon Him is His highest honor; for it is the divine glory to be still giving, still blessing, still pouring forth from unexhausted fulness. Under the law He had to receive from us, but in the gospel He is giving to us; and the words of the Lord Jesus are these—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." And this place He will fill for ever; for, "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." Praise shall, it is true, arise to Him from every thing that hath breath; but forth from Himself, and from the seat of His glory, shall go the constant flow of blessing, the light to cheer, the waters to refresh, and the leaves of the tree to heal; and our God shall have His own joy, and display His own glory, in being a Giver for ever.

—J. G. B.

THE WONDER OF THE BOOK

The wonder of the book, my friends, grows on us as our experience is enlarged. For the more deeply we search it the more we feel that the Bible is not merely a book, but The Book. Sir Walter Scott in his dying hour was right when he asked his son-in-law to read to him out of the Book, and in answer to the question, "What Book?" replied, "There is only one Book, the Bible. In the whole world it is called 'The Book.' All other books are mere leaves, fragments." Yes. It alone is the perfect Book. It is the eternal Book. It is the Voice; all others are merely echoes. Of course, you all know that the Bible literally means The Book. It is a translation of the Greek title of the Bible. *He Biblos*; in English, The Book. It is the Book that stands alone; unapproachable in grandeur; solitary in splendour; mysterious in ascendancy; as high above all other books as heaven above earth, as the Son of God above the sons of men.

The Wonder of Its Formation

Now, one of the first things about this Book that evokes our wonder is the very fact of its existence. Anyone who has studied the history and origin of the Divine Word must be overwhelmed with wonderment at the mysterious method of its formation. That it ever was a book, and is today the Book of the modern world, is really a literary miracle. For there never was any order given to any

man to plan the Bible, nor was there any concerted plan on the part of the men who wrote, to write the Bible. The way in which the Bible gradually through the centuries grew is one of the mysteries of time. Little by little part by part, century after century, it came out in disconnected fragments and unrelated portions (Heb. 1:1), written by various men, without any intention, so far as we can tell, of anything like concerted arrangement. One man wrote one part in Syria, another man wrote another part in Arabia, a third man wrote in Italy or Greece; some writers wrote hundreds of years after or before the others, and the first part was written about fifteen hundred years before the man who wrote the last part was born. Now take any other book you can think of on the spur of the moment, and think how it arose. You know fairly well how it arose. In nine cases out of ten a man determined to write a book, thought out the thoughts, collected the material, wrote it or dictated it, had it copied or printed, and it was completed within two or three or more months or years. The average book, we may suppose, takes from a year to ten years to produce, though a book like Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," or Tennyson's poems, took longer to complete. But, generally speaking, the average book you think of has been produced by one man within his own generation. Now, here is a book that took at least one thousand five hundred years to write, and spanned the span of 60 generations of this famous old world's history. It enlarges our conceptions

of God; it gives us new ideas of His infinite patience, as we think of the wonder of His calm, quiet waiting as He watched the strain and the haste and the restlessness of man across the feverish years, as slowly and silently the Great Book grew. Here a little and there a little of it came on; here a bit of history and there a bit of prophecy; here a poem and there a biography; here a letter, there a treatise; and at last in process of time, as silently as the house of the Lord of old (1 Kings 6:7), it came forth before a needy world in its finished completeness. When Moses died there were only five small portions; when David sat upon the throne there were only a few parchments more; one by one, princes and priests and prophets laid on the growing pile their greater and smaller contributions, until in process of time the whole of the Old Testament Bible was written in its entirety, word for word, letter for letter, sentence for sentence, book for book, precisely as we have it now, intact and complete; and as Josephus testifies, no one through the ages has dared to add or take away, nor has the Old Testament text been altered in the slightest degree from that day to this.

But the New Testament is a far greater miracle from the literary standpoint than the Old Testament. The Jews, you all know, were not a writing people. I hardly know of a Jew who ever wrote a book, except Josephus, and I doubt very much if a man or woman here could mention two. Their training, as Bishop Westcott once said, was exclusively oral, and they had a disinclination for liter-

ary work. Not only so, but their Master was not a writer. Jesus never wrote a line for publication, so far as we know, and the idea of their writing an additional or supplementary Bible would never seem to have entered the mind of His disciples. They would doubtless have sprung back with horror at the very idea of such a thing, and for fifty years after Jesus was born there was probably not a line of the New Testament written. But then, by the mystic suggestion and overruling design of the Almighty Spirit, without any concerted collaboration or unity of plan, fragment by fragment, here a little letter, there a biography, the New Testament grew. But remember; there was no pre-arrangement, no plan. It was not as if Matthew and Mark and Luke and John came together in committee, and after solemn conference and seeking for the leading of the Spirit, Matthew undertook to write of Christ as the King, and Mark said, "I would like for my part to write of Him as the Worker," and Luke said, "And I think I will undertake to delineate Him as the Man," and then John said, "Well, I will crown it by writing of Him as the Son of God!" It was not as if Paul met James one day, and after talking and praying about it, Paul agreed to write of the dogmatic, and James of the practical aspects of Christianity. Nothing of the sort. There is no trace of such a thing. They simply wrote as they were moved, to meet some passing need, to express some earnest longing, to teach some glorious truth, by a letter, or a treatise, or a memoir; and so this composite of fragmentary mem-

oires and disconnected letters came into this miraculous unit that we call the New Testament. Yes! The Book is marvelous; it is transcendental; it is altogether unexplainable. It is the miracle of literature in its formation.

The Wonder of Its Unification

Another thing: We talk of this Bible as a Book. We seldom or never think of it as a Library. Very few of us, save those who have studied the matter, ever think of this Book as a Library consisting of sixty-six separate volumes, written by between thirty and forty different authors, in three different languages, upon totally different topics and under extraordinarily different circumstances. One author wrote history; another, biography; another, about sanitary science and hygiene; one wrote on theology; another wrote poetry; another, prophecy; some wrote on philosophy and jurisprudence; others, on genealogy and ethnology; and some on stories of adventure and travel of romantic interest. Why, if these sixty-six books were printed separately, in large-sized print and heavy paper, and bound in morocco, I doubt if they could all stand on that table! And yet here we have them all, the whole sixty-six volumes, in a little book that a child can carry in its little hand. And the strangest thing of all is, that though their subjects are so diverse and so difficult, the most difficult and abstruse of all conceivable subjects, though there was

no possibility of anything like concerted action or transfer of literary responsibility, for it was impossible for the man who wrote the first pages to have had the slightest knowledge what the men would write about who wrote one thousand five hundred years after he was born; yet this miscellaneous cento or collection of heterogeneous writings is not only unified by the binder in one book, but so unified by God the Author, that no one ever thinks of it today as anything else than One Book! And One Book it is, the miracle of all literary unity.

The Wonder of Its Age

Again, it is a wonder that that Book is here today. I say it is a wonder that we have a Bible at all when we think of its age. When we compare the Bible as a book with any other book in this respect it is a perfect wonder. I will tell you why. You all know that the greatest test of literature is time. Do you know of any book that is read by anyone today to speak of, that was written one thousand years ago? Books that were the rage a few years ago are forgotten today. Whoever thinks nowadays of reading "Robert Ellesmere," or asks at a bookstore for Rider Haggard's "She"? Why, poor "David Harum" is almost unsalable, and we will soon hear nothing of "The Rosary." These books were born, were boomed, and died. The cold hand of oblivion is laid upon them. (Heb. 8:13). Their

force is spent. Their power is gone. They were literary sky-rockets; they are like "Ta ra ra boom de aye." Where is the book, after all, that is five hundred years old, and read by the masses nowadays; for, as we said, a book that is one thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years old is read by nobody. Horace and Homer may be studied by students of the classics, and schoolboys may have Virgil and Xenophon thrashed into them, but whoever thinks of reading them? They are dead books in dead languages. For you can put it down for a certainty that the older a book is the smaller is its chance of surviving, or being read by people of diverse nationalities. Another thing, no book has had much chance of being circulated widely amongst a people from which it did not originate. No book, for instance, written by a Spaniard has much chance of being read by Germans. German works are read by Germans; English works by Englishmen. I know that I never could enjoy "Old Mortality," for I am not a Scot. What book do you know of, with a few great exceptions, such as Dante, Cervantes, Dumas, Goethe, Shakespeare, that has been able to overleap the bounds of nationality, and as to Turkey, India, or Mexico, or Brazil, what man out of a hundred could tell you whether they had any authors, or if they had, the name of one of their works. But the marvelous thing about the Bible is, that it is the only book in the world that has not only overleaped the barrier of time, but it is the only book in the world that has been able to overleap the barrier of nationality. It was written

largely in a dead language, for the Hebrew language is not a language that is either spoken or written today; and yet that Book, written in a dead language, written by men who died two thousand or three thousand years ago, is not only living today, but it is the most widely-circulated book in the world.

The Wonder of Its Sale

Surely this is another marvelous thing. The Old Book is easily the best seller of the day. A leading bookseller was asked what book had the largest circulation. He did not mention the most recent novel or the latest scientific work. He said that the book which outsells all the other books in the world was the book called the Bible. Other books compute their circulation by thousands; the Bible by millions. And yet the man on the street never thinks of this book as a book that was written in a dead language over two or three thousand years ago.

The Wonder of Its Interest

Another marvelous thing about this book is that it is the only book in the world read by all classes and all sorts of people. You know very well that literary people rarely read a child's book, and children would not read books of philosophy and science even if they could. If a book is philosophical and scien-

tific it commands the attention of literary people, and if it is a child's book it is read in the nursery. A wonderful thing it is to think that here is one book that differs from all others; a book that is read to the little child and read by the old man as he trembles on the brink of the other world. Years ago I heard the nurse reading a story to my child, and I said to her: "What is it that you are reading to the little one?" "I am reading the story of Joseph in the Bible," she answered. And the little child, in excitement, cried, "Please don't stop her, please," as she listened with delighted interest to the reading of a book that was written in Hebrew probably three thousand five hundred years ago. And not far away from the room where the little child was listening, there sat one of the noblest of modern minds, one of the greatest of modern scientists, our foremost Canadian scholar, the great Sir William Dawson, President of McGill College, Montreal, reading with profound devotion and a higher delight the pages of that same marvelous Book. Here is a phenomenon. One of the ablest of modern scientists delights in the reading of a book which is the joy of a little child in the nursery! Verily it is without a parallel in literature. Our boys and girls read and study it in myriads of homes and Sunday Schools, and great scholars like Newton and Herschel and Faraday and Brewster, and great statesmen like Gladstone and Lincoln, and great soldiers like Gustavus Adolphus and Gordon and Stonewall Jackson, have taken this book as the joy and the guide of their lives.

The Wonder of Its Language

Another wonderful thing is that this Book was not written in Athens, the seat of learning in Greece, nor in Alexandria in Egypt. It was not written by men who received their inspiration from the ancient sources of wisdom. It was written by men who lived in Palestine, in Nazareth, in Galilee. Many of the writers were what we would call illiterate. Not only were they not university men, or scholars or original thinkers; they could not speak their own language properly. There is a strong probability that neither John nor Peter could speak grammatically. You remember Peter was trapped because his dialect betrayed him. He spoke like a Galilean. Did you ever hear a man of Yorkshire or Somersetshire talking? Did you ever hear the brogue of an Irishman from Galway? It was like that with Peter and John. (Matt. 26:73; Acts 2:7; 4:13). They were uneducated men. And many of the men who wrote the Bible were men of that character. One was a farm hand. Another was a shepherd. They were men of no literary reputation. And yet from men of that type educationally has come a book that God in His mysterious power has so divested of all provincialism that it has become the standard of the language of the most literary nations of the world. And not only so. It is a book that has gone to the North and South and East and West. It is the strongest factor in modern life today, and yet it is of the ancient world. It is the most potent factor in the influence of the great nations of the pro-

gressive West, and yet it proceeded from the narrowest and most conservative people of the unprogressive East. All its authors were Jews, and the Jews, by instinct and tradition, by education and sentiment, were the narrowest of all narrow people. The Jew was not only narrow; he had no interest in other nations. You know what a time it took to get the idea into Peter's head that he ought to have an interest in the salvation of the Gentiles of the outside world. (Acts 10:14; Gal. 2:11-14). A miracle of special revelation only did it. How do you explain, then, the fact that these ignorant men, those most unc cosmopolitan men, with all their provincialism, and exclusiveness, and insularity, were enabled to write a book which has become not only the Book of the Jews, but the Book of all men, and *The Book* of the world today? It is for only one tongue, and that is, the world's. It is for universal man as man. It is the proud boast of the Church of Rome today that it has but one language, and that a dead language, the Latin. But the Bible Society has a prouder boast. It is its boast that it has printed the Bible in over five hundred living languages; that it is giving the Living Word to every nation under heaven, that they may hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. Yes, God has so overruled the history of His world that there has been born a Society which has re-established the miracle of Pentecost. It is truly a miracle. It is a wonder to think that an old Hebrew book, written by a lot of Jews, has in God's mystic Providence been so divested of all

orientalism and Judaism, and rabbinism, that the millions upon millions of boys and girls and men and women who read it never think of it as the writing of Hebrews or the language of an ancient and oriental race. To them they are simply the words of their own dear mother-tongue. It is the English Bible; the best that our literature can give in simple, noble prose, as Frederic Harrison once said in a lecture at Oxford. And yet, wonderful to think of, the German never thinks of it in any other way. To him it is the German Bible.

The Wonder of Its Preservation

Another wonderful thing about the Bible is that it is almost the only book in the world that has stood ages of ferocious and incessant persecution. Century after century men have tried to burn it and to bury it. Crusade after crusade has been organized to extirpate it. Kings of the earth set themselves, and rulers of the church took counsel together to destroy it from off the face of the earth. Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, in 303, inaugurated the most terrific onslaught that the world has known upon a book. Every Bible, almost, was destroyed, myriads of Christians perished, and a column of triumph was erected over an exterminated Bible with the inscription: "Extincto nomine Christianorum" (The name of the Christians has been extinguished). And yet, not many years after, the Bible came forth, as Noah from the Ark, to re-people the

earth, and in the year 325 Constantine enthroned the Bible as the Infallible Judge of Truth in the first General Council. Then followed the prolonged persecution of medievalism. You all know how the Church of Rome denied the Scriptures to the people. The Church of Rome never trusted the people with the Bible. For ages it was practically an unknown book. Even Luther was a grown-up man when he said that he had never seen a Bible in his life. No jailer ever kept a prisoner closer than the Church of Rome has kept the Bible from the people. Not only so. In consequence of Edicts of Councils, and bans, and bulls of Popes, Bibles were burned and Bible readers sent by the Inquisition to rack and flame. Many of us have seen the very spot in old London where baskets full of English Testaments were burned with great display by the order of Rome.

Yet perhaps the worst persecution of all has been during the last one hundred and fifty years. The bitterest foes of the Bible, curiously enough, were men who claimed liberty of thought, and Bolingbroke and Hume and Voltaire seemed so confident of the extermination of the Bible, that the Frenchman declared that a hundred years after his day not a Bible would be found save as an antiquarian curiosity. Then came the German rationalistic host, with the fiercest and deadliest of all the attacks. Baur and Strauss and the Tubingen School took up the cry of the Children of Edom: "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground." But He that sitteth in His silent heaven laughed, and Jehovah had them in

derision For here it is today, stronger than ever. It stands, and it will stand. The adversaries have done their worst. They have charged their heaviest charge. They have fired their deadliest volley. Whatever unexpected adversaries appear in the future, no more destructive trios than Julian and Celsus and Porphyry, than Voltaire and Strauss and Renan, than Eichborn, Wellhausen and Kuenen, will ever be confederate against it. Yet, in spite of these age-long persecutions, the Word of the Lord is having free course, and is being glorified. It is being circulated at the rate of about twenty-five million copies a year, in over five hundred languages of the globe. It has an influence it never possessed before. Verily as we think of it we may challenge our proud age with the challenge of Moses and cry: "Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?" (Deut. 4:32).

The Five Crowning Wonders

But before I close I would like to briefly refer to five other things that are to my mind the crowning wonders of the Book.

Its Self-Authenticatingness

There is, first of all, what we might call its self-authenticatingness. You need no histori-

cal critic or university professor to prove that the Bible is God's own Word. The Holy Ghost alone is the Author and Giver of that conviction. If you will but hear the accents of His voice you will be assured beyond all possibility of argument that this book is God's own Word. Men have come, and still come, to unsettle and destroy. The Spirit of Christ comes to validate and confirm with a Divine conviction and a Divine certainty that is incommunicable by mere reason, and is impervious to the assaults of doubt. You have perhaps heard Spurgeon's famous story of the poor woman who was confronted by a modern agnostic, and asked, "What are you reading?" "I am reading the Word of God." "The Word of God? Who told you that?" "He told me so Himself." "Told you so? Why, how can you prove that?" Looking skyward, the poor soul said: "Can you prove to me that there is a sun in the sky?" "Why, of course; the best proof is that it warms me, and I can see its light." "That's it!" was her joyous reply. "The best proof that this Book is the Word of God is that it warms and lights my soul." (Read 1 Cor. 2:12). You cannot explain this. But it is a fact deep and real.

Its Inexhaustibility

Another wonder of the Bible is its inexhaustibility. It is like a seed. You can tell how many acorns are on an oak, but you cannot tell how many oaks are in an acorn. The tree that grows from a seed produces in turn

the seeds of other trees; each tree contains a thousand seeds; each seed the germ of a thousand trees. Its depth is infinite; its height is infinite. Millions of readers and writers, age after age, have dug in this unfathomable mine, and its depths are still unexhausted. Age after age it has generated, with ever increasing creative power, ideas and plans, and schemes, and themes, and books. Yes, books; and in many cases books that are the only literature of the nation. The greatest minds have been its expositors. Myriads of students have studied it daily, and its readers from day to day can be numbered by millions. The volumes that have been written on single chapters or even pages would fill the shelves of many a library, and to-day they are as fresh, as fertile, as inexhaustible, as the day they were first written. The treasures yet to be found are as the stars of the sky in infinity of multitude.

Its Non-Improvableness

Another wonder is its non-improvableness. You cannot gild gold. You cannot paint rubies. You cannot brighten diamonds. And no artist can touch with final touch this finished Word of God. This proud-pinnacled century can add nothing to it. It stands as the sun in the sky. If the greatest Bible-lovers of the last century, like Irving, and Gladstone, and Spurgeon, and Parker, had attempted to improve it, their work would have been a patch and a disfigurement. It has the Glory of God.

Its Authoritativeness

Its irresistible authoritativeness—this is another wonder. It breaks upon you as a Voice from Heaven. Five hundred times in the Pentateuch it prefaces or concludes its declarations with the sublime assertions, “The Lord said,” or “The Lord spake!” Three hundred times again in the following books it does the same, and in the prophetic, twelve hundred times with such expressions as: “Hear the Word of the Lord,” or “Thus saith the Lord.” No other book dares thus to address itself to the universal conscience of man as man. No other speaks with such binding claim, or presumes to command the obedience of mankind. While all the books of the Bible are not equal in grandeur of revelation or of spiritual value, or ethical importance, there is throughout an equality of inspiration and finality of authoritativeness. The strange thing is that men in every age and clime acknowledge it. They know that the book speaks to their inner consciousness with an authority like the authority of God Himself.

Its Perennial Re-Inspiration

Another wonder is what might be called its perpetual re-inspiration. Men think of the Bible as a book that *was* inspired. But the wonder of the Bible is that it *is* inspired. From the far-distant heights of time it comes sweeping into the hearts of men today, and the same breath of God that breathed into it its mystic life makes it live and energize

again today. It is the Living Word, vital with the life of the Living God who gave it and gives it living power. The Twenty-third Psalm was inspired, but again and again today, as it is whispered in the hush of the death-chamber, or read with the hidden cry, "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold the wondrous things of Thy law," it is re-inspired, and the Spirit makes it live once more. For this is the most remarkable and unique feature of the Bible. I feel that it is *mine*. Its promises are mine. As I read the one hundred and third Psalm, it is not ancient Hebrew, it is present-day power; and I, a living soul, overwhelmed with gratitude, cry out: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." The other day I took up this dear old Bible that my mother gave me, and I noted a verse in Genesis with a date written on the margin. There floated back upon my mind a time, some years ago, when I was in great trouble. I had to leave my dear wife and children, and to travel in quest of health in distant lands; and my heart within me was sad, and one day, opening my Bible at random, as men say, my eye caught these words in Gen. 28:15, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land." Shall I ever forget the flash of comfort that swept over my soul as I read that verse! All the exegetes and critics in the world could never persuade my soul that that was a mere echo of some far-off relic of a Babylonian legend, or of an Oriental myth. No, no! That was a message to *me*. It came straight down to *me*. It swept into my soul as a Voice from Heaven. It lifted

me up, and no man will ever shake me out of the conviction that that message that day was God's own Word to me, inspiring because inspired, inspired because inspiring.

Its Christfulness

But the final wonder of the Book is Christ. He is its fulness, its center, its fascination. It is all about Jesus! Old Testament and New Testament alike tell of Jesus, the great Fact of history, the great Force of history, the great Future of history; for of this Book it can be said: "The Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof." And as long as men live upon the face of this globe the Book that tells of that Supreme Personality, the Center of a world's desire, Jesus; Jesus, the arch of the span of history, the keystone of the arch of prophecy; Jesus, the Revealed, the Redeeming, the Risen, the Reigning, the Returning Lord; Jesus, the Desire of all nations; so long will this Book draw men's hearts like a magnet, and men will stand by it, and live for it, and die for it.

The Last Word

And as I close, let me say this one word more. Oh, do not think and do not say, as I have heard men say they think, that we ought to read this Book as we read any other book; we ought to study it and analyze it just as we do any textbook in literature or

science. No, no! When you come to this Book, come to it with awe. Read it with reverence. Regard it with a most sacred attention. "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground!" Never, never, compare this Book with other books. Comparison is dangerous. They are of earth. This is from heaven. Oh, do not think and do not say that this Book only contains the word of God! It *is* the Word of God. Think not of it as a good book, or even the better book, but lift it in heart and mind and faith and love far, far above all, and ever regard it, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God; nay, more, as the living Word of the Living God: supernatural in origin, eternal in duration; inexpressible in value; infinite in scope; divine in authorship; human in penmanship; regenerative in power; infallible in authority; universal in interest; personal in application; inspired in totality.

D. H.

Reading the Bible

A correspondent referred some time ago to the tendency among Christians in the present day, of neglecting the reading of God's Word. This is an important subject, and one which we need to take to heart. We never can neglect the Word of God without loss to ourselves, and no doubt it is one of the causes of much of the spiritual weakness which abounds on every hand. If a magazine or a book—even a good book—takes the place of the scripture,

it is so far more of a hindrance than a help to the believer. The Word of God and prayer are two things absolutely necessary if we are to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. What would have happened to the Israelite had he neglected to go out of the camp in the morning and gather the manna daily? He would have been without food and therefore weak and unfit for the exigencies of the wilderness journey.

It is quite true that some are much occupied and pressed with work or business; but, let us remember that it is not a question of the quantity we read; even a few verses read with the earnest desire to profit by them and feed upon them, are more helpful than whole chapters gone over in a formal way. What characterizes the godly man in Psalm 1 is that he meditates upon the law of the Lord day and night, and the result is that he is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, he is kept fresh and fruitful even in times of trial and difficulty.

We may depend upon it, this is what is needed. Not cold intellectual knowledge, but meditating daily on God's Word, seeking the Spirit's teaching and guidance, and practically living out what we do know. Then God will give more. —Words of Help.

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Study the Bible with prayer. Seek the Lord there, and not knowledge—that will come too; but the heart is well directed in seeking the Lord: the eye is single, and then the whole body is full of light. —J. N. D.

If we are "to grow by the sincere milk of the Word" . . . we need the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and in order to this there must be the exercising of ourselves unto godliness—the "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings," so that the Holy Spirit be not grieved. If the Christian allows envy, guile, hypocrisies, to work in his heart, there will be no growth in the true knowledge of the things of God.

—J. N. D.

If I But Read

The Lord I love went on ahead
To make a home for me. He said
He would come back again, and He—
Oh, gracious love—He wrote to me!
He knew I was so weak and blind
And foolish that I could not find
The road alone. He told me things
That all earth's wise men, and its
kings,
Have never guessed, yet I foreknow
If I but read His Word. And, oh,
Such depths of love on every sheet!
My soul is trembling at His feet.
What would He think of me
If when I saw Him I should say:
"I was too busy every day
To read what Thou didst write to me;
I really hadn't time for Thee!"

M. S. N.

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

In His Name

On examination, it will be found that there is, speaking generally, a two-fold significance connected with this expression—one God-ward, and one man-ward. To this may be added the expression, which, while slightly different, may be fitly included under this head; viz., believing "in His name" (John 1:12; 2:23). The word "in," in this case, is not the one usually so translated, but rather "into" or "unto," and conjoined here with the believing, it indicates the object to which faith has been drawn. This will be more easily understood if it is explained that there are, in Scripture, three main ways of setting forth faith. For example, it is said that Abraham believed God; we also read constantly, especially in John's Gospel (though the words are not always so rendered) of believing *in* Christ; and, in addition, we meet with believing on, or upon, Him, as in Acts 16:31, etc. There is a very distinct difference in these various modes of expression. To *believe* a person is to receive his word or testimony; to *believe* in him is to believe that he is trustworthy; and to *believe* on, is really to rest upon, or to trust in, the object of faith which has been presented to the soul. We may see, therefore, that to believe in the name of Christ is the assent of the soul to His trustworthiness, and that the name of Christ, the expression of all that He is, is that which is proclaimed in the gospel

as the object for faith. And the reception of this testimony, testimony to what Christ is, as the Lord Jesus Christ, is the commencement of all blessing. The title to take the place of children is connected with it (John 1:12); as also the title to the possession of eternal life. (John 3:15, 16.) Attention is called to this, and it is earnestly pressed upon the reader, because, without the knowledge of this door-way into all blessedness, it is impossible to enter upon the consideration of the virtue of the name of Christ. The value of His name must be known for salvation before it can be enjoyed in the presence of God, or before it can be used in the world.

In John 14:13, 14 we read, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." As the last words of verse 13 show, it is here, in accordance with the characteristic truth of this gospel, the name of the Son rather than that of Christ: but this will all the more strikingly illustrate our point. What then is brought before us is, that believers are divinely warranted to appear before the Father in the name of the Son; that they themselves—in relationship through having been born again, and having received the Spirit of adoption, and having been set, through the death and resurrection of Christ, in association with Himself in His own relationship (chap. 20:17)—are now free to enter into the presence of His Father, and their Father, in His blessed name. That these words look on to the period after His death, resurrection, and

ascension is evident from the fact that the presence of the Holy Ghost is contemplated. (Chap. 14:16, 17, etc.) When that time should have come, not before, they might ask the Father in His name. This will explain the Lord's language in chapter 16:23, 24 "and in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto" (during the time of His sojourn with them on earth), "have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Who of us has entered into the vast significance of this scripture? Or who has availed himself in all its length, breadth, height, and depth, of the unspeakable grace herein expressed?

Let us then examine these wondrous intimations, and to aid us we may enquire, first of all, what is meant by asking in the Son's name. To be before the Father thus, is to be there in all the value of that name, according to the Father's own estimate of it, with all the claim of the Son upon the Father's heart, and with the Son's authority for the presentation of our petitions. When He Himself, the Incarnate Son, stood by the grave of Lazarus, He said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. *And I knew that Thou hearest me always.*" If therefore we ask anything in His name, we shall also be always heard; and this is precisely what the blessed Lord here promises. Understanding then that He has given us this liberty and privilege, when we are in the enjoyment of the relationship which He has secured for us with the Father,

two things have yet to be ascertained; first, as to His requisite authority for the petitions here referred to; and secondly, as to their subject. The authority of the Son for the utterance of any special desires begotten in our hearts can only be obtained in communion with His own mind, as we are taught from the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit. And hence their subject can only concern the Son's own things. That is, in other words, the assurance given that whatsoever we ask in His name shall be done, cannot allude to our own personal needs and desires; but it supposes His people to be in fellowship with His own desires, objects, and interests, so that they can pray for these in His own name, and with His authority. For when we have learned, in any feeble measure, what the Father's counsels are for the glory of His beloved Son, we are free, if we have ceased from self-occupation, to be led out into the vast circle of the Son's things and the Father's things (John 16:14, 15), and to pray for the accomplishment of all these wondrous purposes of His love. What a place it is into which we are introduced! And what grace to invest us with all His own preciousness before the Father!

If on this side we may appear before God in the name of Christ, on the other, it is enjoined upon us to do everything, whether amongst our fellow-believers or in the world, in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. (Col. 3:17.) These two aspects are constantly, and in every variety of manner, presented in the

Scriptures. In John 17 for example, after the Lord has put the disciples in His own place before the Father, He gives them His own place before the world. Peter, in like manner, teaches that, if believers are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, they are also a royal priesthood to show out, in the world, the praises (excellencies) of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. This is only to state the blessed truth that the believer is inseparable from Christ, whether before God or before men, that through grace he is so bound up with all that He is, and has accomplished, that he enters the holiest in all the value of His person and His work, and passes through the world as His representative. Indeed, this last word most nearly expresses what it is to act in the name of Christ, or, as in this scripture, in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is to act on His behalf, and under His authority. What an ambassador, or a plenipotentiary, is in relation to his sovereign, the Christian is in relation to Christ. He is to be governed entirely by the will of his Lord; he must, with all fidelity, express His mind, study His instructions, and seek in every way to advance His interests. Self and selfish objects can have no place in such a mission: his motto must be that of the apostle Paul, "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21); Christ alone the motive and object of all his activities.

We may well pause in the presence of such a statement, and exclaim, Who is sufficient

for such a mission? Lest any, therefore, should be overwhelmed at the thought of what they might deem to be a tremendous responsibility, let it be remembered that He who sends us out to act in His name, sustains us in the mission with all His power. No one goes to warfare at his own charges at any time. His name, indeed, when rightly borne and used, carries omnipotence with it. Thus when the seventy returned to the Lord, they said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us" (not "through," as rendered, but) "in Thy name." "Yea," replied the Lord, "behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:17, 19). The mission and the power for its accomplishment are thus intimately connected; only faith, faith in activity, is the essential condition for the use of the power. This truth needs to be earnestly insisted upon at the present time, if there is to be a revival, or recovery, before the Lord's return. It is written, "all things are possible to him that believeth"; we read the words, do not doubt them, and yet we seldom think of the possibility of their being verified in our own experience. A saint of olden time knew the secret when he wrote, "Lord, give what Thou commandest, and then command what Thou wilt." Even so, for it is only by the Lord's own power that the smallest of His precepts can be translated into practice; while it is equally true that His largest behests are as easy of performance as the smallest, inasmuch as adequate power is ever at the service of faith. This is

seen in the case of the man with the withered hand. How could he stretch forth an arm that was dry and dead? He believed, and divine power flowed into his dead arm; he stretched it forth, and lo! "was restored whole as the other" (Mark 3:5).

A few illustrations of acting in the name of Christ will help to the understanding of the whole subject. Take first an instance of apostolical activity in Pentecostal days. When Peter and John encountered the lame man at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, Peter expressly disclaimed acting in his own authority, or power, saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). In like manner Paul, "in the name of Jesus Christ," commanded the evil spirit, which possessed the damsel who followed him day by day, to come out of her. In both cases they acted, therefore, as His servants, and used, in the exercise of faith, His power in the miracles wrought. So likewise, when correcting disorders among the saints at Corinth and at Thessalonica, the apostle acted in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 5:4; 2 Thess. 3:6.)- These instances will suffice to show that in all service, as well as in all the duties and responsibilities of daily life, it is the privilege of the believer to act in the name of his Lord. It is, indeed, his true calling to stand before men as the representative of Christ. This may be seen in another aspect from a scripture in 1 Peter 4:14, "If ye be reproached," he says, "for" (literally in) "the name of Christ, happy are ye." Here it is

evident that the enemies of Christ look upon His people as bearing His name, and thus standing forth in the world as representing Him. Hence their enmity to Christ is manifested in the persecution of His followers. And the Christian can never divest himself of this relationship to his absent Lord. Whether in the assembly, in his home, or moving amongst his fellow-men, everywhere and at all times, he must remember that he bears the name of Christ, to act in His interests, under His authority, and on His behalf.

It may be again repeated, What an unutterable privilege to be endowed with the liberty of appearing before God and men in the name of Christ! It is, on the other hand, the very greatness of the privilege which indicates the vastness of the responsibility. For if we are entrusted with the name of Christ, as with a holy standard, what incessant vigilance, and what realization of our dependence, are required to maintain it in all its purity, and to guard it from all dishonor? To encourage ourselves to be diligent in this object, we may remind ourselves how precious it is to the heart of Christ to behold His people zealously and jealously caring for the honor of His name. As we read in the prophet Malachi, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, *and that thought upon His name*" (chap. 3:16). It was a day of abounding iniquity and corruption amongst God's people; but this pious remnant were drawn apart from the evil into

the bonds of holy fellowship by their godly fear, and their love of Jehovah's name. The eyes of the Lord were upon them, and in the joy of His heart He proclaimed, "And they shall be mine . . . in that day when I make up my jewels"; that is, in the day of coming judgment He would put them into His treasury-house amongst His precious things. May we all covet the Lord's approbation for caring for the honor of His most precious and peerless Name.

—E. D.

Don't Carry the Burdens of Tomorrow

God broke our years into hours and days
That hour by hour, and day by day,
Just going on a little way,
 We might be able, all along,
 To keep quite strong.

Should all the weight of life be laid
Across our shoulders at just one place,
And the future, rife with woe and struggle,
 Meet us face to face:
 We could not go;
Our feet would stop, and so
God lays a little on us every day.

And never, I believe, in all life's way,
Will burdens bear so deep,
Or pathways lie so steep,
But we can go, if, by God's power,
We only bear the burden of the hour.

Selected.

The Song of Solomon

"Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they make me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents" (chap. 1:6-8).

It is the bride-to-be speaking here as in the previous verses. She is speaking of herself as burnt black by the hot rays of the sun as she was forced to hard labor in the vineyards of her oppressors. She was forced to serve their interests and had no time left to look after her own things. Her own mother's children, that is, her own brothers, were her oppressors—those from whom one would naturally expect affection and kindness. Thus she learned the sad fact that the world is swayed by its selfish interests so much so that even natural affections are brushed aside in the pursuit of their selfish ends.

Prophetically, no doubt, this refers to the oppression of the remnant by the Jews under the Antichrist. But we will not now dwell on its prophetic application, but on its practical application to our individual experience, because there is a practical lesson here of great importance. The speaker here in these verses

learns first of all by bitter experience what the true character of the world is. So often young Christians, charmed by the glare and glitter of the world, have to learn by bitter disappointment that it is all a vain and empty show. At heart the world is heartless and self-centered. Self-interest, selfishness, greed and lust are the great motive powers that keep the wheels of the world turning. The sooner the Christian is disillusioned on this point the better. So many young Christians turn a wistful eye to the world, thinking to find there satisfaction and enjoyment, but find instead that there is nothing there that can satisfy the deep longings of a renewed heart, and as a result the soul is left empty, restless and discontented.

It is just such a state of soul we find here in these verses, and all disillusioned, restless and oppressed she turns to her Beloved and asks, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." How sad, yet how like our natural hearts, that we try everything else before we turn to the Lord to ask Him where to find the rest that He gives. Yes, there is a place where the sheep of His flock can find sweet rest at noon. Noon in hot climates like Palestine is the most trying time of the day, when the sun, a type of affliction (see Matt. 13:6-21), beats down in all its violence. But the Good Shepherd delights to give rest to His sheep even during the most trying heat of the day. Dear reader, have you found this rest and contentment of soul that keeps your heart peaceful and calm during

all the heat and bustle of the day, or when the hot rays of affliction beat upon you? These verses give us the secret of how we may find true rest for our souls.

"Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." Notice well the order here, "where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest"; feeding comes before rest. Her own soul was hungry. There is no food in the things of the world that can satisfy the longings of the renewed soul, and there can be no rest while these longings are left unsatisfied.

Rest as to our sins is found as we rely in simple faith upon the finished work of Christ as our Substitute. We know from the Word of God the question of our sins has been fully settled to God's own satisfaction by the blood of Christ, and that we stand before God accepted in Him in all the virtue and value of His finished work on the cross. This gives rest as to our conscience once burdened with the sense of our guilt, but rest of soul in another thing. Peace and contentment cannot be found in a hungry soul, not till the deep longings of the soul are met. These deep longings that God has implanted in every new-born soul when made a partaker of His own divine nature and eternal life, cannot be satisfied by the passing things of time and sense. An immortal soul possessing eternal life, is fitted for higher things than the fleeting things of this passing scene. Only in God's Word that "abideth forever" and in fellowship with the Father and with Christ, the eternal Lover

of our soul, can we find food that will fully satisfy the appetite of the new nature.

With this in mind we will now turn again to these verses and see with what wonderful simplicity and beauty this fact is illustrated. The picture here is that of sheep which have been feeding in the green pastures and, their hunger fully satisfied, are resting peacefully and contented during the heat of the day. A hungry sheep will not rest, but will be running about trying to find something to meet its hunger. If we are not feeding in the green pastures of God's Word our souls will not find rest, for there only will you find that which satisfies the spiritual longings of the renewed heart. It is important that we begin the morning with feeding upon the Word of God under the eye of the Good Shepherd in order to have peace and rest in our souls throughout the trying moments of the day. We cannot too strongly press the importance of a quiet time with the Lord over the Word before the hustle and distractions of the day begin. A young Christian we know, who had to go to work early in the morning, made it a practice to retire earlier at night so he could rise in the morning in time for a quiet season over the Word before leaving for work. We might well learn from his example.

Notice the expression here in this verse: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth," it is the language of a quickened soul who at heart loves the Lord but is out of touch with Him. She is out of fellowship with the Good Shepherd. She has "turned aside" to other flocks not under His care. 'For why should I be as

one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions." It is this personal nearness to the Good Shepherd Himself that she had lost, but which is so essential to rest of soul. It is not merely that we should read the Word but that we should get in touch with the Good Shepherd as we meditate upon it so that our soul is fed by Him through it. It is this personal contact—this personal fellowship with the Lord Himself that is so essential if we are to have rest and quietness in our souls.

'If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids by the shepherds' tents.'

It is the Good Shepherd Himself now that answers her. And how gently he deals with this hungry soul. He does not reprove her sharply for having turned aside, but uses language that is suited to draw out her heart to Himself. We may all learn from this and especially any that are used of the Lord to feed and care for His sheep.

'If thou knowest not, go thy way forth.' Ah, here is the secret. 'Go thy way forth.' She was at a distance from Him and moving in another world than that where He fed His flock. The shepherd never feeds his flock in the cities. In the Song of Solomon the city is a type or picture of the world which man has built up for the satisfaction of his own lusts and pleasures without regard to God. If you are saved and are still going with the world in its pursuits of lust and pleasure without God, you may be sure you are moving in a different world than that where the Good

Shepherd feeds his flock, and your soul will starve. His loving words to you are, "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock." Yes, "go thy way forth," associate yourself with His flock, keep close to the Good Shepherd, feed in the green pastures of His Word, and you shall find rest to your soul.

And now one thing more. In the closing clause of this verse we read, "and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." When we are feeding upon the green pastures of His Word, the Lord would have us give out to others also what we are enjoying in our own souls. Feed on the Word of God, keep close to the Good Shepherd's trusted side, and bear witness for Him, and you will find rest and happiness for your soul.

To be continued, D. V.

Christ is All

More and more, I am made to feel that Christ does not have His proper place among the children of God. He is not the object. It is either a doctrine, a dogma, a party, or our experience—something besides Christ. We seem possessed with very much the same spirit that actuated Peter on the mount, when he said: "Let us make there three tabernacles." The Father solemnly rebukes this, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye

Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only" (Matt. 17:5-8).

Have you ever been in the "cloud," dear brother? Have you ever heard the "voice?" Have you been on your "face?" Have you felt the "touch?" Then, have you heard another voice, "Arise?" Do your eyes see "no man save Jesus only?" Many, perhaps, have reached the top of the mount; but few, very few, have been in the "cloud," have heard the "voice," have been on their "faces," have risen to see "Jesus only."

"Christ is all" (Col. 3:2). Do we make Him this? Is it a question of my salvation? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Is it a question of relationship with God? "Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). Is it a question of experience? "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Is it a question of service? "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Is it a question of my path? "I am the way" (John 14:6). Is it a question of heaven or the place to which my path leads? He would define it as "where I am." (John 13:3.) "O, let us know more of that rich blessedness which comes of making Christ all," of seeing "Jesus only." Our cry should be—"O, to know Him." (Phil. 3:10.) In our selfishness we cry and beg for blessings. It is the Blessor we need, Himself. He is the joy of the Father's heart.

Let us taste with Him the delight He takes in His Son. Christ is infinitely higher than doctrine or experience. Experience we shall have, but only with Him can our hearts be ravished and raptured.

Why is it we are not changed more from "glory to glory?" The veil has been rent; the blood has been sprinkled; the Spirit has been given. The reason is we are occupied with ourselves and the work of the Spirit in us; rather than with Christ alone. This is the weakness in the so called holiness movement, so much of which is superficial. Let us look more in that unveiled face, from which streams the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. (See 2 Cor. 3 and 4.) All else will pale, and fade if we will but linger there.

Let me say here—the Spirit never occupies me with His work in me or my experience. And if I am thus occupied I am experimentally out of the Spirit. The Lord said of the Spirit, "He shall not speak of Himself." "He shall glorify Me" (John 16:13, 14). To go further, the work of Christ, wonderfully blessed as it is, can never be the object of my heart. It gives my conscience peace, sweet peace, but only His Person can satisfy my heart. And O, how His person does. Ten thousand hallelujahs to Him!

The Father directs our attention to Him. (Matt. 17:5.) The Holy Ghost would occupy us with Him. (Acts 7:55, 56.) The Word of God testifies of Him (John 6:39). He is the object of faith; He is the object of love; He is the object of hope; and the faith, or love, or hope, that does not make Him the object, is

spurious and unreal. He is all for my path; He is all for my service; He is all for my worship; blessed, blessed, be His Name. He is not on the cross, He is not in the grave; He is on the throne. Wondrous fact, a Man in the glory of God, and that One my Savior; my Priest; my Advocate; the One who died for me; the One who lives for me; the One who is coming for me; the Bridegroom of His church. It is not surprising that Peter should say, 'Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.' The ungodly world as well as the religious world are equally bent upon shutting Him out. The former is "reserved unto fire," the latter He will "vomit out of His mouth" (1 Peter 2:7; 2 Peter 3:7; Rev. 3:16). Therefore keep clear from them both, "let us go forth unto Him" (Heb. 13:13). He is enough, and it pleases His heart for us to make everything of Him.

May it be with us, "Christ only," you cannot get a better portion.

And now, dear brother, let every affection, every desire, every thought, and every aim, be gathered to, and centered in Him.

F. C. B.

The World, and what should a Christian's Life Be in it?

"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be me dis-

ciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:25-27, 33).

"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. . . . But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:24, 29-31).

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men?" "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 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. . . . And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 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. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 2:20-22; 3:1-4, 15-17).

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of

a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. . . . For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:14-16, 21).

What is the world? Such is the all-important question which must be seriously considered by every thoughtful Christian. What is this world, from which he is called to keep himself "unspotted"? (James 1:27).

Scripture uses the word "world" in three different senses. In the first place it signifies literally the order, the system, the organized state of human affairs on the earth. Secondly, the earth itself, which is also called "the world," because it is the sphere where that system is developed. Thirdly, all individuals who live according to this system are included under the same word. We must therefore make a distinction between the world as a sphere, then the persons who compose it, and finally the system of the world.

When we read in the Word of God that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15), we must understand that He came into this scene called the world, and therefore He was found in contact with the system of the world which hated Him. He said of His disciples: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). This is just the opposite to the men of the world who find their life in that

system—they did not form part of it. Whosoever is the friend of the world, in that sense, is the enemy of God (James 4:4). The characteristic of such a system is, to govern itself, quite independently of God. . . .

It is a system where every need of man is provided for, as also everything required for the use of his faculties.

Man has need of society as well, and the world has not failed in providing him with a social system—a perfect study in itself. Social position comes first with man, and he spares himself no trouble to create it, and no expense is too great for its attainment. Consider the immense fabric which we call "society" with its myriads of human beings, some straining every nerve to climb higher and higher, whilst others seek to maintain themselves suitably in the positions already attained. What a terrible power has this social system of absorbing the mind and heart of man.

Again, man needs a political government for the protection of his life and property and rights. To this also the world responds fully.

And what has it not done in the way of organization for what we call "Business"? The world's occupations form a remarkable whole. Men with only physical strength procure labor; inventive minds find an outlet for their genius; artistic souls show their abilities in the world of sculpture, painting, music and poetry; learned men seek to solve problems; authors compose books; even the desire for luxuries on the part of some, furnishes others with the means of living.

Man is a very complex creature, needing many different things for his satisfaction. He wants a little business, something of politics, a little society, a little study, and finally a little religion. Man is religious by nature. The word "religion," which we so often use, is only found five times in the Bible. It is not godliness, for the worshippers of idols are religious. Religion is a part of the nature of man, quite as much as his intellect or memory.

Consequently, this system termed the world, which responds so perfectly to all that is of man, is able to satisfy this need also. To anyone particularly sensitive to tender impressions, with a love of the beautiful, harmonious music, imposing ceremonies, religious rites, will be presented. Another, with a frank, independent nature, finds in liberalism a free scope for his beliefs. On the other hand, to a cold, reserved, deep thinker, a strict orthodoxy would be more to his liking. If he should be a conscientious man, making nothing of himself, and believing it impossible to do without penance in one way or another, his needs, too, can be met by this world-system, and so on.

There are, therefore, doctrinal creeds and sects for every kind of character and for each form of religious sentiment in the flesh.

What system could be more admirable and complete? Nothing is left out. It contains sufficient imaginary joy and satisfaction to keep this vast moving mass of humanity always employed, and in the enjoyment of a relative happiness. Hearts always seeking

something to fill them, busy and active minds: if one thing fails, they turn to something else. Sorrow and even death itself are not forgotten in this world-system. Provision is made for funerals, mourning, visits of condolence, words of sympathy, and everything of a like nature; so that, in a short time, the world is able to rise above its grief and return to the sphere of its usual avocations.

God is now leading some few to see that all that which makes up "the world"—its business, politics, education, government, science, inventions, railways, social arrangements, charitable institutions, reforms, religion, etc.—form part of the "fashion of this world"—a system which is being continuously perfected. What is called the progress of the age is nothing less than the development of this great system.

Now the present relation of Christ to such a world ought to be ours too.

The position He occupies in heaven, and the position He does not occupy down here, plainly shows us what ought to be our position also.

Why should it be so? Because Satan is "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). He is the leader of this vast system, the moving power of it, and its prince. When the Lord Jesus Christ was on this earth, the devil came and offered Him "all the kingdoms of the world," saying, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If

Thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be Thine" (Luke 4:6, 7).

Here the veil is drawn aside, and the real object of all man's religious worship is exposed. The Bible speaks of Satan as being 'full of wisdom and perfect in beauty' (Ezek. 28:12) and one who disguises himself as 'an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14). It is not therefore surprising that careless (and even thoughtful) men should be mistaken and deceived. How few have had their eyes opened by the Word of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit to the real character of the world! Some think they have escaped from its snare because they have given up what are called 'worldly pleasures'—and because they have become members of certain churches and religious associations—not discerning that they are just as much in the system of the world as before. Satan, who is the prince of this world, has simply made them change from one form of the world to another, in order to quiet their uneasy consciences by rendering them better pleased with themselves.

These things being so, what is the remedy? How shall those living according to this world, walking in the broad road, escape from its bondage? How shall they discern between what is of the world and what is of God? The apostle Paul says, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God' (Rom. 8:14). The normal way in Christian life is, to be directed by Christ, in the same manner that a man's body is governed by his head. When in good health, neither hand nor foot moves unless directed by the head. And

in the same manner Christ is the Head of the Christian (1 Cor. 11:3), who is henceforth under His guidance in all things, be they great or small. It is thus that Christianity strikes at the root of worldliness; for as the free will of man is the fundamental principle of the whole edifice of the world, so *dependence on God and obedience to His will are the foundation of all Christian life.*

Satan's great aim is to set up a system for man that will entirely replace the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This will be his masterpiece in the last days, and is the most prominent feature in the great apostasy so near at hand. Then, Satan will publicly declare himself to be, in his own person, the god of this world; though at present this is hidden under a mysterious form. Surely it is time for Christians to awake out of sleep, and to consider whether they are in any way linked with a system which is rapidly ripening for judgment. . . .

All around us we find those who tell of what is suitable or fitting to be done amongst men; for their rule and measure is what will suit man. But a child of God goes straight on, not influenced by what people say; for what suits God is his rule and standard. Men may see the way before them as clearly as possible—a reasonable and satisfactory path—but that is worth nothing to anyone walking by faith: for he knows that what is universally esteemed as the right way amongst men, is really the wrong way; for that which stands

high in their estimation is, in fact, the broad way (Luke 16:15).

For instance, everyone would say that a Christian, as becomes a good citizen, should be interested in the government of his country, and that he ought to vote, in order to ensure worthy men being put into positions of power and authority. God tells us the contrary. In several places in His Word, and in various ways, He shows me that, as His child, I am not a citizen of any country, nor a member of any society.

Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20)

Henceforth I have to do with "heavenly things" (see Gal. 6:14). If I give my thoughts and my heart to earthly things, I shall be "an enemy of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). Again, we read, "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2).

Then, what about rulers and authorities? Be subject to them, since they are established by God. When they demand the payment of taxes, etc., discharge your debts, and "make supplication . . . for kings and for all that are in authority" (1 Tim. 2:1, 2). All that a Christian has to do with politics, is to be subject to those in authority over him, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (Rom. 13:5). It is true that Christ is the Heir of "all things"—including the earth in which this worldly system is at work now—but we should be like Abraham in the land of Canaan; God did not give him even so much as to set his foot on as an actual inheritance (Acts 7:5).

The Just shall live by faith

If, then, a true child of God refuses to vote, it is not so much that he thinks it is a bad thing in itself, but that he has given his vote and his whole interest to the One in the heavens whom God has exalted as "King of kings and Lord of lords." Not only so, but he has lost interest in earthly matters, having found something much more attractive. He sees the world as ungodly, both in its spirit and its actual state; and that its boasted reforms and improvements only end in closing the door of man's heart to God still more firmly. He desires to bear witness to God and His truth; and he announces judgment to come, and the coming of Christ, just at the time when men are congratulating themselves on being in "peace and safety!" He hopes that by his testimony others may learn the way of escape from the snares of Satan, by which he is seeking to entrap the mass of mankind. . . .

Those who are saved should be separate, taking part with a rejected Christ in face of the world which crucified Him;

being manifested as a heavenly people, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). Such is the calling of the children of God! But it cost something to live in this way—it is like an isolated rock in the midst of a rushing river! Everything around is in motion, seeking to

overturn it—pressure from all sides—but it stands unmoved in the midst of unceasing opposition, which would surely drag it down if it had not the stability of the Rock.

When we begin to put in practice God's words, then comes the storm! It is easy to belong to what is called a "Church," and to do as others do. To be upright and a good citizen does not bring down persecution upon us; for we may be both and yet go with the current. *But to shine as lights for God in the world provokes enmity:* wherever Christ is seen He is hated. If He should be seen in me, I should be hated too, for that reason (John 15:18-21).

When a Christian has really come to know God, or to be "known of Him," he is carried above participation in the things that belong to the system of the world. How can he return to "the weak and beggarly elements" wherein he was formerly in bondage? The child of God possesses life eternal in Christ; he is one with the Head (Christ), as revealed to him by the Word and the Holy Spirit. How, then, can his interests be absorbed with the world, when he has learnt to know God? If we saw a child in an orchard, eating bad and sour fruit, we should conclude he was ignorant of what real, good fruit was. In the same way, if a man entangles himself in this system of the world, can it be possible that he knows God?

This is why the words of God are not presented to us in the way of formal commands, such as "thou shalt not vote," "thou shalt not receive honors in this evil age," "thou shalt suffer reproach," etc. Instead of this, they

are given to us in such a way that the disciple who loves Him, whose selfish heart has been broken, and who desires nothing better than to know the thoughts of his Lord, can find out the secret of becoming increasingly like Him, by being *more in His company now, apart from this present evil world.*

It is no longer the old commandments of the law of Moses: "thou shalt," "thou shalt not," etc., and yet the path is quite simple and easily discerned, provided that the eye is single. God sees to it that a heart full of love for him shall have no difficulty in knowing His will; but an insincere heart will invent excuses and pretexts in order to follow an evil way. Family life is a good example of this. Take a loving, devoted and obedient son, taking pains to understand his father's wishes and ways. He has a sense of duty, and all becomes easy and natural to him. Whilst another son, brought up under the same conditions, enjoying the same advantages and knowing also his father's thoughts (or who ought at least to know them), but seeking his own pleasure, begins to say, for that very reason: "I did not know this or that," "you never told me I was not to do that, or to go to this or that place."

Contact but not fellowship

Finally, I would just add one word. We cannot avoid coming in contact with this system of the world, but this contact should never be fellowship with it. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? . . .

What concord hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor. 6:14-18). "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Jesus, who was not of this world, suffered here and knew privation; loneliness and tribulation were real things for Him; and according to the measure in which we are faithful in following His steps, it will be the same for us. How many are there amongst Christians who seek their own pleasure and comfort, finding, in a certain sense, their "home" in this ungodly system of the world? What! A "home" where Christ is not? We are travellers, passing through this world; weary pilgrims and real strangers if we truly walk as those who belong to Him.

As long as we are in the world, we cannot avoid coming in contact with it; but let us see to it that we are not in fellowship with it in many things where it should not be so, and where it certainly would not be, if we bore about in the body the dying of Jesus (see 2 Cor. 4:10).

There are many ways in which the enemy seeks to allure hearts, even of the children of God. It may be, religious meetings, charitable works, brotherhoods, etc.—things in which the flesh can take a part—these are substituted for what marks a life "by faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20). Godly men of old days whose testimony was that they pleased God, have been persecuted and despised (Heb. 11:36, 37). Others were "made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1 Cor. 4:13). They had their

citizenship in heaven. But we, instead of that—are we applauded by the world? We live too much according to the "course of this world," hence there is no conflict between us and it; with the result that we are disloyal subjects of Christ, avoiding the cross and its shame.

Yet the Word of God remains unchangeable: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). The road is a narrow one; may we be amongst the "few" that find it! We have our passports with us. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and we only await the "shout," the cry of command, to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Savior and to be with Him for ever. What a blessed hope!

Our joys are different

There is nothing in common between the life of heaven and that of the world. It is not a question of prohibitions as to using this or that, but of having altogether other tastes, desires, joys; and it is on that account people imagine Christians are sad, as if they were absorbed by only one thought. It is that our joys are altogether different from those of the world; the world knows not our joys. No unrenewed person can comprehend what renders the Christian happy. —J. N. D.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

For His Name's Sake

There are two or three expressions which may be considered under this head. A shade of difference may be discerned in their meaning; but, in their practical application, they have to all intents and purposes, the same force. One might be rendered "on account," or "by reason, of His name"; another, "on behalf on His name." In all three alike the fundamental idea is the value of the name to the one acting, enduring, or suffering; and this will also find, as we hope to see, an exemplification in God's actings of grace towards His people. The words, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth," have already been before us, and the expressions now to be adduced will furnish another illustration of the fact that it is the fragrance of the name of Christ which delights both the heart of God, and the hearts of His people. Hence it is, we read in connection with the blessings of His righteous sway during the thousand years, that "His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed" (Ps. 72:17). Yea, throughout eternity we shall continue the song we have learned on earth:

"Thy name we love, Lord Jesus,
And lowly bow before Thee;

And while we live, to Thee we give
All blessing, worship, glory."

In the first case which will come before us, it is the value of the name to God as affording the basis for the exercise of His forgiving love. The apostle John thus says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake" (1 John 2:12). The whole truth of grace is contained in this short statement; for the term "little children" in this scripture comprises the whole family of God. We learn from it, that in the forgiveness of sins God acts solely on the ground of the value of the name of His beloved Son, but in virtue of His name as the One who glorified Him on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do. What misconceptions would be cleared away from the minds of anxious souls, if this simple truth were but apprehended! For then, instead of spending weary days in searching for some good thing, or merit, in themselves, on which to rest for acceptance before God, or as an undoubted evidence of their conversion, they would perceive that if they are to be saved, it must be wholly through what Christ is to God. Let all such, therefore, prayerfully ponder the words "for His name's sake," inasmuch as they show, beyond the possibility of doubt or mistake, that God's attitude towards all who come to Him, confessing their sins, depends entirely upon His estimate of the value of the name of that Blessed One who now sits at His right hand. What an unchanging and immovable rock is

thus provided for our souls—that Rock of Ages, indeed, on which we may rest for ever in perfect peace, a peace which no change of feeling, or experience, need ever affect. Let us, then, never cease to proclaim this blessed truth to sin-stricken and weary souls, for it is the very kernel of God's glad tidings to men in this day of grace.

And not only have we thus received the forgiveness of our sins, but our feet are also kept, while passing through the wilderness, in the same way. We read, for example, in Psalm 23:3 'He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.' That is, God has undertaken everything for us on the same ground as that on which He has forgiven our sins. The motive for all His activities of grace and love, for His unchanging attitude, for His watchful care and protection, is found in Christ, and not in ourselves. This is blessedly exemplified in the Psalm whence the above citation is taken; only here, it is the Lord as our Shepherd, acting rather from His own heart, and from the relationship which He has been pleased to assume towards His people. The simple argument is, if He has become our Shepherd, He will provide everything necessary for us, whether in our pilgrim path, or as passing through the valley of the shadow of death. But the verse quoted shows that it is for His own name's sake that He maintains these relationships of grace. If we are weary, disheartened, discouraged, or depressed, He restores our souls; and, as needing constant guidance, with every desire to tread in His

paths, but often unable to discern them, He has placed Himself at our head, and leads us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. If, then, the name of Christ is so unspeakably precious to God, and if it constitutes the all-efficacious basis of His dealings with us, how we should zealously seek to be in communion with Him about it, and thus, having some feeble sense of its value, delight to lose ourselves in it, resting in it in our approaches to God, even as He rests in it in His relationships with us.

Communion with the heart of God, indeed, as to the preciousness of the name of Christ, is the true secret of the unwearied devotedness and courage of many of His followers. The apostle Paul may be mentioned as a special illustration of this, even though the words, "for His name's sake," be not used. In captivity, and no longer able to deliver his blessed message,—in the prospect of death at any moment, for he knew not but that he might be thrown to the lions immediately, it was his solace, notwithstanding the mixed motives that governed the activity of many, that Christ was preached, and in this he both did, and would, rejoice. All his expectation and hope was that he might be so kept and sustained that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life, or by death. Absorbed in his object, Christ alone bounded his horizon; and hence for Christ's sake he was willing to suffer anything and everything, if he might but bring glory to His blessed name. In like manner, we read in another epistle of some who had the name of

Christ so indelibly graven upon their hearts that, for His sake, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; of others who had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonments; and of others again who were sawn asunder, or slain with the sword, while if some escaped martyrdom, they had to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. (Hebrews 10, 11.)

This suffering character of the path of His disciples was often the theme of our Lord's instruction. So far from concealing from them the afflictions and persecutions which they would encounter, He warned them on every possible occasion of what they would have to endure for His name's sake. Thus, for example, He says, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake"; at another time, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake"; and yet again, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you"; "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." So it came to pass; for Paul wrote (citing from the Psalms), "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." But if our blessed Lord has forewarned us of what may be entailed upon us through the confession of His name, He has also ministered the needed sustainment and consolation. Of Himself, in His pathway

through this world, it is written that for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame; and for our encouragement He has left on record these words, "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matt. 19:29).

To suffer with Christ is a necessity, in some measure, if we are the children of God; but to suffer for Christ is a privilege attached to fidelity in His service. As an example of this, the case of Peter and John might be adduced. Brought up before the Jewish Council, they had been forbidden to speak, or to teach, in the name of Jesus; but, obeying God rather than men, they proceeded with their blessed work. Once more arrested, after they had been miraculously delivered from prison, they were beaten, and commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus. Were they disheartened, or daunted, because of what they had to endure? So far from it, they departed from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. (Acts 5:40, 41.) What, then, is the secret of this superiority to shame and suffering? It is the preciousness of Christ to the hearts of His people, the assurance of His presence with them, and the knowledge that even death is but the path of life into His eternal presence. If He for our sakes became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich, it is surely no great thing if we are taught through grace to

count, like Moses, the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and if we are made willing to suffer persecution, and to endure the loss of all things here for His name's sake.

Yet another instance of the power of the name of Christ may be considered. In John's third epistle we read of some who, "for His name's sake," went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. The form of the phrase, "for His name's sake," in this scripture exactly coincides with that used of Peter and John in Acts 5; and we thus gather that it was the value of the name of Christ to their hearts that led the latter to rejoice in suffering, and the former to refuse support from the world for His service. Well would it have been for the Church of God if the example of these devoted servants had been followed. Nothing has so corrupted Christianity as the acceptance of worldly help for the furtherance of its objects. Before the Lord was crucified, He said to His disciples, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing" (Luke 22:35). Is He less tender in His care over His servants now that He is glorified at the right hand of God? A noble army of devoted servants in every part of the world will gladly testify that they, too, though without assured support from man, and refusing assistance from the world, have lacked nothing. And it would be the commencement of a new era in Christian service, and especially in Christian missions, if those engaged in them were to go forth in the same simple faith in the all-

sufficiency of the name of their Lord. In the closing days of the history of the Church on earth, may many true labourers be raised up, and be sent forth into the harvest by the Lord of the harvest — men to whom the name of Christ shall be so precious that they may find in it their only motive, the only stimulus for their zeal, and their abundant warrant for entire dependence upon Him for all their needed support.

The reader will find much edifying in tracing out other cases in the Scriptures; and our prayer is that every one who may be encouraged to do so by the perusal of what has been written, may find, while so engaged, that his heart is drawn out more fully in the adoration and praise of our blessed Lord and Savior, and that it may become his one all-absorbing desire, in all his future life, to bring glory to this precious NAME. —E. D.

Gleanings

It is not a question of whether a thing be right or wrong, but what savour have the things of Christ in it? It may be a very small thing. If we find the reading of a book makes the manifestation of Christ to become less precious to us, we have got away from God, and we cannot tell where the next step may take us. Satan often cheats us in this way. . . . If anything comes in and takes the freshness of Christ from your soul, take heed!

The Song of Solomon

"I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver" (Chap. 1:9-11).

It is the Lord speaking here. As He beholds His beloved one, He describes what He sees in her that delights His heart. It is a privilege to know His thought about us, and especially, if we love Him to know what He delights most to see in us. This description then of the beauty that He delights to see in His own is a subject of deepest, personal interest to every heart that loves Him.

"I have compared thee, O my love, to a steed (N. T.) in Pharaoh's chariots."

What is the likeness to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots that He so admires? There is no doubt an allusion there to energy devoted to the master's service, and a walking and pulling together in harmony. But there is also another thought of still deeper significance. A verse in Job 11:12 will help us here: "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." The wild ass likes his own wild ways. He likes to run about at will and refuses to be bridled or tamed, or to submit himself to another's will. Is not this a striking picture of what the unregenerated heart is? But a steed in Pharaoh's chariots has been broken. It has learned to give up its own inclinations and to yield itself obediently to the impulse of the rein in its master's hand,

and so spend its energy in its master's service. It has learned to give up all plans of its own as to what to do and where to go, and just leave all the planning with its master. It goes on its way depending for guidance upon the impulse of the rein held in the driver's hand. This driver of Pharaoh's chariot can be taken as a picture of the Holy Spirit. What the Lord delights to see in His own is that they give the reins of their lives over into the hands of His Spirit to be subject to His guidance in all things. How much energy is wasted in trying to carry out plans of our own devising instead of just leaving the Lord to do the planning while we go on step by step looking to Him for guidance at every turn of the way. The Lord has a perfect plan for the life of every one of His own, and it is the best and most blessed plan possible; but so many Christians rely upon their own plans instead of surrendering themselves to the Lord and asking Him to lead them in the way He has planned for them. It is no wonder that their life becomes a failure instead of one of usefulness and blessing.

We get them in this figure of the horse in Pharaoh's chariot, the thought of one's energies devoted to the Master's service, the will yielded up to Him to walk in dependence upon the guidance of His Spirit in the path of His choosing for us; and, as a result also, walking and working in peace and harmony with others who are likewise yielded to Him. Let us each one ask himself or herself, Is that what the Lord sees in me? How it must grieve the Lord's heart to see His own so often in

strife and discord, or spending their energy for selfish pursuits, going on in their own ways, missing by far His chosen plan for their lives. No wonder their testimony is so weak, and their lives have so little fruit to His glory.

"Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold."

Jewels speak to us of a beauty that is not ours naturally, but which has been bestowed upon us. They are therefore the fit symbols of those christian graces, which are displayed in the believer's life as the fruit of the Spirit's working in the heart. These christian virtues don't come from ourselves naturally, but are produced by the power of the Spirit of God. Where there is real surrender of ourselves to Christ and a giving over the reins of our lives into the hands of His Spirit, our lives will become beautified with a truly christian character. In the tabernacle everything was overlaid with gold. The tabernacle is a type of Christ and the gold of the divine nature. The silver bases made of the redemption money speaks of redemption, but silver is also figurative of the Word of God. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6). Every believer has been made a partaker of the divine nature through faith in the Word of God. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. . . . Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies

and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 1:23; 2:1, 2). As we feed upon the Word of God and yield our lives up to His Spirit, that divine nature will be manifested by us and the Word of God lived out in all our ways. This then is the jewels of gold and silver which He delights to see in us. Are you wearing these jewels both in private and before the public?

"We will make thee bead-rows of gold (N. T.) with studs of silver."

So the Lord and His Spirit would beautify His own yet more and more.

Some have thought that this may refer to the crown of glory that the Lord as King of kings will bestow upon His queen.

"While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."

Sitting together at the table enjoying the same things, is an expression of communion and fellowship. When one's life is yielded to the Lord, not only will the Spirit of God beautify it with all the christian graces, but there will also be happy fellowship with the Lord. And while one is enjoying sweet fellowship with Him, the heart will also overflow with worship, praise and thanksgiving for all His benefits. It is this that the spikenard is the symbol of. If there is little praise and thanksgiving in your life it is because you are not walking in close fellowship with the Lord.

Thus far we have been considering these beautiful verses in their spiritual application to ourselves, but now before closing let us

look at them for a moment in their prophetic application to the Jewish remnant.

We read in Ez. 16:11-14, "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets also upon thy hands, and a chain upon thy neck, and I put a jewel upon thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head . . . and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty." The prophet is here describing all that royal glory and beauty that the Lord had bestowed upon Jerusalem during the reign of Solomon. But Jerusalem was untrue to the Lord and as a consequence has lost that royal glory. She sank so low that when her Messiah came she cruelly mocked Him, crowned Him with thorns and spit in His face. But the time will come when Jerusalem, repentant and rejoicing in the Lord's forgiveness, will again be exalted at the head of the nations. What a joy that will be to His heart, and what a triumph for His grace, when He will again crown Jerusalem with royal glory as the fruit of His redemption and the work of His Spirit in the heart. He will then be able to say of her, "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver." And she will say, "While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." And the whole world will look on in wonder, rejoicing in the rich blessings of His glorious reign of peace and righteousness.

To be continued, D. V.

LOVING THE WRONG WORLD

“Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you” (Col. 4:14).

“There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlaborers” (Philem. 23, 24).

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica” (2 Tim. 4:10).

It is this last passage, the last mention of the man Demas in the Word of God, to which I ask your attention. We must consider it in the light of the other passages where we find Demas yoked with the very foremost servants of God in arduous service. “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” You see how simple this is. Here is one of the early Christians who had started out in the Christian life upon a high level, and with high ideal. This is proven by the companionship in which we find him. He could have been in no company on this earth more devoted to Jesus Christ than the company of such men as Paul and Mark and Luke. So he went on for years, and was counted by these men, the very foremost servants of God, as fellow-laborer, one with them in the strife, and they no doubt confidently expected him to be one with them in the reward.

Then suddenly, when Paul was in the extremity of his need, when he was Nero's

prisoner and about to be slain for his faithfulness, Demas deserted him. The reason for that desertion is disclosed. It was not bodily fear; it was not because the terror of Nero was upon him; it was not because the lions were very near and his courage was unequal to the test. It was because there was, after all, in this man's heart a love for this world. Though he had gone on under the first impulse of his conversion and of his early consecration in the highest type of service, that love of the world was lingering always, and at last it drew him away, and he deserted the service of God and went off to Thessalonica, "having loved this present world."

Demas Was an Ordinary Christian

We are not to suppose for a moment that Demas was an apostate from the faith. What he gave up was service and consecration; and what he did was to descend to a lower level of Christian living; but he got down to about the average, that is all. I want to say with all possible emphasis that we must cease to look upon him as an uncommon backslider. The warning lies in the fact that he was a very common backslider. Thousands, in other words, start out in the Christian life with a high ideal of what a Christian ought to be. . . . But sooner or later the pace slackens, prayer is neglected, service grows languid and intermittent, fellowship with the saints is often forsaken, and the life falls to the low level of the average. This is, alas, the usual thing. What is the matter?

The world was never cast out of the heart. There never was a clean break with it. That was the difficulty. . . .

Now let us look together into this matter, this perilous love of the world which wrecked the service of Demas.

To Love the World of Nature Is Not Wrong

A number of different words in the original are translated in our New Testament by one word, "world," so that we sometimes get a confused idea of what the Holy Spirit means in different uses of these words. Sometimes, by "world," for instance, is meant this earth—the world of nature, that which God has made here, the creation. Now, is it wrong to love the world of nature? Would God, even, cease to do that? Can we think of it for a moment! . . . The words of the Lord Jesus Christ are full of nature. His disclosures glow with picture and parable drawn from the world of nature about Him. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt. 6:28, 29). He saw in the lily and the birds the token of God's tender care for His creatures.

And we say in a very real sense that most Christian men and women have always loved the world of nature. We see in it the handiwork of our God.

We Should Love People

Then again, by the word "world" is meant the people living on earth. This designation

includes the ties of nature and social order. Is it wrong to love the world of humanity? "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Should we withdraw ourselves from human contact, human sorrows and needs? No, it is not wrong to love the world of humanity.

But to Love the Satan-Led Ungodly System and Standards About Us Is Sin

But sometimes by "world" is meant this age, this present world system of things; the vast organization of social and economic forces under the leadership of Satan. This is the bad sense of "world" in Scripture. The Lord Jesus said Satan was its prince, and Paul said Satan was its god. It is under his power—this "present" world. It hated and crucified Christ, and still closes its heart against Him. It was the religious part of it that did that, and in the name of God. It is composed of all intelligence, human and natural, apart from God in Christ. It is often brilliant, cultured, agreeable, amiable, fascinating, even religious. In this latter phase its ministers are often transformed as angels of light, but the whole vast system is based upon selfishness and self-gratification.

If you really look for one moment at the life of the world, at the forces which are at work here, at the basis upon which the system itself is organized, you will see that it is not in the smallest respect nor in the remotest

degree organized upon divine principles. Selfishness, not benevolence, rules it. Of course, we have benevolent hands stretched out here and there to those whom the world has crushed in its mad rush onward in the pursuit of wealth, ambition and pleasure, and we try to think there is a vast deal of tenderness and right feeling in the world; but if we look a little closer, we discover that by far the greater number of helping hands are Christian hands, or else given to ease their conscience or for the glory of renown. But this world system is organized with consummate skill. Like a lottery, it offers a few prizes—pleasure, power, riches and fame—which are alluring and fascinating; but with the glitter of these it blinds and deludes the wretched millions who can never gain them. That is the world that Demas loved.

Observe, it is this *present* world. There is, then, another “world.” The world suggests a comparison between this age in which we live and that which is to come. The essential difference between Paul and Demas was that Demas lived for this world, and Paul lived for that.

What Is a Worldly Attitude?

Notice another word Paul uses: “Having *loved* this present world.” Let me hold your attention upon that word “loved” for a moment. A great many efforts have been made to draw a dividing line between worldliness and spirituality upon the basis of things—defining some things as worldly and others

as unworldly—but they have never succeeded. The line cannot be drawn there.

Then the effort has been made to reduce life to the condition of absolute necessity, which is the utilitarian view. This has invariably failed. Why? Because God is against it. God did not try to do without flowers, nor did He make them all black. We are something more than body. We have other needs than food, and shelter from inclement weather. This is the least and lowest part of man. He has a spirit and a soul. The mind and the heart have needs as imperative as those of the body. . . . Suffice it to say that the line can never be drawn upon the basis of things. . . . There may be just as much worldliness under a sunbonnet as under a crown; and cleanly and beautiful surroundings may go with sweetest humility. . . .

I wish still to hold your minds for a moment to that word “loved.” “Having *loved* this present world.” Have you ever noticed what John in 1 John 2:15-17 gives as the contents of the world? He says, “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride (or ostentation) of life, is not of the Father, but of the world.” Now what does this “lust” mean? It is over-desire, love and eager pursuit of things for the mere gratification of the body, of the eye, and of the love of ostentation—display. . . . The fixing of the heart upon these things, so that they become the real object of life.

Does not this give us an easy test? What, upon the whole, are you living for? The present

or the future? It is a very simple matter. For instance, you have a thousand dollars to invest. Do you naturally try to make some more things out of it? Or do you invest it in heavenly securities? If you had it, would you support a missionary with it, use it for the present need of humanity, or buy a corner lot with it?

Now, Demas felt for a time the power of unseen things; then he went back to the things which are seen. In this he was a type of the majority of us. Let us be humble enough to say that. The fact about us is that most of us lead divided lives: sometimes we are fellow-laborers with Paul, and sometimes we go away from him to Thessalonica. That is the fact about it.

Three Rules for Victory Over Worldliness

But is this all? Are we left here in the midst of these things seen, with more pious precepts about them, but with no power of victory over them? Not so. The Scripture points out the secret of victory as clearly as it points out the offense and the peril. Will you try to hold in your minds three things in which victory over the love of this present evil world is to be found?

First, *keep the distinctions clear*. Remember that worldliness is not in things, but in the love of things.

Second, *keep your conscience exercised toward God*. There is among us so much thinking of the opinion of this one or that one. Keep a conscience exercised toward God—

what He thinks about this. The love of mere luxury and ostentation creeps in insidiously when we are not walking with God, and we persuade ourselves that we need them and that our desire for them is innocent and right and pleasing to God. But when we are walking in the white light, we can use the world as not abusing it, thankful for His daily mercies, and using all with a view to His glory (1 Cor. 7:31).

Lastly, *the love of the world, which is the desire of things, beyond the power to minister to our best good, can never be overcome by effort, but only by faith.* "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). How does faith overcome the world? Faith makes unseen things real. Faith, when full of the vigor which comes from unclouded communion with the Father and the Son, keeps before us the actuality of the things toward which we are going. It makes unseen things real. So walking by faith we keep the right proportions between the little things of the passing moment, and the great eternal verities, and the hold of these seen things is loosened and we are able to do with them or without them. We are able to walk free of them. Our hearts are not entangled with them, and we are always thinking of these things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. We are neither oppressed by the possession of things nor depressed by the deprivation of them. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). —*Arranged.*

This Present Evil World

This world is evil, that's God's verdict of it. It lies in the evil one (1 John 5:19, N.T.) who is the "god of this world" and has blinded the minds of them that believe not (2 Cor. 4:4). The world rulers of this darkness are wicked spirits, Satan and his host of demons (Eph. 6:12). It is good for Christians, and especially for the young, to realize this fully.

What good can be hoped for from a world that has rejected Christ? The reason so many fail to see the evil is that they are taking the wrong standard by which to estimate things. God judges the world by what it has done to His Son. What place has it for Christ? Do you judge it by the same rule? "Oh, there is nothing wrong in this," you say, "or in that." "Well, but what place is there for Christ in it? Is He wanted there? Would it be a joy for your heart if He should come and find you at that?"

A father walks into the house, one child leaps with joy into his arms, the the other quickly slips into the other room. What is the matter? Why, he was doing something that he knew would not please his father. How is it with you? Would you leap with joy if Christ should come and find you doing what you are doing? Oh, if we would only bring Christ in how it would clear our vision to see the evil. All that which is not suitable to Christ's presence is evil.

"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," so says the

Apostle in Col. 3:17. Is that too high a standard to suit you? Not if Christ is valued by your heart. Oh, let us be done with this negative way of estimating whether a thing is evil or not; what wrong is there in this or that. Get something positive before your heart. What is there for Christ in it? Can you be there as Christ's representative? Is it a word you can speak in His name or a deed you can do as belonging to Him and for His glory? If so, you cannot be too wholehearted in it, if not, better stay clear from it.

Shame on us if we want Christ simply as a Savior whose death saves us from going down into hell at last and gives us title to heaven, but are not much concerned about our walk or practical deliverance from every evil that contaminates the world that murdered our Savior. No, that is not the purpose of God in the death of Christ—simply deliverance from hell; no, indeed, but "He gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world (or age) according to the will of God and our Father."

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world; looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

In this present world but not of it; living for God in it as a people purchased by Christ to be His own peculiar or special people zealous of good works. Living in it for Him but looking for the realization at any moment, of that blessed hope of being taken out of it to Himself. Yes, He died that we might reign with Him in the glory but also that, while awaiting that glory, we might be delivered now from this present evil world—from its snares, from its principles, from its maxims, from its ways—to live in it as representing Him before it in every word, in every deed as He lived in it and manifested the divine life in every word and deed. Is that too high a standard for your walk who have become by grace a partaker of the divine nature? Alas, then it only proves how little a place Christ has in your heart. Luke-warm, half-hearted, how awful when Christ gave Himself wholeheartedly for you. Look at Him seated at the right hand of His Father. That is the place His Father has given Him, the highest place, the first place. What place are you giving Him? —E. C. H.

A Personal Testimony

Our battleship lay in the harbor during the great war for a period of rest, after having sent a number of the enemies' boats to the bottom.

A sailor came aboard, but was unknown to the man on watch. "Is Henry Stiver on

board?" he asked, "I would like to see him."

"No, but if he comes he will find a good agreeable company and there will be plenty of wine, whiskey and cigars to celebrate the new comradeship."

"But that won't attract him," the stranger said, "he is a believer in God."

"A what!" exclaimed the watch man in great surprise.

"A believer in God," repeated the stranger with an emphasis that meant the newcomer would not celebrate with wine and whiskey, cigars and song.

The news ran through the whole crew. A believer in God coming aboard, who would not celebrate with drink and song to strengthen that comradeship among themselves—they who had consecrated themselves to death for their country.

"Leave it to me, I'll fix him all right," I said to the rest of the crew with whom I was always a favorite because I was ready for everything that came along.

One evening after being ashore, I came aboard and sat down to the table to eat. Seeing a new man standing, I introduced myself to him and found him to be Henry Stiver. "Ah, that's him, that holy fellow," I thought, and just then I walked my closest comrade and invited me for a drink and, turning to Henry, said, "You may come too."

"No," said Henry, "I prefer not, I shall stay here."

"What!" I thought, "this young man assigned to this ship knowing nothing of sea-

manship, dares to say no, giving us as it were a slap in the face, when he knows he is at the mercy of the crew. How will it turn out for him?" But going up to him I invited him very warmly to come along.

"No, I can't," said Henry very courteously, but decidedly.

"Why? You will have the best chance to meet your new mates and have a good time, and besides, what harm is there in a glass of beer and a little fun?"

"No, I thank you. You mean it all very well, but I am a believer in the Lord," Henry explained.

I could not grasp what he meant by being a believer in the Lord, but I could not help admiring his courage in saying "no" when he knew full well that soon the whole crew would be against him. Turning to go with my comrade, I said to myself, "All right, you say you are a believer in the Lord and refuse to go with us; we will make you prove it sure enough."

From then on Henry was a marked man under keen observation. Naturally he had to suffer for he was so different from the rest of the crew, but we could not help admiring him. He was always courteous and ready to do a favor for any of us and all the time happy and did not have to make merry with the others to have joy. Indeed he had a source of joy of which we did not know.

Henry read his Bible openly and gave thanks before eating whether we scorned or not. His clean life and words showed that he

stuck to what he professed; thus he judged us by his deed but was careful not wronging us with his words.

One day while lounging on deck in the sunshine, I saw Henry coming up with his Bible. "What book is that?" I asked.

"It is the Bible," said Henry.

"So you believe on God," I said. "Many say that but if you would only look behind the curtains you would see something else. Where do you go when you are ashore and on Sundays?"

"To a meeting for believers," answered Henry.

"Look here," I said, "I have always attacked you but I want to find out now if that Bible is true. May I go with you the next time you go to your meeting, only to see if those people are normal?"

"Sure, come along, please."

The next Sunday we both went to the meeting, he praying in his heart and I planning to make a great disturbance. But to make a long story short, I was soon convinced of the truth and shortly afterwards converted.

Henry did not say many words, but his deeds spoke volumes. I saw the gospel lived before my eyes, and could not escape the convincing and convicting power of such a living testimony. And now I only tell you this true story of my conversion to encourage you to stand firm and seek strength from the Lord to be a living testimony for Him at all cost and in whatever surroundings you may be.

—T.S.

Christ or the World

The day of the apostasy is hastening on with rapid strides, and also the day in which the Lord shall come to snatch His own away. The present moment is of so solemn a character that I feel constrained to address you this word of exhortation. Godly men everywhere, who watch the signs of the times, see the moment approaching which shall terminate the present actings of grace. The time has evidently arrived when one must speak plainly and decisively, and ask you where you are, and what you are about. You have by grace been gathered out of the seething mass of idolatry and wickedness which now threatens Christendom and the world with an overthrow more awful than that of Sodom and Gomorrah of old; and the question is whether you are adequately impressed with the responsibility, as well as the blessedness of the ground you are on, and walking like men and women whose eyes have been opened. Believe me, there has never been in the world's history, such a time as the present, and Satan is occupied with none as he is with you, and his occupation with you is the more to be feared because of the subtlety of his operations. His object is to withdraw your attention from Christ.

Interpose anything between your soul and Christ, and you become weak. Some of you are young, recently converted, or brought to the right ways of the Lord, and you do not know the depths of Satan. But you are hereby

solemnly warned of peril; and if mischief overtake you, you cannot plead ignorance. Again I say, Satan has his eye especially upon you, for the purpose of interposing the world in some form between your soul and Christ. He cares not how little, or in what form. If you knew how little, how very little will answer his purpose, you would be alarmed. It is not by that which is gross or shameful, such is the development, not the beginning of evil. It is not by anything glaring that he seeks to ruin you, but in small and seemingly harmless trifles—trifles that would not shock nor offend any one as things go, and yet these constitute the deadly and insidious poison, destined to ruin your testimony and draw your heart from Christ. Do you ask what are these alarming symptoms, and where they are seen? The question does but show what is the character of the opiate at work. Brothers and sisters, you are being infected with the spirit of the world. Your dress, your manner, your talk, your lack of spirituality, betray it. As surely as you tamper with the world, so surely will you drift away to its level. *It must be Christ or the world. It cannot be—ought not to be—Christ AND the world.* God's grace in drawing you out of the world in your ignorance is one thing, but God will never permit you to prostitute His grace, and play fast and loose, when you have been separated from the world.

Beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak; I have confidence

in you, in the Lord, that you will bless Him for these few faithful words. Nothing can be more glorious than the position you are called to occupy in these closing days. In fact, you are lowering your dignity to the level of the poor potsherds of the earth, who only wait for the rod of the Victor (and yours too) to be dashed into pieces. Oh, awake, then, from your lethargy, slumber no longer: put away your idols and false gods; wash your garments, and get you to Bethel, where you will find God to be better than ever you knew Him, even in your best days. Lay aside your last bit of worldly dress; guard your speech, that it be of Christ and His affairs, and not, as you know it now often is, of anything but Him. Let your prayers mingle with those of other saints at the prayer meetings. they were never more needed. Neglect no opportunity of gathering up instruction from that Word which alone can keep us from the paths of the destroyer, and let your life be the evidence of the treasures you gather up from the Word. If you want occupation, with a glorious reward from a beloved Master, ask that Master to set you to work for Him, you will never regret it, either in this world or in that which is to come.

Beloved, bear with me, I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. You belong to Christ, and Christ to you. Let not the Betrothed One be unfaithful to her Bridegroom! Why should you be robbed and spoiled? And for what? Empty husks, and bitter fruits, while you waste this little span of blessing!

All the distinctions acquired here in the energy of the Spirit will but serve to enhance your beauty and render you more lovely in the eyes of Him who espoused you to Himself. Can you refuse Him His delights in you? Can you refuse Him the fruit of the travail of His soul, who once hung a dying man, between two thieves, on Calvary, a spectacle to men and angels, and for you—you who have forgotten (for you cannot have despised) this devotedness for you. He could have taken the world without the cross, and left you out, but He would not; and now will you, having been enriched by those agonies and that blood, take the world into your tolerance and leave Him out? Impossible! Your pure mind did but need to be stirred up by way of remembrance.

Let us therefore take courage. May we not take this word as the answer of our ever-gracious faithful Lord, to arouse us—to re-awaken our drooping energies? And then the more quickly He comes the better. We shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
—Abridged.

“ . . . fellowship with Jesus in that which distinguished Him so preeminently above His fellows—repose of character. . . . How blessed and how unearthly the calm, quiet, unruffled composure of the course! No haste, no hurry, because though on earth yet still in heaven; His mind, His heart, deep buried in His Father's love. And may we not thus abide in Christ, and Christ in us?”

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

Unto His Name

If the term "name" as used of our blessed Lord and Savior, is expressive of all that He is, it will not cause surprise to find it presented to us in so many different ways and aspects. The necessary connection, indeed, between the living Word and the written word, inasmuch as the latter contains the revelation of the former, affords the explanation. It follows that the more we have Christ Himself before us, in reading the Scriptures, the more fully are we in the mind of the Holy Spirit, and the better are we prepared for the discernment of the rays of His glory, which shine forth from every page. To regard the Scriptures as the display of Christ, of God as revealed in Christ, is a sure preservative from error, as well as the antidote to the rationalistic teachings of the day; while, at the same time, it tends to produce that reverence and adoration in the soul, without which it is impossible to receive the divine communications therein made. Too much stress cannot be laid on this point; and the remark is earnestly commended to the attention of the reader.

In passing now to consider the phrase, "unto His name," we propose to select two or three examples of its use to illustrate its significance, and to point out how, in every case, it brings into prominence, whether as Leader, Object, or Centre, the Person of our blessed Lord. We take, first of all, the ex-

pression, "Baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16; 19:5). In both instances, in our translation, it is rendered "in the name of the Lord Jesus"; but the words in Greek could only be accurately given, we apprehend, as "unto the name," etc. This, indeed, can be shown from renderings of the same word in other places. Thus in Acts 19:3, where the apostle says, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" and they say, "Unto John's baptism," the same word is used. Similarly in 1 Cor. 10:2, where we read that they "were all baptized unto Moses," the same word is also employed. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that "unto" should be substituted for "in" in the two scriptures cited; and it is necessary that this should be done, from the fact "in the name of the Lord" is also found in connection with baptism. (See Acts 10:48.) The meaning in this case, as explained in a former paper, will be that those who baptized Cornelius and those who heard the word with him, acted, by the direction of Peter, on behalf, and under the authority, of the Lord.

Having now elucidated the force of the term, its meaning may engage our attention. The similar expression in 1 Cor. 10 may help us to ascertain it. There can be little question that to be baptized unto Moses, implies the bringing of the people into association with Moses as under his authority. In like manner, to be baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus, brought those who were baptized on to the ground where His authority was supreme, and into the company of those who owned that authority. The name of the Lord

will then express, in this connection, what Christ is as exalted and glorified as Lord; and the baptized confess Him as such, and own also His claim upon, and His authority over, them. It is not the whole truth of baptism, for Paul teaches that as many as were baptized unto Christ Jesus, were baptized unto His death. But we do not enter upon this here, as we desire to confine ourselves to the scripture before us, and to call attention to its meaning. To go no further, then, its import is the absolute authority of Christ as Lord, and the responsibility of the confession of it on the part of those who have been baptized. In a day of profession and declension, it is well to enquire whether souls who have been led on to the ground of Christianity are aware of the responsibilities which they have assumed. Surely the Lord might also say to many of us in this day, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" For there never was a time when the spirit of lawlessness was more prevalent, even in combination with the confession of the name and authority of Christ. If the first duty of a soldier is unquestioning obedience, surely a Christian should ever be marked out before the world by his unqualified subjection to the authority of his Lord as expressed in His word, and by his unwearied zeal and devotedness in maintaining the honor of His blessed name. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

Another example of the use of the same phrase may be cited from the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we read, "God is not un-

righteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward (or 'unto') His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (chap. 6:10). In many respects, this is a most remarkable passage for the preciousness of the truths it contains. It will be observed that here it is the name of God; for Christ, in this epistle, is seen as the High Priest at the right hand of God, where He both represents, and intercedes for, His people. Still, it is the name of God as revealed in Christ, for in chapter 1 we are reminded that the Son is addressed as God. This being so, we have to enquire as to the meaning of the words—unto His name—in this passage. First of all, it is plain that the apostle alludes to ministry to the saints. These Hebrew believers had been doing good, and "communicating," that is, sharing what they possessed with their fellow-saints who were in need, for they had apprehended the truth that with such sacrifices God was well pleased. (See chap. 13:16.) In thus caring, with true brotherly love, for the needs of the saints of God, they were, the apostle says, showing kindness unto His name.

But this requires further explanations. It must, then, be remembered that our blessed Lord fully identifies Himself with His people, and that His name is called upon them, as well as entrusted to them to bear, and to maintain His honor, before men. Hence it is that to receive a Christian in the name of Christ, is to receive Christ Himself; and, further, to receive Christ is to receive Him that sent Him. God is thus identified with

Christ (not now to speak of their essential unity), and Christ makes Himself one with His people. Turning then to the other side, it will be at once understood, that whatever is ministered to His own, is kindness showed to His name. He Himself has explained it in the ever-memorable words, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me' (Matt. 25: 40). So too, in a still deeper sense, He could say to one who had been the bitter and relentless enemy of His people, 'Why persecutest thou me? (Acts 9:4). How blessed an encouragement, to remember at all times that the Lord regards what is done to His saints as done to Himself! And herein lies also the secret of all true service amongst His people. If they are our object, much as they might benefit by the service, it is not such service as the Lord can commend. In such a case there might be brotherly love, or at least the semblance of it, in exercise, but that which should be the divine spring of it, Christ Himself, would be wanting. To be imbued with this truth, would produce unwearied and incessant devotedness.

As another instance, we may refer to Matthew 18:19, 20. We give the whole passage, 'Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name' (that is, unto my name), 'there am I in the midst of them.' To understand the blessed instruction of this scripture, it should be

borne in mind that the chapter "supposes Christ rejected and absent, and the glory of chap. 17 not yet come. It passes over chap. 17, to connect itself with chap. 16"; and the reason of this is that it deals with the two subjects introduced in chap. 16, the Church and the kingdom, which should occupy the place of Christ on earth, during the period of His absence, and session at the right hand of God, where He will remain "until His enemies are made His footstool" (Ps. 110:1). It may also be pointed out that, in connection with the mention of the assembly in this chapter, provision is made for three things: First, the question of trespass against a brother; second, the administration of discipline, binding and loosing, with its divine ratification when done according to God; and, lastly, what more immediately concerns us in this paper, the condition of prevailing prayer.

It will be noticed by the reader that verse 19 commences an additional instruction, as shown by the words, "Again I say unto you," etc., though we cannot doubt that the company, the "two of you," or the "two or three," is connected with the assembly in verse 17. What is added is the teaching concerning agreement in prayer, rather than anything which regards the Church, except, indeed, the revelation of the wondrous grace which associated the Lord's presence and union in prayer with any two or three who may be gathered unto His name. So understanding it, everything depends, as will be perceived, upon what is meant by being thus gathered. Speaking generally, it may be said that the

essential point is, that as "name" expresses the truth of the Person, the Lord Himself must be the Centre and the Object of the gathering. But then it must also be remembered that His full name in this relationship is the Lord Jesus Christ. His name, as such, speaks therefore of His authority His Person, and His work. The gathering then must be under, and as subject to, His authority, and also to maintain the truths of His Person and work. That the gathering power is the Holy Spirit, is evident from the fact that He is here to glorify Christ; and being so, He could not sanction any assembly where the supremacy of Christ was not owned, or where there might be any indifference to the glories of His Person, or to the character of the atonement made upon the cross. Every company, therefore, claiming to be gathered unto His name must answer to these tests.

This is the condition which the Lord Himself lays down for His own presence—"Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is not even, there will I be, but there am I; and we then learn that the gathering together thus—unto His name—ensures His presence. The realization of it may depend upon our state of soul, as it must do; but the Lord's presence is a fact connected with the fulfilment of a condition. What grace! And what a fount of blessing and power in the midst of His own! An example of this, indeed, is given; for He tells us that He Himself, present in the midst of His saints gathered after this manner, is the power to produce agree-

ment in prayer, and the assurance that every such prayer shall be answered by the Father. What room for heart searchings as to the character of our gatherings, is thus afforded! And what a call it gives to us to examine our own individual state of soul, even if we are truly gathered unto His name! One of Satan's snares is to lead us to take things for granted; the means of avoiding it is to be constantly before God, desiring to have everything, as to ourselves and our associations, exposed by the light of His presence, and to have everything tested by His unerring Word —E. D.

IS CHRIST YOUR SATISFYING PORTION?

When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be the question, What harm is there in this or that? rather, Am I doing this for Christ? Can Christ go along with me in this? If you are in communion with Him, you will readily detect what is not of Him. Do not let the world come in, and distract your thoughts. Its smiles are all deceitful.

Remember, Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, and not the world's. One word more. Talk with Him. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of near intercourse with Him who has loved you with such manner of love! —J. N. D.

The Song of Solomon

"A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes. Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir" (Chap. 1:13-17).

"A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts" (v. 13).

This verse no doubt has its direct application to the remnant of Israel during the dark night of the great tribulation, when "darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people" (See Isaiah 60:2). But it has also a beautiful application to believers now and so we will consider it first in this connection.

The myrrh is a sort of resin gathered from a plant that grows in the East. It was used as a perfume and also as a medicine. It is the life sap that oozes out through the wounds made in the bark of the plant. It is, therefore, a reminder of Christ, who in love for us, was wounded for our transgressions and shed His blood.

The reference here is to an oriental custom of carrying a small bundle of myrrh in the bosom because of its sweet odors. If we take Christ into our bosom, if we give Him that full place in our inmost affections as

the One who laid down His life in love for our souls, it is bound to give a sweet fragrance of Christ to all our person.

We cannot copy Christ, we cannot imitate Him in our own strength. As long as we look at Christ only as a model that we strive to imitate, we will never succeed. But as we meditate upon His sufferings for us, our hearts are drawn to Him and we embrace Him in our affections; and as we give Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us, the full place in our hearts, it will give a sweet fragrance of Christ in all our ways. This is the only way we can have a sweet odor of Christ about our person and ways. How much place are you giving Him in your heart?

'He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.' Thus the most intimate place in the affection is given to Him by His beloved one during the time the world is going on in the darkness of night. In John 12:46 Christ says, 'I am come a light into the world.' And Zacharias, full of the Holy Ghost, said of Him: 'The dayspring (or sunrising) from on high hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace' (Luke 1:67, 78, 79). But the world cast Him out and He has returned to His place on high, and consequently the world is left in darkness. He will come again as 'the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings' (Mal. 4:2), to usher in that glorious day of His millennial reign. But while awaiting that great event, the world is sitting in darkness without the light of day—without Christ. The period of

time we are living in is especially marked by Christ's absence, and the sad part is that He is not wanted. The gospel goes out world-wide but falls on deaf ears, only here and there a heart opens to receive Him as "the light of life" (John 8:12).

He has no place down here where He is wanted except as the hearts of His redeemed ones are opened to receive Him. Surely when we consider how much He suffered for us, He is worthy that we open our hearts wholly to Him and give Him the full place there in our most intimate affections. When we do so the world cannot see Him, but there will be a fragrance of Christ about our person that those around cannot help but take note of. Oh, let us give Him then that full place in our heart's affections, so that we can say in the language of this verse we are considering, "A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts."

"My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire (henna-flowers, N. T.) in the vineyards of Engedi" (v. 14).

The vine is often used by the prophets as a figure of Israel. "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant" (Isa. 5:7; see also Ps. 80:8).

Verse 13 speaks of the place Christ should have in the heart's affections of His own during this present time characterized by the darkness of night, because He who came as the light of the world was rejected and has returned on high, while in verse 14 we get Christ presented to us in His coming mil-

lenial glory, when His glory will be displayed in Israel before a wondering world. It is not sure just what plant is meant here by the Hebrew word translated "camphire." Some translators have translated it "henna-flower," a sweet, showy, fragrant flower that grows in the vineyards of Palestine. If so, it would be a beautiful picture of Christ in His coming reign over Israel—no longer hid from the eyes of the world, but seen in all the display of His glory and beauty in Israel. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (or in glory, N. T.)" and, "They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God" (Isa. 24:23; 35:2). What a blessed day that will be when the glory and beauty of Christ shall be seen like the henna-flower in the vineyards of Engedi, filling the whole atmosphere with His sweet fragrance.

The special hope of the Church is the coming of the Lord for her to take her to be with Himself forever, while the special hope of Israel is the coming of the Lord to reign in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords.

But when He is manifested in all His glory over Israel, the Church shall be manifested with Him in glory. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:3). But the heart that is attached to Christ looks forward with delight to that glory Christ shall yet have in His coming reign; not so much because we are to share that glory with Him, but because

we long to see Him have that glory which is due Him, in this world that spit upon Him and in mockery crowned Him with thorns. The Father has purposed and will not rest till it be accomplished that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). And how the heart of His bride-to-be should rejoice as she looks forward to the coming glory of her Bridegroom.

"Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes" (v. 15).

As she is talking of what her beloved is to her, He now speaks up and tells of the beauty He sees in her. All this fairness is the fruit of His work of grace in her heart, drawing out her affections to Himself. "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair." The repetition shows the ardor of His enraptured heart as He gazes upon His bride now made perfect through His grace. "Thou hast doves' eyes." The dove is the symbol of faithful love, of purity, holiness, and peace. When a dove is separated from her mate, she rests solitary and mourns till she sees him again, so is a proper emblem of devotion and attachment to Christ. The pigeon or turtle dove, both of the same family, was the only bird that could be offered on the altar as a type of Christ in His love and purity and devotion to God's glory. The Spirit, also, descended upon Christ like a dove (Matt. 3:16). So, in the doves' eyes we can see that Christ-like, Spirit-produced devoted, faithful, pure love.

When He speaks of her beauty, she answers back, "Behold, thou art fair, my beloved,

yea, pleasant." And then adds, "Our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir" (v. 16. 17).

The bed in a house of cedar and fir speaks of rest in a place of incorruptibility and royal glory. The cedar and fir are the symbol of royal glory. David and Solomon both made houses of cedar. They also resist rot, so are the emblem of that which is incorruptible and enduring.

The bed, which speaks of rest, in this house of cedar and fir, is green. Green is the most restful color in nature. It is a compound color made by mixing blue and yellow together. Blue is the heavenly color, and the golden yellow is the emblem of that which is divine and free from all alloy. The gold was used everywhere in the tabernacle as the emblem of the divinity of Christ.

To sum it up, we get, then, in this green bed in the house of cedar and fir, a divine and heavenly rest free from all alloy in a place of incorruptible and royal glory.

To be continued, D. V.

Forgiveness of Sins

"And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil" (Luke 11:4).

First, before touching this Scripture, let us look at some of the results of the work of Christ on the cross, whereby sin has been put

away. The blood of Christ has covered all the believer's sins, the Word says "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:7). Every believer is in this blessed or happy place. No longer a naked sinner before God, but now covered with the best robe of God's righteousness (Rom. 3:22) like Adam and Eve after God had covered them with coats of His own making (Gen. 3:21). Surely they were at peace with God, in the rest that comes with sins forgiven and covered. We trust our readers are clear as to this and are rejoicing in the certainty of this great salvation; yea, with hearts overflowing with thanks and praise to God!

Now it is most precious to see that we believers are no longer in the place of sinners before God, but are called in Scripture "Children of God" (Gal. 3:26; Eph. 1:5), "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1; 2:11), holy and beloved" (Col. 3:12), "saints" (Rom. 1:7), "Christians" (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). The believers in the Lord Jesus have many titles yet nowhere in Scripture are they called sinners. In Romans 1:7 the reading should be: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints—or saints by calling." (The supplied word in italic "to be" are not in the Greek.) That is, every Christian is "beloved of God"; and has that title "saint" by calling; such is the result of the glorious work of Christ: "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Sin has been so completely removed by that sacrifice that the

believer is no longer in the place of a sinner, but is a saint, holy and beloved, made agreeable to God in Christ (Eph. 1:4). We read "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). This was written to the saints at Rome, who were once sinners, but now no longer so. The love of God was in activity on our behalf "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" at a time, when all were in open rebellion to Him. So we read "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (v. 10).

Thus also the saints at Corinth were instructed "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God, and such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

In Heb. 10:10-14 we read "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath

perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

It is by a sovereign act of God's will that we have been set apart (to sanctify means to set apart) for Himself through the sacrifice of Christ. And we are not only set apart, but in that place as set apart by His sacrifice, we are "perfected forever," that is, God always views us in this place, or standing before Him, as sanctified or set apart to Himself, as cleansed fully, perfectly and forever through the blood of Christ. There is no sin that comes into a believer's life but what God has once and for all dealt with in judgment when He laid it on Christ and He bore the judgment in our stead. And not only so, but all the perfection and virtue of Christ's work for us on the cross in perfect obedience to the Father's will is reckoned by God as ours; so we ever stand before Him in that unchanging, absolute perfection of Christ's work for us. This is our perfect standing before God and how blessed it is to see this precious truth.

This will not encourage us to be careless about sin or make us feel it does not make so much difference now since it has all been already judged and the judgment already borne by Christ on the cross. On the contrary the very thought of all those sufferings Christ endured in bearing the judgment for our sins will make us detest sin. It was our sins that caused Him so much agony and pain on the cross when He bore the penalty for it. When this precious truth of our perfect, unchanging standing before God gets hold of our

heart, instead of being indifferent toward our sins and failures after we are saved, it will make us abhor ourselves for doing that which cost Him so much agony to put away and humbly confess it before God in self-judgment.

Now the difficulty is what about our failures after conversion? Let us never excuse sin, or make light of it as not being so bad. It is more serious to be a naughty child, a sinning saint, than when sinning as a blind slave of Satan. The reason we sin is because we get out of the presence of the Lord. Our privilege is to have fellowship with Him, but when we get into the place of distance as the result of self-will, self-confidence or other shades of self, or by giving attention to the allurements of the world, we fail to judge "the thought of foolishness as sin" (Prov. 24:9), and it leads to acts of sin. The Spirit of God reproves us when we allow our old nature or self to act. If we do not judge self in its motive, thought, etc., it will lead us to words, and acts that are sinful and not only unbecoming to a Christian, but dishonouring to our Lord Jesus, whom we are to represent and follow in this scene, for we are called by His Name—"Christian."

We need to see also the difference between God's forgiveness of a self confessed sinner when he first comes to God in repentance and faith in Christ and His governmental forgiveness as a Father in His dealings with His children.

When a sinner comes to God accepting

Christ as his Savior, God forgives him fully according to the value of that sacrifice that answered once and for all, for all the sins of all who believe. Then God not only forgives but also gives him eternal life, that is a new divine nature implanted in his soul by the Holy Spirit, so he is born again. Now he is in the relationship of a child before his Father; and as such if he is disobedient and sins, the Father may have to chasten him in this life to teach him to hate his sins and forsake them. But if he feels badly about them, confesses and judges them before his Father, He may forgive His child instead of correcting him if He sees that in his heart he has truly judged himself for them and has taken sides with Him against them. His communion is thus restored with the Father.

The discovery of our failure should not prompt us to cry for forgiveness, but lead to confess our sins, before our Father and God. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

The work of our precious Advocate with the Father is going on before we fall into sin; He seeks to keep us from it. When Peter's self-confidence was leading him to where he would deny his Master, the Lord said 'I have prayed for thee' (Luke 22:32). There is a perfect Savior for the sinner; for the failing child of God, a perfect "Advocate with the Father" (1 John 2:1). It is the work of our Advocate, who applies the Word of God to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which brings us to realize

that we have sinned, and this should lead us to confess our sins before God, and if necessary also before man. (Ps. 32:5; James 5:15, 16.) This is more difficult than to say "forgive me"—the pride of our hearts will strive against confession—however, it is more wholesome, because in the exercise of self-judgment, we pass sentence upon ourselves, our thoughts, words and deeds, and take our stand with God against sin and the workings of our old nature.

When communion is thus restored we have in our souls the consciousness of being forgiven assured to us by the Word, for He is faithful and just to forgive because of the work that was finished on the cross. (Ps. 32:5; 1 John 1:9). The Lord uses the water of the Word to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (Eph. 5:26.) This is the result of the unwearied love of our Lord Jesus on high in His office as our Advocate. "He restoreth my soul" (Ps. 23:3). Not that we should sin, or be careless as to sin! Oh, no—but the gracious provision is made, "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Now as to Luke 11:4, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." This is a petition of what is called the "Lord's prayer," but is really the disciples' prayer, which the Lord taught them to pray before the work on the cross was finished. This is not Christian ground to pray for the forgiveness of our sins, because we forgive others. Believers, now that Christ

is exalted, are exhorted "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

The apostle, writing to children of God, said "I write unto you children because your sins are forgiven you for His Name sake" (1 John 2:12). The apostle in giving thanks unto God for the result of the work of Christ says: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. 1:14). The good news of the gospel is "through this man (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13:38). The Christian is one who has believed the gospel and rejoices in the certainty that his sins are forgiven, not because of the measure of his own faithfulness of forgiving others, but because of the perfect work of our Lord Jesus and the infinite value of the precious blood which has flowed from the pierced side of the Crucified One. Therefore, there should rather be giving of thanks; the way is opened into the unclouded and unveiled presence of God where we are invited as "brethren" to come with "boldness"—"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb. 10:17-22).

Let us join in with the redeemed even now and sing: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5, 6).

E. C. H.

FRAGMENTS

We never find the Lord's own sufferings preventing Him from thinking of others. On the cross He can think of the thief, just as though He were not suffering Himself. If He had not time to eat, still He had always time enough to announce the truth to the crowd which followed Him; tired at Jacob's well, His heart does not grow weary of speaking of the living water, nor of looking into the poor Samaritan woman's conscience. He was never tired of doing good; and He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

“THAT YE SIN NOT”

1 John 2:1, 2

These words are addressed to those whom John calls “My little Children.” It is a term of endearment that John habitually used for those who were so dear to his heart, because they were so dear to the Lord. The Lord Himself in addressing His disciples uses the same expression (John 13:33). How tenderly the apostle appeals to them. “My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.” He is not writing to the unconverted, but to God's own dear children.

In the first chapter, the apostle writes about fellowship with the Father and the Son

wherein is fulness of joy. Through the eternal life that has been manifested in the person of Christ and has been given to us as a gift from God (1 John 1:1-3; 5:11-12), we receive a nature capable of enjoying this fellowship.

Then he goes on to tell us of the purity of God's nature. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5-7). All fellowship with Him must be in accord with His pure and holy character.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Cleansed in that blood shed once for all eternity, no spot or stain remains for the eye of God. This makes us fit to stand in His holy presence, and the new nature we have received enables us to delight in Him and have fellowship with Him. This is what His great grace has wrought for us.

But it is necessary that there be no abuse of His incomparable grace, no slight of His adorable Person. God watches the heart and mind ~~and~~ tongue of His children as to this. He cannot have fellowship with them in that which slights or slurs His Person.

The nearness of our relationship into which God has brought us with Himself as His dear children makes the insult done to Him all the worse when we slight His holy will to do our own. Setting aside God's will for our own is the essence of sin. "The thought of foolishness is sin." (Prov. 24:9). Any levity in thought, word or deed is contrary to the nature of God, and interrupts our fellowship with Him; for how can the Father

and Son have fellowship with sin. Therefore John's tender solicitude for God's dear children that they sin not, so as not to slight their Father and interrupt their fellowship with Him and with the Son, and therewith lose the joy of the Lord, which is our strength. (Neh. 8:10). The Father cannot shed His joy and gladness in the heart of His child who has so slighted His love as to indulge in that which is contrary to His nature and character, until he has confessed and judged it, being thoroughly ashamed of himself for the way he has so shamefully wounded his Father's love by indulging in that which grieves His Holy Spirit. And it is to this very end that Christ, our Advocate, works on high.

Even before Peter had sinned in denying his Lōrd, Christ, seeing the self-confidence that exposed him to Satan's sifting, prays for him that his faith fail not (Luke 22:31); and then how tenderly he turns and looks upon him when he had sinned, breaking his heart with that look of love so that Peter goes out and weeps bitterly. And later He appears to Peter alone to continue that work of restoration, and finally in John 21, completes it by probing to the very root of his failure; but in such a loving way, for at the same time He confides to his care His tender little lambs. (See John 21:15-17).

We see this gracious work of our Advocate carried out in symbol by Him on the night of His last supper with His own (John 13:1-10). Having loved His own, He loved them to the end and rising from the supper He takes a towel and girds Himself and takes

water (the figure of the Word of God) and washes His disciples' feet because of the defilement they had contracted in their walk.

This is a beautiful picture of His work which He is doing for us now on high as our Advocate. He watches over our hearts, and minds, anticipating our failure by His intercession and warning us as He did Peter, and when we have failed, He continues His gracious work for our restoration, using the Word of God by the Spirit to probe our hearts (Heb. 4:12-13); perhaps using some of His own instruments to speak to the heart and conscience and sometimes, where self-will is still strong, using chastening to break it down. (Rev. 3:19). By any and all of these means, He works as our Advocate to lead us to confession and self-judgment in order to restore us to that fellowship our sin and folly has interrupted.

Where there has been public failure this work of restoration continues toward the one who has failed, restoring him also in the confidence of his brethren, like Peter (John 21:15-17). The Lord took his case up in the presence of the brethren at the fire of coals, and gave to him the care of His lambs and sheep. Thus the Advocate triumphs in making the one whom Satan desired to make a stumbling block for others, the very one who is to strengthen his brethren — "when once thou hast been restored, confirm thy brethren." (Luke 22:31 N. T.).

Our Advocate is "with the Father." It does not say an Advocate with God as though by sin one had lost his title as a child before

God and has to be saved over again. No, he is still a child of God, although a naughty one. He does not lose his title as a child before his Father, nor does he lose the eternal life he received when born of God. His Father does not disinherit him nor cast him off. He hates his sin with infinite hatred, but He loves His child with an everlasting love that rises above every difficulty, and has made a provision in His loving fore-thought for His failing children.

“We have (through our Father’s gracious provision) an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (verse 2). He is the Advocate for all God’s children. How much it cost Him to endure all the wrath and judgment against our sin when He made propitiation for us on the cross, so that we will never have to be condemned for our sins? And now He is on high as our Advocate to meet our need when we fall into sin, that we might be restored to the blessing and joy of that communion with the Father and with Himself that our sin has interrupted. What a wondrous provision of grace.

No, our failures and sins do not make us lose our place as children of God, nor lose the divine nature and eternal life that we received when we became God’s children, but it does make us lose communion and the joy of communion with our Father and our Lord and Saviour, whose holiness and purity will not allow Them to have any fellowship with us in our sin and failure but whose love has made a provision in the advocacy of the Son for our restoration through confession and

self judgment to fellowship.

The Word of God never supposes for a moment that a child of God should live in sin. How serious indeed and what an affront to God for a child of His, who is the object of such love, to indulge in sin or temper with it. The nature of sin is to get worse and worse, and it would do so if it were not for our Advocate. But our Advocate works so as to bring us to feel our sin and judge ourselves with humiliation before our Father.

Let us beware of hindering Him in this gracious work He is seeking to accomplish in our hearts. Let us think at such times of the great love of God to us in making us His children for all eternity at the cost of the sacrifice of His Son. Nothing will make us more profoundly ashamed of ourselves, for our folly in sinning and yet at the same time give us courage to confess without despair our sins to our Father in full confidence in His love and thankfulness to Him for it.

Selected.

“WITH PURPOSE OF HEART”

(Acts 11:23)

“For thy servant will no more offer burnt offering and sacrifice to other gods, but to Jehovah,” (2 Kings 5:17) (N.T.) thus the mighty Syrian captain Naaman, spoke to Elisha after he had dipped himself seven times in Jordan and was cleansed from his leprosy. By this miracle of grace he had been led to know the living and true God, **Jehovah**, and the purpose had been formed in his heart

from henceforth to serve Him only. To carry out this purpose of heart he needed grace and the special support of the Lord. It would not be an easy matter to confess **Jehovah** in the heathen land with such surroundings as he had in the high position as a personal servant nearest to the king. These thoughts weighed heavily upon him, especially as it was part of his service to accompany the king into the idol-temple when he worshipped his false god, "Rimmon." While supporting the monarch, Naaman would have to bow down with him, thereby giving the appearance that he was again worshipping idols. Satan desired to fill the heart of the captain, now a young believer, with many anxious thoughts. Naaman had most marvelously been healed and converted, his conscience was made tender in view of evil and he felt himself weak in expectation of what might be before him. Elisha comforted him with the words:

"Go In peace"

He would say thereby, "surrender thyself fully to the Lord who has done so great things for you; follow Him, He will counsel and help you in every time of need. Do not trouble yourself with anxious thoughts as to the future, possibly all shall develop much different from what you expect."

God had the power to touch the heart of the king that Naaman might be relieved from the duty of accompanying him to the idol-temple or possibly the king himself might be

converted to the living and true God by the very **report** Naaman brought to him on his return home. "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." (Mark 5:19).

God expects the Christian to walk in faithfulness and holiness. At one time we "were dead in trespasses and sins," serving the devil, for we "walked according to the course of this world" and were "children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:1-2).

Should we continue in this former manner since we are saved from sin, judgment, the world and Satan? Peter wrote to believers, "for the time past of our life suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." The purpose of our hearts should be to "no longer live the rest of (our) time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the **will of God**" (1 Peter 4:3-2). If the apostle rejoiced, how much more must it rejoice the heart of God when His own walk in the truth with purpose of heart? (3 John 4).

"Henceforth we should not serve sin"
(Rom. 6:6)

Conversion is a turning to God, away from all manner of sin, shame and evil habits; how the heart should be exercised to live a life of practical righteousness and holiness. The Lord Jesus Christ is our perfect pattern, He said: "Lo, I come . . . I de-

light to do Thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40:7-8). He, amidst untold sufferings, served God in "obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross." (Phil. 2:8). Oh, that we might follow in His footsteps!

Satan seeks to fill us with fear when we become exercised as to entire surrender to God: he gives us a magnifying glass to look through in order that difficulties might appear as mountains. He whispers, "What will your wife, your husband, or your father say? What about your employer or superior? What will your relatives think, your neighbours, and all the other people? Can you answer for the division it will cause in your family?" But at such moments let all who wish to remain faithful with purpose of heart cleaving to the Lord, not consider circumstances nor look at men, but have the eye and heart set upon the Lord **alone**. With Him there are no circumstances that He could not turn to our advantage and to a blessing for all concerned. (Rom. 8:28). Unto Him all power is given in heaven and earth. (Matt. 28:18). As to men, they are before Him "altogether lighter than vanity." (Psa. 62:9). Why should we fear men? "The fear of men bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth **his trust in the Lord shall be safe.**" (Prov. 29:25).

Considering God's Goodness Gives Purpose of Heart

The prodigal son said, "I will arise and go to my father." He came to this purpose

through considering the goodness of his father, and that gave him courage to carry out his purpose, "he arose, and came to his father." (Luke 15:18-20).

Moses purposed in his heart to visit his brethren, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" (Heb. 11:25-26) thus sharing "the reproach of Christ" (Heb. 11:25-26). What blessing there was connected with this determination! God led him marvelously through all difficulties and entrusted to him the leadership of His people, and "the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Ex. 33:11).

Dear fellow Christian, let us ask ourselves the question: "have we broken with evil?" (Dan. 4:27). Are we in real earnest in our hearts when we say, "I intend through the grace of God to serve the Lord Jesus Christ only"? (Josh. 24:15). Do we hate worldliness and all its **idols**, seeking the Lord's face to get deliverance from every one of them? Let us call to remembrance some of the idols: love of self, egoism or selfishness, thirst for our own honour, love of money, conceit and vanity, hatred, which is murder, and secret lusts and evil desires, in fact **all** that is an object of the heart, thus taking the place of Christ, **is an idol**. Naaman was exercised to serve idols no longer. What are we doing?—How important to heed the warnings of the Apostle: "Children keep yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21).

(Arranged from G & F).

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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The Song of Solomon

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" (Song of Solomon 2:1-4).

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys" (v. 1).

The lily of the valley is often taken to be Christ but it only shows how careless many are when they read their Bibles, not taking pains to read the context and to weigh each verse in the connection with its setting.

It is the bride-to-be that says in verse 1, "I am the rose (or narcissus, J. N. D' trans.) of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."

It is His pure grace that has made us such. By nature we are anything else than the lily or the narcissus. It is not a question of what we merit. We merit nothing, but to be cast off forever. It is simply a matter of how great is His grace and what it has wrought for us and in us.

In the next verse Christ answers, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." This shows us beyond question that the lily is His loved one and as compared with the unsaved around her she is as a lily among thorns. What a contrast between a lily and thorns. But it is all the work of His

grace that has taken poor thorny sinners and converted them into sweet lilies of the valley.

The narcissus and the lily look up to the heavens or bow their heads in humility. They do not lift themselves up loftily. They grow under the sunshine of heaven and drink in the refreshing showers from above and thus cared for, they will fill their surroundings with their sweet fragrance.

How is it with us, dear fellow Christian, are our ways fragrant with His grace?

Perhaps you say, If I were only in different surroundings. My surroundings are so difficult. Well, that is just what we get here, a lily among thorns. Why does Christ leave His lily among the sharp thorns? That certainly is no suitable surroundings for a delicate lily, you say. But He leaves it there because that is just where He wants it to be and to shed, in gentle grace and spotless purity, its sweet fragrance all around it.

Do you feel sometimes that your surroundings are thorny and difficult? Well, then, take courage. That is just where Christ wants you to be His lily. Remember He is looking down upon His lily and delights to behold its delicate beauty in contrast to all the thorns that surround it. It is a privilege to give joy to His heart by being a sweet fragrant lily for Him just where you are among the thorns. Take courage and look up. Let your eye meet His and you will find in Him an all-sufficient object for your heart and food to sustain your soul.

She says in answer to what He has just said of her: 'As the apple tree among the trees of

the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste" (v. 3). This delightfull exchange of happy thoughts, one of the other, is precious. How it delights the heart of our Savior when we delight in Him. There is nowhere else one can find lasting joy and delight.

The trees of the wood may give some shade but one would starve sitting under them. They have not fruit to feed upon. But Christ, ah, there we get food for our souls in abundance. In the apple tree you have not only beauty and shade but food to sustain.

Note, there are five things here: "I sat down," there you have rest; "under His shadow," here is shelter; "with great delight," and this is true joy; "and His fruit," how it refreshes and nourishes the soul; "was sweet to my taste," not only food to nourish but sweet to the taste, bringing delight as we partake of it.

When Christ fed the multitude He made them sit down first. So many souls are running here and there trying to find something that will satisfy. But when you come to Christ you may sit down at rest. No need to run about anymore for you find in Him all you need to delight, satisfy and nourish the soul; as well as a cool and pleasant shade where we may sit to calm and refresh our agitated spirits when we find ourselves under the hot sun of affliction or the burning heat of the day with its usual pressure and round of daily toil and routine. Especially is the shade of a tree appreciated in a hot climate like Pales-

tine. It is "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2).

But if we are to enjoy the shade and be constantly refreshed and nourished by the fruit we must stay close to Him. The shade and the fruit are not for those who stray off at a distance from Him.

Dear reader, have you thus learned to know your Savior as the all absorbing delightful object for your heart? Christianity is not simply a means of getting to heaven but it is the joy of heaven come down to fill our hearts already, to sustain and satisfy the soul now as we journey on toward that heavenly home. So many seem to be satisfied just to know their sins are forgiven and their title to heaven is clear. They would treat the Savior simply as a means to get to heaven, or perhaps also to get them out of trouble. When they get in difficulty they pray to Him. But what the Lord longs for is that we open our hearts fully to Him and receive Him as the lover of our souls. An ever living, loving Person, who would walk and talk with us and delight us with His love and refresh us with His presence and strengthen us as we lean upon His mighty arm.

"He brought me into the banqueting house, and His banner over me is love" (v. 4).

In the previous verse we see the Lord, as the apple tree, and His beloved one sitting down under His shadow with great delight and enjoying His sweet fruit. It is what the Lord is for her while she is still in a "weary land" (Isa. 32:2), where the sun of affliction beats down, and there is no food around for

her soul except in Him. In Him she has found a place of delight, rest, shelter, and food. But in the fifth verse there is a change, there is progress. He has come and brought her into His banqueting house, and His banner over her is love. It is the millennial feast for Israel (see Isa. 25:6-8), and for the church, it is the eternal feast with Him on high.

But dropping the future application, there is also a very practical and real sense in which it is true of the believer now, who, like the prodigal, has returned to his Father's house and been made to sit down at the feast spread there (Luke 15). A feast that begins on earth but never ends. See also Luke 14: 15-24, where the good things that God offers to all in the gospel is likened to "a great supper"; and the invitation goes out to all, "Come, for all things are now ready." What a feast for our souls we find in Christ under the banner of His love.

The banner, or flag, stands for all the power of the king or nation it represents. All power in heaven and earth is given unto Him (Matt. 28:18). How blessed to be under His banner of love—that banner that speaks of all His mighty power, unfurled over us in love. No power in earth or hell beneath can molest us there. What rest and peace it gives to the heart as we feast upon the good things He has prepared for us under His mighty banner lifted over us in love. No fears to alarm, no dread of the enemy coming in to disturb. Such is the blessed lot of every believer as he in simple faith feasts upon the rich portion that is his in Christ through the gospel.

But someone says, 'I do not have that settled rest and peace; my soul is not feasting; I am often disquieted over the present and have fears and dread about the future.' Well, dear troubled soul, whose fault is it? Is it that His love for you is too shallow and fickle that you cannot trust it, or His power too weak to defend and keep you? Dare you say so? No, certainly not. He has proved His love in giving His life for you, and as to power, who can question it? "All things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things and by Him all things consist (or are held together, upheld in existence)" (Col. 1:16, 17). And in Heb. 1:3 you get the two things together, both His power and the love that purged our sins: "Who . . . upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Whose fault then is it that you do not have that settled peace? It can't be His; it must be yours, your lack of just trusting in Him, just resting upon Him. Accepting in simple faith what He offers and feasting your soul upon Him. Quit looking at your fears, quit looking at your doubts, quit looking at yourself, and just fix your eyes upon Him and His mighty banner of love and feast your soul upon Him. There is no other way to be happy in Jesus.

Of course if you are going to be nibbling at the carnal things the world spreads for its devotees it will spoil your appetite for spiritual things. You can not be feasting at His banquet table and partaking also of what the world feeds upon.

In 1 Sam. 30:16 we get another feast which is a type of the short lived joy that the world has. "And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah." But the devil never unfurls a banner of love over his followers. Their passing joy in perishing things is indeed short lived for destruction comes upon them suddenly ere the morning light. "When they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3). In this account in 1 Sam. 30:8-19 David, who suddenly appears and overthrows the Amalekites while their feast and dancing is going on, and delivers all their captives, is a type of Christ when He shall appear with all His armies from heaven for the deliverance of Israel, His earthly people, and the judgment of the nations who are at enmity against God.

How blessed is the believer's portion in contrast to the unsaved. He can feast and be at rest in his soul now under the mighty protection and power of his Savior's banner of love while he looks forward with joyful anticipation to the eternal feast of good things prepared for us in the Father's house. Yes, the Lord is soon coming to bring us into His banqueting house up there.

But let us stop a moment to meditate on the first three words of this wonderful verse, "He brought me." "He," who is He? Think a

little of the greatness of His person as the Eternal Son of God, Creator and upholder of all things. Think of His great wealth, His unspeakable glory. Then think again, who am I, poor worm of the dust, guilty and vile sinner by nature helpless in myself. Now put the two together, "He brought me," Oh, wonder of love! "He brought me into His banqueting house"; yes, right into His banqueting house, His own eternal joy. Could anything be greater, more wonderful? No higher place of bliss than that where the Eternal Son of God finds His own joy; but He would share it all with us, with me. And how do we attain to it? "He brought me." Not my own efforts, not my own merits, no, nothing of my own; but He brought me there by His efforts, by His divine work and labor of love.

To be continued, D. V.

"The love that Jesus had for me,
To suffer on the cruel tree,
That I a ransomed soul might be
Is more than tongue can tell."

"The joy that comes when He is near,
The rest He gives, so free from fear,
The hope in Him so bright and clear
Is more than tongue can tell."

"Praise the Savior, ye who know Him;
Who can tell how much we owe Him?
Gladly let us render to Him
All we have and are."

THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

A Name Written . . . His Name is called
The Word of God
Revelation 19:12, 13.

It is only when we perceive that Revelation is a book of judgment, that we are prepared for the unwonted aspects in which our blessed Lord is here presented. In chapter 1, He is seen as judging in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and in such a manner that even the beloved disciple fell at His feet as dead. Here also—only now in relation to the world—He wears the same judicial mien, betokened by the same feature in that "His eyes were as a flame of fire." Indeed, it is expressly said in this scripture, that "in righteousness He doth judge and make war." It is the same Jesus who once sat in lowly guise upon Samaria's well, but who now, after His long session at God's right hand, is returning to this world, which had rejected and crucified Him, to vindicate His rights, and to establish His throne, and thus to glorify God, by making good all that He is, in His righteous government. All things are to be put under His feet, and in His sudden appearance through the opened heaven, we see Him coming to subdue, enter upon, and possess His rightful inheritance.

Before considering the significance of the names here mentioned, it will be for profit to call attention to the connection. In the previous part of the chapter, events of great importance in the divine ways are introduced.

All heaven is filled with praise when the great corruptress of the earth meets with her righteous doom at the hands of God. Thereupon we have the celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb, for which His wife had made herself ready, and was, through grace, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white—the righteousnesses of saints. In Ephesians, we have the private and intimate presentation of the bride, as "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Here it is rather the public marriage, to which guests can be invited, and with which all the heavenly hosts can be in communion. It marks the termination of the time of the patience of Jesus Christ; but if He is about to be exalted in the former scene of His shame and humiliation, He will share the glory of His throne with His beloved bride.

This is the fourth time the opened heaven is mentioned in the New Testament. The first occasion was at the baptism of Jesus, when "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The lowly Jesus, fulfilling all righteousness, and identifying Himself with His poor and afflicted people—the saints in the earth, and the excellent, in whom was all His delight—is here seen as the Object of the heart of His God. Next, He Himself speaks to Nathanael, and says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter (or henceforth) ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and

descending upon the Son of Man." Here on earth—at that time, and also in the future—we apprehend, He is seen as the object of angelic ministry. At the death of Stephen, the third instance occurs, as thus described: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." The Object of the heart of God has now become the Object of the believer, who has thus, through grace, been associated with God in His own delight in His beloved Son. Now lastly, the heavens open that the Son of Man may come forth, as we have seen, in righteousness to judge and to make war.

After the personal description is given, it is said, "He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself." The introduction of this statement in this especial place, is very striking: "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns"; and then, before relating that He was "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," the secret, written name is mentioned. There must be a reason for this; and as the explanation we cannot forbear giving the words of another: "But, though thus revealed as man, He had a glory none could penetrate into"; and the writer adds, in a note, "So it was as to His person and service. No one knew the Son but the Father. It was the secret of His rejection. He was that, and so necessarily such in the world. But the world under Satan's influence would not have that. In His humiliation His divine glory was maintained in the inscrutable depths of His person. Now He is revealed in glory; but there ever remained what none

could search, or penetrate, into—His own Person and nature. . . . As revealing God, in grace or power, so as to make Him known, we know Him. But His Person as Son always remains unsearchable. His name is written, so that we know it is unknowable—not unknown, but unknowable." These weighty words deserve the careful consideration of the reader—especially at the present moment—for they contain a wholesome reminder of the inscrutability of the Person of the Son.

First comes the written name, unknown to all but its divine Possessor; and then, in connection with the vesture dipped in blood, it is said, "And His name is called The Word of God." This must be carefully distinguished from what is found in the first verse of John's gospel. "The Word" there who was with God, and who was God, if it be taken, for the moment, as a divine title, cannot mean less than that (as has been well said) "He is, and He is the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God"; and this absolutely as relating to all that God is. But in our scripture, while the "Word of God" is the revelation of what God is, it is the revelation of God in a special aspect or character. The very details of His appearing out of heaven sitting on a white horse will make this plain. There is not a word of tenderness, grace, or affection; He is "called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire. . . . He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," etc. All speaks of holy and unsparing judgment; of judgment according to the standard of a

righteous God; as indeed it is said: "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (v. 15). It is of all this, of God so presented, that Christ, as the Word of God, is the revelation. So in the gospels, for example, while Christ was ever God manifest in the flesh, it is in the aspect, sometimes of power, sometimes of grace—sometimes as light, and sometimes as love. But in whatever way, He expressed that which was divine; He was never less than all that He is.

Yet another name is given: in verse 16 it is said, "And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." The context explains at once the force of this title, showing that, in harmony with the whole book, it has relation to the earth. In the preceding verse, we are told that He will smite the nations, and rule them with a rod of iron; and the name, or title, we are considering, indicates that it is consequent upon this that our blessed Lord will establish His throne of universal supremacy upon the earth. Already exalted at the right hand of God, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him," He will in the day of which our passage speaks, be exalted also in this world, when He will "have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." It will be the fulfilment of the promise, "Also I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27).

As showing the delight of the Spirit of God

in directing our attention to the future glory of Christ in this world, it may be mentioned that twice before in this book it has been introduced. At the very commencement, in John's address to the seven churches, we read, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." It is the past of our blessed Lord, what He was when down here as the Faithful Witness; it is the present, what He is as risen from the death, the First Begotten; and it is the future, what He will be, when He shall have taken His great power, and when all the potentates of the earth will render their homage at His feet as Lord of them all. In chapter 11 we find also the same blessed era. When the seventh angel sounded, "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become (the kingdoms) of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (chap. 11:15). At the present time, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together"; in that day, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God:" and under the rule of the rightful King over all the nations of the earth, the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.

Such is the blessed future which awaits the earth; but before that can arrive, all the believers of this period will have been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The marriage of the Lamb, as we have seen

from our chapter, precedes the appearing of the Lord. The hope of the Church, therefore, is the return of the Lord for His saints, for this they daily wait in communion with His own heart. To be with Him will be the consummation of their joy, inasmuch as it will be His joy in presenting His bride to Himself, which will fill their hearts and overflow in perpetual praise at His feet. But their vision is not bounded by this prospect, glorious as it is; for they look forward also, with earnest longing, to His appearing in glory, not because, in the grace of their God, they will be displayed in the same glory with Himself, but rather because the time will then have come when their Lord, who was once rejected and crucified, will be publicly exalted and enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords. Yea—

"Our longing eyes would fain behold
That bright and blessed brow,
Once wrung with bitterest anguish,
Wear its crown of glory now."

—E. D.

H O W C A N I

**Be Sure That I Am Safe Eternally While I
Feel So Miserable?**

In many cases after one has received the Lord Jesus Christ as his own Savior and has had the definite experience of being "born again" by the Holy Spirit, there comes an experience of general miserableness. (I do

not refer to the many who have merely made a profession of religion, their lives showing that they have never been born of God.) The tendency is to hide this from others, because the young Christian, hearing of the triumphs of his fellow-believers, supposes that this experience of a miserable feeling is only his. If it lingers he loses the joy of his salvation and either doubts that he ever was saved or thinks his salvation has taken wings and flown away, leaving him miserable. He is ashamed to confide in older Christians his condition. Let me tell you, after years of experiences as an evangelist following with care young Christians, that there are but few who do not have just such an experience.

But why does it come? There is God's side and man's side to the answer.

The Christian brings it upon himself by being occupied—

1. With his feelings instead of the testimony of the Word of God (1 John 5:12, 13).
2. With his faith instead of the Savior in whom his faith is resting (Romans 3:24).
3. With his joy instead of the indwelling Spirit Who gives the joy (Gal. 5:22).
4. With his earthly possessions instead of his heavenly inheritance (1 Peter 1:4, 5).

Then God permits it so as to teach His child a much-needed lesson. Let me illustrate: Some time ago, a woman was wonderfully saved at my tent meetings and she was so filled with peace and joy that she wanted to tell the whole town; and the relief, after days of deep concern, was so sweet to her

soul that she was just bubbling over. I reminded her that it is the blood of Christ that saves and it is faith in Him as our Savior that gives us this salvation, whether there be feelings or not. I told her, that she would need to remember this when her feelings were quieted. After a week or so she sent for me. She was in deep distress, saying, "I cannot understand why I feel so different now." I told her I was real glad that her feelings were all gone, and after showing her many scriptures, I explained that God was stripping her of every feeling so as to test her. Then I questioned her, "If you never have another feeling on earth, will you still rest your faith in the blood of Christ and know that you are saved because God's Word says so?" There was a struggle and then "I will"; with that settled, God could again trust her with feelings of peace and rest and joy. God cannot let you have feelings of peace and happiness if you put your dependence in them instead of in Christ, Who, "made peace by the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20).

Now read the seventh of Romans, and as you read and stop at such verses as 18 and 24, I hear you say, "Why, that is just the way I am." You, too, are crying, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Now read right on into the eighth chapter; the first verse says, "There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them who are IN CHRIST JESUS." (The rest of the verse is not in the Greek but wrongly supplied from the fourth verse, see Revised Version.) Say this over and over

again to yourself: "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them who are *in Christ Jesus*." You have been thinking that you were safe as long as you felt you were safe, i. e., that your safety depended upon how you were. It does not depend upon how you are but where you are. Dear young Christian, please lay hold on this great delivering truth of Romans 8:1. How was Paul in his experience of Romans 7:24? Read it and you will see that he was just as wretched as you are now; and just then, when feeling that way, he sees that he is just as safe as he ever could be, for his safety did not depend upon *how* he was, but *where* he was: "*In Christ Jesus*"; then he is as safe as Christ and so are you and so am I. Let us both enjoy it and thank God together.

To illustrate this great truth of God's revelation—imagine a great liner in mid-ocean; a storm is raging and a passenger, being sea-sick, is hanging over the rail feeling as miserable as it is possible to feel. He has neither strength nor desire to do anything, and all he can think of is his miserable feeling. There comes in sight a small freight ship, and a sailor who is fearless in the storm, stands on deck; seeing the miserable, sea-sick man on the liner, he laughs at him in his misery. As far as feelings go, the man on the liner is miserable, and the man on the freighter is happy. But what have feelings to do with the safety of either one, and what have feelings to do with your safety? The storm continues, the freighter succumbs to it and sinks, and the happy sailor is lost, be-

cause of where he was; while the liner goes safely into port, and the miserable sea-sick man is safe, because of where he was. The sea-sick man was as safe as the captain; the ship make them both safe. Everyone who is "in Christ Jesus," having trusted Him as his Savior, is just as safe as his Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Captain of our salvation, Who is bringing many sons to glory" (not part way there) (Heb. 2:10).

Dear young Christian, "God *cannot* lie," and "the Scripture cannot be broken," so take your Bible and read: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24, 26). "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12). "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses"

(Acts 13:38, 39). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:10-13). As you read these verses remember that "God cannot lie" and "the Scripture cannot be broken." The Devil cannot break these Scriptures and neither can your feelings; they "must be fulfilled." Will you not then say: "Be my feelings what they will, Jesus is my Savior still." —Upward.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Christian life is a divine life into which only those born again through the Word of truth enter. It is an eternal life, for "I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish" (John 10:28), says the good Shepherd. It is possessed by every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ simply because he or she is a believer in Him. It is not at all an attainment, but the gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). It is not a renovation of human nature but a new life; not a mere reformation but a regeneration by God

the Holy Spirit. Strictly stated the real Christian life is the life of Christ lived in a Christian, it is both devotional and practical.

The devotional side of the Christian life is really the heart of the believer occupied with Christ; that is, the Christian having Christ as the one object before the heart.

The practical side is clearly defined and emphasized by John in the familiar words: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

This article purposes to deal with the first the devotional side, for if this be lacking there will be no motive nor power for a true christian walk. The devotional side of the christian life is evidenced by:

- (1) A personal knowledge of the grace of the Lord Jesus.
- (2) A growing attention to the words of the Lord Jesus.
- (3) An increasing appreciation of the Person of the Lord Jesus.
- (4) A wholehearted recognition of the Master-ship of the Lord Jesus.

We select four illustrations from the gospels of devotion to our Lord which may be profitably meditated upon by all who desire to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior. The first of these occurs in the seventh chapter of Luke, where in verses 44-50 a sinner comes into the Pharisee's house and washes the Lord's feet with her tears. The evangelist portrays:

- (a) A forgiven sinner,
- (b) Saved entirely by faith in Christ,
- (c) Conscious of having been forgiven much,
- (d) Clinging in gratitude to Him.

She speaks no word, but here, as elsewhere, actions speak louder than words.

Gregory the Great said he could never refrain from weeping when preaching from this incident—so human, so tender, so divine.

"Forgiven much . . . loved much." This is of the essence of a devotional Christian life.

As an old writer has said, "May we welcome Him not only with water for the feet—to comfort and refresh Him after His weary journey down here; not only with the oil for the head—to honor Him as our prophet, prince and King of our lives, but also with the kiss—the fervent, unstudied outpouring of heart affection—the clinging of the whole soul to One it loves."

In the tenth of Luke of further element of this devotional side of Christian life finds illustration. In verse 42, "One thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her"; and verse 39 clearly defines what that good part was—"She sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word."

This is the attitude of spirit which ensures insight to the mind of Christ. "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11: 29). It is well to note that it is this contemplative, listening, quiet side of the Christian life which gives tone and character to the disciple of the Lord Jesus. This takes time

to develop, and needs to be as carefully planned as hours for recreation, meals and sleep are for the body. As with the noble-hearted Elijah—nature in none of her varied moods could meet the need of his heart—only the voice of gentle stillness--so with ourselves, we need to be alone with our Lord long enough to become conscious of His presence and thus to be changed by beholding the glory of the Lord. As Whittier sweetly sings:

"Drop Thy still dew's of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace."

We should be sitting at His feet, listening to His Word, looking up into His face in quiet devotion of heart, occupied with Himself.

A third Scripture incident recorded in Mark 14:3-9 deals with a further development of our theme. This story is chiefly interesting from the fact that Mary of Bethany displays a spiritual intelligence beyond any of the apostles and is so fiercely criticized by them for her devotion to their common Lord. She alone in spirit seems to enter in any measure into His entire rejection, death and burial. She is not found among the other women at the cross a week later, having already in spirit passed through this when she anointed His body for the burial with her precious ointment, bestowing upon Him all that she had. Such devotion is always criticized by cold calculating spirits like Judas, and alas!

even by real believers also; but it is always commended by Him who knows the heart and estimates perfectly the value of the motive. He says of her, "She hath done what she could" (v. 8), and can one possibly do more? But do we do what we can? That is the question which the honest disciple will face.

The criticism of the apostles amounted to saying that some things were too costly to spend on Him, too good for the Master. Love, however, does not reckon in this way. Again we notice the devout soul is not here shown as talking but as doing.

A fourth scripture bearing upon the subject of our paper is found in John 20:16, "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say Master." Here the good Shepherd, calling one of His own sheep by name, evokes from her heart glad recognition, "My Master" or "Teacher." This is really giving up her own thoughts to accept His thoughts for her, and therefore involves surrender of heart and will to walk in the path He outlines for her. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go" (Ps. 32:8). Then with her heart comforted by His presence she is commissioned by Him and goes out in obedience to His word in loving, blessed, helpful, uplifting service to others.

How far do we know the joy of this recognition of the Lord as Master? We call Him Master and Lord, and we say well, but do we do the things He says, for that is surely better? (John 13:13-15).

Here then, briefly, we review the open se-

cret of the devotional Christian life:

- (1) Forgiven much, to love much too.
- (2) Learning of Him, by listening to Him.
- (3) Counting nothing too good for Him.
- (4) Joyfully accepting His Lordship over the life.

In conclusion, no harm, but great good will come to our hearts as we quietly and honestly challenge them in His presence.

Take time for the interview with Himself, asking that the Holy Spirit may help as we seek to face the real facts of our inner spiritual condition.

Have I been forgiven much? Do I love much?

Have I chosen that good part? Do I hearken really?

Do I know aught of the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death?

Is His commendation more than all else to me?

Do I practically own Him as Lord of my life?

Do I do the things which He says?

These are the questions which those who wish to know the joy of the Christian life must face for themselves. But let no dread of Him alarm the soul; no anxiety burden the spirit. Rather with simple sincerity of heart tell Him all the truth and count on Him to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

—Altered.

Faith Lays Hold Upon God's Resources

'The apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do' (Luke 17:5-10).

Under the consciousness that the teaching of the Lord in this passage was quite beyond them, the disciples ask: 'Increase our faith.' Faith being that which takes us into the resources of One Who is greater than ourselves, and draws virtue out of that which has been divinely ordained to meet our necessity. Faith is simply the believing of a testimony, that testimony being the gospel; our justification being "by faith, that it might be by grace." This intimates that work must be excluded. And this the fourth chapter of Romans discusses and teaches. But Scripture also speaks of faith as the principle which animates the life of a saint. This the eleventh

chapter of Hebrews presents to us. And, in this character, it is a growing virtue or principle in the soul. It may be either weak or strong, great or little. As we read here, "Lord, increase our faith"; and as we elsewhere read, "O ye of little faith"; and again, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed"; and again, "Your faith groweth exceedingly."

In this sense Scripture considers it, as a growing principle in the soul. It is our entrance into the power of the testimony which is believed; "the substance (confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen." It is, we may say, the power of divine life in the soul, and may be in health and vigor there, or the contrary. It stands for the energy of the kingdom of God within us. Scripture mentions it as that which lays hold of God, waits on Him, walks with Him. So that if faith be strong, this waiting on God and this walking with Him with the grace and activity that accompany it, or goes with it are fresh and lively. And being this, it should be with real, unfeigned humiliation we speak, when we confess that our faith is weak; for this, if made in spiritual intelligence, is a confession of how little our souls are alive to God.

Scripture, I need not say, abounds with notices of this great principle. It considers it in its source, its actings, its qualities, its value with God, etc. And the Lord here, in answer to the desire of His apostles for an increase of it, describes it to them in its two chief attributes—its sovereignty, so to speak, and its self-renunciation—being that which

can command the sycamine tree into the sea, but then will come back to God and say, that all it does is nothing. These are its necessary excellencies. It takes all blessing from God, but leaves all glory with God.

J. G. B.

WORTH WHILE CORRESPONDENCE

on How to Know God's Will

Dear—

Thank you for your letter and questions. They indicate a desire to know the Lord's will. It is only in doing the Lord's will that we can have true freedom as a Christian. Bondage to sin is no liberty. Man says liberty is having the freedom to do what you want to do. But pleasing self is the root of sin and produces bondage and an accusing conscience. See 1 John 3:4 where it says "sin is the transgression of the law" which should rather be translated as in the R. V. "sin is lawlessness", that is acting without regard to authority over us. Acting without regard to God's authority and will. Doing as we please.

But now as to your question: "I was wondering what is right and wrong to do in life. Going to parties and movies are wrong to some people. I would like to read the scriptures to find out if this is true." There are certain things, however that we do not find direct statements about in the Word of God.

But we do find general principles that would guide us and give us to sense what would be wrong. Here are a few verses to consider. Get your Bible and read them. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2). We see here God's will is good, acceptable and perfect. But we have to have our mind renewed to understand. We cannot understand His will nor find it perfect and acceptable if we are conformed to the practices of this world. The world's principle or motive of action is "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Just pleasing self by doing what we want to do without any thought or concern of the will of God. See 1 John 2:15-17. And here are two more verses, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31); "and whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17).

Now these last two verses will guide you about many things. For example you mention parties and movies, and you might have added T. V. There are different kinds or parties. A card party or beer or dance party or a simple birthday party etc; but if you will pray, Lord, can I go there in Thy Name as

Thy representative and do this to the glory of God and with Thy blessing upon me? Just to pray this prayer from the heart, wanting really to do His will and to please Him and not to do anything or go any place where He cannot go with you and bless you, will usually make it very clear to you if it is pleasing to Him or not. You will often feel instinctively in your conscience that you could not do it for His glory and with His blessing on it. If so then don't do it. He will make you happy if you yield to Him and say no to those things He cannot bless you in doing. But it will make you miserable if you do them because your conscience will condemn you. No child of God can be happy in doing those things that his conscience condemns or that he cannot whole heartedly ask the Lord's blessing in doing it. You should not feel like you are deprived by giving up such things, on the contrary when you do it just to please Him, He will give you such a sense of His presence with you that it will make you really happy.

E. C. H.

Every day brings its own perplexity. How sweet to feel that the guidance of the Lord is continual. If we choose our own way, we cast off the Lord's guidance. But if we abstain from self-will, then He will direct our every step. If we will but be guided, we shall be sure of His presence with us to give His peace and joy to our hearts and to be "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).

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*"Till I come, give attendance
to reading . . ." (1 Tim. 4:13).*

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The Song of Solomon

"Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please"

Song of Solomon 2:5-7).

In the previous verse we read, 'He brought me into the banqueting house and his banner over me was love.' What a feast under the banner of His love. As she looks upon the good things He has spread for her on His banqueting table, she says, 'Stay me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples; for I am sick of love' (J.N.D' trans.). Sometimes we say, I am sick of it, meaning that we don't want to have anything more to do with it; but the meaning here is just the opposite. While feasting under His banner of love upon the good things He has prepared for her, her heart is touched to overflowing, and her affections burn with such ardent flame for Him that she is sick with love. Nothing can stay her up, or sustain, refresh and comfort her now, but the flagons of wine, or raisin cakes, and the apples from His banqueting table. When we remember that He is the apple tree (see v. 3), then we can understand that the apples are the sweet fruits of His love for us; and wine, or raisin, is the symbol of fellowship and the joy flowing from it. The joy of fellowship with Himself and the strength that

comes from the sweet fruit of His love in activity for us, are the only things that can sustain a soul that loves Him. Nothing else will satisfy. When one loves Him truly, it just makes one sick and miserable if his communion with Him is interrupted, or when one fails to feast upon the good things His love has provided for us.

Nothing can make up for lack of fellowship with the Lord and daily feeding upon Him and His Word. It is the only thing that can sustain us in our daily life for Him, and keep our souls refreshed. In the hurry and flurry of our daily lives, we must always be on our guard lest we lose contact with Him. It is so easy to let the busy activities of the day crowd out our communion with Him. There is a vast difference between a Christian who lets his daily activity crowd out his communion with the Lord and the one who begins the day in communion with the Lord and keeps in touch with Him throughout the hustle and bustle of the day. The one easily gets worried, flurried and fretted, the other is kept calm, peaceful and quiet in his soul while he does his daily duties under the eye of the Lord and as unto Him. Both may be doing the same work, but what is going on in the heart and soul of each is quite different. The one is doing what he does in fellowship with the Lord and to please Him, the other is borne down under the pressure of his work and surroundings.

"His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace me."

What a blessed place of rest and peace drawn so close to Him in His tender embrace. "His left hand is under my head." The heart is on the left side. The left hand is the hand nearest His heart. She pillows her weary head in His left hand, soothed by the tender affectionate touch of that hand that was pierced for her. Again we say, What a blessed place of rest. And then, "His right hand doth embrace me." The right hand is the hand we do things with. It is the symbol of power. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Ex. 15:6). "My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me" (Ps. 63:8). His mighty right arm is thrown around her to sustain her and draw her closer to Himself, but also what a protection, with His powerful arm around her, no enemy can molest her, no harm can reach her.

She falls asleep in His arms. What a picture of sweet peaceful rest in His loving embrace. And He is looking lovingly down upon her, watching that nothing disturb her rest. This is the meaning of the next verse.

"I charge you, O ye dauthters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the hinds of the fields that ye stir not up nor awake my love till he (or she) please." The Hebrew reads, "till it pleases," so the context must decide who is speaking and whether it is He or she that is sleeping. "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. 121:4). So it is certainly not the Lord who is asleep here, but His beloved one, sleeping peacefully

in His embrace, and He, as He holds her lovingly in His arms, is watching that nothing disturb her rest. He charges by the roes and the hinds of the fields that none stir up or awake her till she please. The roes and the hinds have a very keen sense of hearing. Their keen ear detects anything approaching even at a great distance off.

The world today is filled with unrest and uncertainty. And the effects of it are being felt in the lives of many of God's children as well. But there is a place of calm and peaceful rest for the soul regardless of what may be going on around us. It is found only as we keep ourselves close to the Lord and conscious that His mighty arms are thrown around us and His loving eye is ever watching over us. Whatever uncertainly and shifting there may be about our changing circumstances and the conditions in the world, there is one thing that changes not and that is His love for His own, and His power. Therefore the believer can say with the apostle, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purposes" (Rom. 8:28).

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27). "And He lifted up His hands and blessed them" (Luke 24:50). "His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me." Underneath and around and over us are His everlasting arms, and there may we rest in peace and quietness of soul regardless of

the surging of the nations or the changing conditions around us. Let us never forget this. If you are worried and fearful, it is because you are losing the Lord from sight, you are not confiding in His everlasting arms. You are not keeping yourself in touch with Him and feeding on His love. Return to His banqueting table and feed upon the raisins and the apples, and let Him draw you close in His loving embrace, and you will find peace and rest of soul.

"Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus,
I am blest;
Peace which passeth understanding,
On Thy breast;
No more doubting,
No more trembling,
O, what rest!

Occupied with Thee, Lord Jesus,
In Thy grace;
All Thy ways and thoughts about me,
Only trace
Deeper stories
Of the glories
Of Thy grace.

Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus,
I would be;
Finding joy and satisfaction
All in Thee;
Thou the nearest
And the dearest
Unto me."

—H. B.

To be continued D. V.

THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

His Name shall be in their Foreheads

This last mention of "His name" is in connection with the glorified saints. There is, however, another company of saints who are shown to us with this distinguishing mark, with the addition of "the name of His Father." The words are omitted in our Authorised Translation; but, inasmuch as they are accepted in the Revised Version, as well as in most recent translations, they may be received with all confidence as genuine. To begin with the latter, we are introduced to a company of saints, an hundred forty and four thousand in number, who are with the Lamb as He stands on Mount Sion—"having His name, and the name of His Father, written on their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1 R. V.). That this company occupies a special place of blessedness is seen from the context, and indeed from the express statement that they "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

If we enquire who they are, it will help us to understand the import of the written name upon their foreheads. It is very clear that they are earthly, and not heavenly, saints. In the previous chapter we are permitted to see the terrible power of Satan as embodied in the rule and authority of the first beast, and as wielded by the second, who is the man of sin—the antichrist. It is this incarnation of evil who will cause all within the sphere of his authority to receive a mark in their

right hand, or in their foreheads, as indicative of their allegiance to the beast. It might seem that evil had completely triumphed; but the opening of chapter 14 reveals to us a multitude who, redeemed from the earth, and during the reign of unchecked evil, are associated with the glories of the Lamb in the very seat of His earthly kingdom. Remembering, then, that it is in Jerusalem where the antichrist will exercise his deputed power, it is evident that this company with the Lamb on Mount Sion is composed of Jewish saints—saints who, whatever their sorrows, have been brought victoriously through the fiery furnace of Jacob's trouble, that time of great tribulation, the like of which will never have been, or will ever be, witnessed.

But it is not sufficient to say they are Jewish saints; for we read of another hundred and forty-four thousand in chapter 7—made up of twelve thousand from each tribe. These are the symbolical number of the elect of all Israel; but those in our chapter, it must be recollected, are redeemed from the sphere of antichrist's sway; and hence, since only the two tribes will be in the land at that period, it is another symbolical number, made up of those who were preserved through grace from surrendering to antichrist's claims and threats, and from his moral contaminations. They are, in fact, the faithful from among Judah and Benjamin, who have now entered upon the glorious recompense of companionship with the Lamb in His exaltation in the kingdom. The very number (as in chapter 7),

twelve times twelve, speaks of intensified perfection in governmental administration, and hence of Messiah's perfect reign. It is an unclouded scene of joy and blessing, the bright promise of the issue of all God's ways in government and grace, which we are permitted to behold, ere the desolating storm of judgment breaks upon an apostate people and a rebellious world.

What, then, we may now ask, is the import of His name, and His Father's name, upon the foreheads of this blessed company? Two distinct things are indicated, as is apparent from their having the Lamb's name, and His Father's name. The first is a contrast with what is found in the previous chapter. There we read, as already seen, that men generally receive the mark of the beast in their right hand, or in their foreheads, as the token of their acceptance of his satanic rule, and as giving them certain rights and privileges within his realm. In like manner, having the name of the Lamb on their foreheads proclaims that this redeemed company, "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb," belonged to their glorious Messiah, and that they had maintained their fidelity to Him in the midst of the unparalleled sorrows of the dark, persecuting days through which they had been brought. Hated, and perhaps martyred then, they are now publicly acknowledged and honored with special marks of favor and approbation by Him for whose sake they had suffered, it might be even to death. In addition, they have His Father's name; for "by their open confession of God and the

Lamb, they had been witnesses of it, and suffered as Christ had suffered in His life in owning God His Father."

We pass now to another scene. That which we have just considered is on earth, on Mount Sion; this is in the heavenly Jerusalem. It is true that the holy city is presented in its relation to the millennial earth; for it is said that the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. But when we come to the description of the blessedness of its inhabitants in its positive character, this of necessity is eternal. It is remarkable that the eternal state, as given in chapter 21:1-5, is presented on the side of relief—"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain"—and that in the heavenly city we have rather what is actually possessed and enjoyed. But even so, it must be remembered that it is not the Father's house; so that, in accordance with the character of the whole book, it is still government (see v. 3); and hence the redeemed here are looked at as servants. It is profitable to observe these distinctions; and we are reminded by them that every aspect of the bliss of the redeemed must be taken into account, and combined, in order to comprehend, in any measure, what God has in store for His people when all His purposes are accomplished.

Three things, then, mark the condition of the heavenly citizens: "His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." They

had served Him on earth, it might be thought, and many among them indeed had served Him devotedly, even as Paul was enabled to say, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." But whatever perseverance, spiritual energy, and singleness of eye had characterized such as Paul and others while on earth, their service was never perfect. There was only One, the Perfect Servant, who could say, "I do always those things that please Him" (the Father). In heaven, in the new Jerusalem, every one of the countless throng of the redeemed will respond entirely and perfectly to God's will. When, therefore, it says, "His servants shall serve Him," it means that they will serve according to the perfection of the thoughts of God. They will, moreover, see His face; they will enjoy unhinderedly the intimacy of His presence, for then, like Christ, they will see Him as He is, and be able to enjoy the beatific vision which will be the source of all their delight and their eternal joy.

"For ever on His face to gaze,
And meet the full assembled rays,
While all His beauty He displays
To all the saints in glory."

Finally, and this is our immediate subject, "His name shall be in their foreheads." It has already been shown that the primary signification of the name borne thus upon the

forehead is, so to speak, ownership; that it marks out those who have it as belonging to Christ. And this conveys much; for to be His is really the sum of eternal blessedness, inasmuch as it brings us into everlasting association with Him, both now and also in heaven itself. There is, however, another thought. In chapter 14 the name is "written" on their foreheads; here it is only said to be there. We gather from this distinction that here the predominant feature is moral conformity to the One whose name they bear. As seen again and again in these papers, "name" expresses the truth of the Person; and hence we regard it here that full likeness to Christ is displayed on every redeemed brow. That all believers will be conformed to the image of God's Son, we learn from another scripture (Rom. 8:29); and here we are allowed to behold it actually accomplished. What joy, we may be permitted to say, it will be for the Lord Himself to see, as He surveys the unnumbered hosts of His glorified saints, His own likeness beaming from every face, Himself mirrored and reflected in all the redeemed! It helps us to enter more fully into the words of the prophet: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Then indeed Christ will fill the scene. Old things will have for ever passed away, and all things have been made new; for then, not to faith as now, but in actuality, Christ will be Everything to all His own, and this in full and unclouded display. To Him be all the praise now and throughout eternity!

"There in the sweetness of His love repose,
His love unknown!
All else for ever lost—forgotten all
That else can be;
In rapture undisturbed, O Lord, to fall,
And worship Thee." —E. D.

THE BLESSER, AND THE BLESSING

A young Christian once said to me, "When my heart is inclined to grow cold, I think of what I am saved from. Through the wondrous love of God, I am saved from hell!"

Another said, "I love to think of what I am saved for—to be near Christ, and like Him. When I am cast down in my soul, I seek to dwell upon what I am brought to, through the grace of God."

Of which do you think the most, dear young friend, the wrath to come from which you have been delivered; or the blessings which are yours as a saved one?

Let me suppose a kind and rich man walking through the streets of a city upon a dark and cheerless night. It is bitterly cold, and he wraps his ample overcoat about him, as he hurries to the brightness and warmth of his gladsome home. Yes, his is a joyous home; it is not only wealthy, but the riches of contentment and peace are there, and even the humblest among his many servants is satisfied.

As the rich man hastens on, his eye lights on a kind of bundle in a dark corner of the street — he approaches it, asking himself,

What can it be? Ah! it is a poor ragged little child, starving and freezing in the pitiless night. Touched with compassion, the good man brings the little wanderer to his house, and saves him from the death he was so near. But more, such is the goodness and love of the man's heart towards the child, he adopts him into his own family as a son, and bids the boy call him father.

Now tell me, dear young friend, what will the boy's heart be occupied with most? Will it be the street, the rags, the misery from which he was saved? Surely he will never forget these—never. But he will be chiefly occupied with his father, his house, its wealth, its treasures, its glories. And he will study his adopted father's character, and seek to be like him, and to walk worthy of the high and noble calling wherewith he is called.

This is the kind of spirit we so much need, and you will find that there is a great deal more said in God's Word about what we are saved for, than what we are saved from. I think some Christians find it easier to think of the misery from which God has rescued them, than of the blessedness which He has bestowed upon them. Perhaps they have not yet been through all the rooms of the house. Maybe they are not quite at home in their new place: possibly they are timid, and hardly bold enough in God's love to say, "Abba Father."

"But if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," and "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father!" (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:6).

Now what a word is this, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Can you write down any of the spiritual blessings with which you are blessed?

"All (or every) spiritual blessings," not three or four; no, not ten or twenty, but all. Then how many can you count up? Notice, this text does not speak of what we are saved from at all. It does not describe the pitiless street, but draws out the heart to the glorious house, and the Father there.

You will find it a happy and profitable occupation to seek to write down some of the blessings which the first chapter of Ephesians describes, and the more you think about them, the brighter you will grow.

The once ragged boy, by continual heart and mind occupation with the rich man and his home, loses all traces of the dirt and manners of the street whence he came, and grows like his father. Thus let us be occupied with what God has done for us, and we shall find such wealth and gladness in His Word, that the world will be only like the dirt and the street to us. A growing Christian has his face turned toward heaven, and shines with its light.

Stephen looked up steadfastly, and said "I see Jesus," and all who looked upon Stephen saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Fix your eye of faith upon Christ, the One through whom we have received "every spiritual blessing"; the One who loved us and gave Himself for us; the One who washed us from our sins in His own precious blood; the

One who is risen and now sits at the right hand of God for us; the One who is soon coming to take us to be with Himself forever—yes, let us be occupied with Him and our hearts will rejoice, and we shall desire to please Him in all our ways.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). —Anon.

THE MAN UP THERE

It was a wet, cold, blustery night as the crowd of commuters hastened off the train in the suburban town out of the large city. Business men and women were in a hurry to be home with the families, to rest after a weary day at the office and sit in comfort around a warm fireside. To their disgust and annoyance a railroad official stood at the exit demanding to see the season tickets upon which they rode and so coats had to be unbuttoned and purses opened to find the tickets. There was much grumbling and near the end of the line a passenger remarked to the official, “You are not a very popular man with this crowd tonight.” “It matters not to me whether I am popular with the crowd,” was the reply, “so long as I am popular with the man up there.” He pointed to a lighted window in which stood a higher official of the railroad who had given the order for the tickets to be inspected. Let us who are servants of Christ seek to be popular with the Man up in the glory. —Selected.

A SOLDIER'S DREAM

A striking incident is told of the mission of a tract, which God graciously used in blessing. It may well serve as an incentive to this happy service, which lies within the reach of all.

The narrator says: One day I was alone and sad; everything seemed dark and desolate to me, my soul was cast down, and I had forgotten the exhortation, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee." Suddenly in the midst of the silence and loneliness of a sad evening, the sound of sweetest music was heard. I looked, and saw a boy playing a street-organ! What an intelligent face he had, and the great black eyes he turned upon me spoke of want and suffering. "He is hungry," I said to myself, and gave him some bread and meat on a plate and added a tract, without having the courage to say anything. However, the boy interested me deeply, and I asked God to use the tract to his soul's good. After he had eaten he read the title, "How to become a Christian," and then put it in his pocket.

Several years passed and the late world war broke out, bringing its story of suffering and distress, so I forgot the young organ-player. I was visiting a military hospital, where the wounded were cared for. The doctor was going his rounds, and was standing silent and sad by the bedside of a young soldier, holding his wrist and feeling his pulse, which was beating more and more feebly. I bent down to look at him; his eyes were closed and the stamp of death was on his face. At

this moment the Chaplain came in; he bent over the dying man and seemed anxious to know if he still breathed. Suddenly he opened his eyes and asked, "Am I going?" The Chaplain, with a sad face, did not answer. "Oh, don't be afraid to tell me! I am ready, thank God."

"I cannot say, my friend," said the Chaplain; "but do you know the Saviour of sinners?"

"Yes, yes; I have just seen Him. I am not wandering; I must tell you before I go."

"Is your mother living? Can I send to her for you?"

"I shall be with her soon; she is in heaven." As he said this, his eyes, fast becoming dim, took on an expression of intense happiness. "But," he added, "I have a young sister, poor child, she will be lonely now, but I have commended her to the Lord, and surely He will not forget her. I should like to send her some little things." So saying, he made a supreme effort to take from under his pillow his purse, in which there was some gold, his Bible, a photograph and a tract, the cover of which was dyed with his blood.

"This little tract brought me salvation, as well as my mother. A long time ago I was a poor street-organ boy, trying to support my mother and sister. We were very poor. A kind lady gave me this tract. How happy was my mother when I read it to her. No one had given us anything to show us the way to heaven, nor spoken of the precious Saviour, who died to ransom us. Since then we prayed for the lady every day. This tract was like a cup of cold water to my dying mother."

I came nearer the bed, for I now recognized my poor organ-boy. Some time after, he opened his eyes again and said, "What a lovely dream! I thought I was in heaven and everything was so lovely, but I wanted to see my Saviour and then my mother. She was there, close to Him. Then I wanted to see the lady who gave me the tract, but she was not there yet. A little while after, the gates opened, and she came in. I longed to tell her about the little tract, and then the Saviour said 'Go.' So I went, but woke up; it was only a dream."

I could no longer control myself and sobbed aloud. This drew the attention of the dying soldier and he recognized me, but incapable of making any movement, he said slowly, looking up to heaven: "I thank Thee, Lord, Thou has answered my prayer." These were his last words. Soon the happy spirit winged its way to the Saviour's presence, another gem for the Saviour's crown.

Dear servant of the blessed Master, slack not thy hand: the sowing may be in tears, but joy cometh in the morning, when the full result of service will be seen. —Selected.

When our trial is a small one, we are apt to think that we can get through it without special help from God. It is the big trials that we take right to Him at first. This explains how it is that we are often sustained in some great trouble, while we completely lose command of ourselves in some insignificant annoyance, such as the breaking of a dish. Hence the need to remember the exhortation, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him" (Prov. 3:

6). "Trust in Him at all times" (Ps. 62:8). Whether the trial be great or small, we need all the aids of heavenly power. Our self-sufficiency in small trials is nothing less than the presumptuous thought that we can do without God!

Peace

Peace with God, as forgiveness, is the proper portion of all believers. Many are looking within their hearts for peace; but the true ground of peace must be looked for in God's word. Peace with God is a very different thing from a peaceful state of soul; the former is the result of Christ's work in atonement; the latter of a work in the believer. The basis of the one is outside self, and is the work accomplished by Christ; the other is the effect of a work within the believer wrought by the Holy Spirit. The first great fact for us to lay hold of is, that—

Peace has been made.

Thus God, Himself tells in His word; "Having made peace by the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20). Can any news be more welcome to the distressed and anxious heart?

What had to be done in order that peace could be made?

This is our first question. God, Himself had to be satisfied. His wrath against sin had to be met. His righteousness had to be mag-

nified. He cannot overlook sin. His heart had to find its rest about it. How could poor worms of the earth have peace with God, until God could say that the offending thing was put out of the way? So long as one single sin remained without a propitiation made for it, and one act of unrighteousness remained with the claims of justice against it unmet, there could be no peace. It is vain to ask our consciences whether they are at peace until we know that upon God's side it is peace.

What is the burden that bows down your head, and bears so heavily upon your troubled heart? It is your sense of your sins, your sense of your own unworthiness, or perhaps it may be the conscious want of a due sense of sin! But the cup which the Lord drank was not filled with our sense of sin, but with God's wrath and indignation against sin. Therefore as we think of peace with God, let our hearts fully heed, that God Himself has been magnified; that His righteousness and holiness have been glorified by the work of His Son. And the measure of God's righteousness is nothing less than Himself—the standard of His holiness, Himself.

How was God's righteousness satisfied?

None but an infinitely holy Being could meet the infinite holiness of God—infinite perfection alone could satisfy the requirements of the infinite justice of God. Christ alone could magnify God in regard to sin. The countless offerings by the law never afforded God's heart rest regarding sin. Therefore God pre-

pared a body for His Son, wherein He might suffer for sin (see Heb. 10:4). The work could be alone accomplished by His death, for "without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

Until Divine Justice was at rest about our sins there could not be peace. Our sins had to be taken out of the way. Jesus took our place and suffered in our stead. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa. 53:5). And we have nothing whatever to do in this mighty work of making peace; our happy portion is to believe, and to praise God for what His Son has done for us.

But not only were our sins borne, our evil nature also was judged and condemned at the cross of Christ. "He hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). It was God who made our iniquities to meet upon the Substitute; it was God who made His Son, when upon the cross, sin for us—that is, He was treated as though He was what we are by nature. He was condemned and judged for us, and for this great end, that we, who are sin by nature, might become, in Christ risen from the dead, the righteousness of God! That is, our forgiveness and acceptance before God based on the fact that God Himself has condemned and judged Christ for us is the demonstration and proof of God's own righteous character. Our sins are not only taken away, and our sinful nature condemned, in the death of Christ, but a new and divinely righteous standing is now ours in the sight of God be-

cause of what Christ has done for us.

God, in His own righteousness and holiness, has been magnified by what the Lord did for us, and what He was for us upon the cross. "Peace made through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20). When He bore our sins, when He was wounded for our transgressions, when He satisfied every claim of righteousness and met every wish of love, when He bled and died upon the accursed tree—peace was made.

How do we know that God's righteousness is satisfied?

We know that all our sins are borne, and that Christ's work meets the uttermost requirements of infinite justice so that God is now satisfied because He who was our Sinbearer on the cross and who died for our sins, has been raised from the dead by God. The righteousness of God demanded that "Christ," who "died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3), and who had magnified God in His love and holiness by dying for us, should be raised from the dead. The justice of God demanded satisfaction in full for our offences, and meted out to Him, when He took our place, all that which we deserve, so that Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). But when the Lord had completed the work, God raised Him from the dead and seated Him upon the throne in heaven. And now God proclaims to us, "Peace by Jesus Christ!" (Acts 10:36).

Let us place these words of the Lord together:

"Why hast thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46).
"It is finished!" (John 19:30).
"Peace unto you" (John 20:19).

How exquisitely do they unfold to us the gospel! He was forsaken because He took our place; but the wrath has been borne, the work is completed, He Himself has finished it; therefore in the fulness of that work He says, "Peace be unto you."

Yes! Our Lord risen from the grave, brought with His own lips the glad tidings of peace to His sorrowing disciples.

As Victor from the fight He stood in their midst and proclaimed the result of His anguish; the fruit of His sufferings and death—

Peace be unto you.

The billows of wrath had rolled over Him; the storm of judgment had exhausted itself upon Him; the sword had found its sheath in His bosom so that when risen out of the grave, He announced "Peace"—peace established in resurrection-power, peace eternally secure. And having proclaimed peace, Jesus showed the divine evidence of it: "His hands and His side" (John 20:20).

Upon Himself He bade His disciples look. We behold Jesus risen from the dead, and see in His once wounded hands, and feet, and side, the evidence that our sins have been borne, and that the justice of God has raised the Sin-bearer from the dead. There is none other evidence of peace having been made like the Person of Him who made it.

It is the wonder-working love of God in the gift of His Son, the miracle of grace in Jesus shedding His blood upon Calvary for wicked men, that overwhelms the natural hatred of our hearts to God. The love of sin stood between our hearts and God, and by wicked works we were enemies to Him; but God's love to us in our sins, and the blood of Jesus shed for our sins, draw out our hearts in love to God. Having made peace by the blood of His cross, God hath reconciled us to Himself by the death of His Son. The enmity of our hearts is subdued, and in the righteousness of God we learn His love. God is light—God is love.

Thus, before we were born, long centuries ago, peace was made. The eternal God, according to His own majesty and love, devised the plan. In the depths of His wisdom He settled this way of peace, and His own Son came down to this earth to make it good. And faith now says of the once crucified but risen Savior, "He is our peace" (Eph. 2:14).

How is peace obtained?

"Have you made your peace with God, my good woman?" said a kindly-intentioned visitor to an old friend of ours. Now although our old friend was dying, yet she knew perfectly well what she was saying, when she replied "No; that I have not, sir."

"Then see to it at once, and make your peace with God before you die, I entreat you," replied the visitor with solemn earnestness.

After a few moments' silence, the aged be-

liever fixed her eyes upon him, and said, slowly: 'It was all done nineteen hundred years ago. 'He hath made peace through the blood of His cross' ' (Col. 1:20).

It is a fearful thing to attempt to make our peace with God, a dreadful delusion for a dying hour. 'We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Romans 5:1).

The stone over which so many stumble is their feelings. But our experiences do not affect God's fact. Whether the believer is in a peaceful state of soul, or harassed and disturbed, the fact that peace is made remains unchanged. The sun has risen, and though clouds of distrust blot out its beams from sight, and a chilly atmosphere takes the place of its genial glow, yet the fact that the sun shines, remains unchanged. What the believer has to do is, by faith to forsake the valley of distrust over which the clouds hang, and to climb to the mountain top of faith and confidence in God's own statement that He has made peace through the blood of the cross. There he will see the peace Christ has made in His own blood ever shining as the sun.

Some time ago a friend of ours was speaking to one who doubted the unchanging favor of God towards His people and who had not the blessing of settled peace with God.

'Is God not satisfied with what Jesus was and is for you?' he enquired. 'Can He then hide His face from you? No; it is you, who, by looking within yourself and pulling the blind down, shut Him out. You must keep the blind up. If the sun is pouring forth all its

golden beauty and you are keeping the blind up, it will show forth all its power to you; but if you draw the blind down, you hinder its rays from entering your room. And if you become occupied with self and are taken up with your own feelings and thoughts instead of with Christ, you are in darkness, for you thereby shut out the light of His presence."

Our hearts are truly deceitful, and our thoughts and feelings often very evil, but God looks at us who believe, not in the flesh, but in Christ. It is this fact which gives our souls peace.

This illustration of "keeping the blind up" has helped many a poor doubter. Let the truth of the perfect satisfaction which God has in Christ and peace coming to us through Christ in glory, be the sunlight you would have pouring into your soul. "Keep the blind up," reader; look not within the dark chamber of your heart, but outside of yourself to Christ. Upon the cross the work was done; by the blood there shed the peace was made; but a living Jesus, a risen Jesus, is the object of faith, and His words to you, as He shows you His hands and His side, are—"Peace be unto you," "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:26, 27). —Selected.

ETERNAL LIFE

HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

You want eternal life, but how are you to obtain it?

In the first place, God alone is the giver of

life. None of us received our natural life by an effort of our own, nor can we receive eternal life except as a gift from God. So we read in Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death, but the **gift** of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is a gift from God, but it is given through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now how is this? Well, why does man have to die and come under judgment in the first place? It is because he has sinned. God is a holy God and a righteous Judge, and therefore, He must judge the sinner's sins. But God is love and He wants to save the sinner from judgment, so He sent His own eternal and well-beloved Son into this sinful world to take the place of the sinner and bear all the punishment that was due his sins. (See 1 John 4:9, 10).

That explains why the Son of God had to die on the cross. He had never sinned nor done anything wrong, so had nothing to suffer for, but He, in love to our souls, was willing to suffer Himself the punishment that was due our sins. Christ died for our sins on the cross. Open your Bible now and read how He suffered there on the cross. You will find the account in Matt. 27 and in Luke 23. Now turn to Isaiah 53 and read why He had to suffer all of that. There you read: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him (that is, we now have peace because He was punished in our stead); and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the **Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all**" (ver. 5, 6).

That explains it all. We are sinners and our sins must be punished. But God so loved us that He sent His dear Son, who also loved us, and He took our place. All our load of sin was laid on Him, and He was punished for it so we can go free. And now what do we have to do? Nothing at all but just to believe what God says, that Christ has borne our sins.

Let me illustrate it to you: Suppose you have yielded to temptation and stolen a large sum of money and squandered it all. You have nothing now left. Now it becomes known you are the one that took the money and you know you can't deny it — you are guilty and will soon be arrested and imprisoned. You are much troubled about it, but a friend of yours takes pity on you when he hears it, and without saying a word to you goes to the firm you stole the money from and out of his own pocket pays everything with interest and gets a receipt from the firm that all is settled in full. He then writes to you and tells you what he has done. He says: "Dear Friend, out of love to you, I have gone and paid all that money back and settled the whole matter. Here is your receipt. I have done this as a free gift to you." What would you have to do then to be sure you would never be punished for your crime? You say, "Why, nothing at all; I would only have to believe it was all settled." "But," some one speaks up, "how do you know it?" "Why, my friend settled it. I know it because he told me so and he never tells a lie."

Now, dear friend, that is just what Christ has done for you. He has settled all your account with God. How do you know it? God says so in His Word. Now turn to John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” and verse 18: “He that believeth on Him is not condemned,” and verse 36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”

See, it says God loved and God gave His only begotten Son. Now that is what God has done. He has given His Son to die for our sins on the cross. Now what are the results? — “that **whosoever** believeth in Him should not perish.” Christ has borne the judgment of our sins on the cross so there is nothing left for us to do but just to believe He has done it. We have to believe in Him that He is the Son of God, given of God to die for our sins on the cross, and what are the results of this faith in Christ? Why, “whosoever believeth in Him **shall not perish** but have everlasting life.” Who says so? God says so. Isn’t that enough to rest upon with full assurance?

God says: “He that believeth on Him (Christ) is not condemned.” “He that believeth on the Son **hath**”—not shall have—but “hath everlasting life.” So we see it is God that gives eternal life, but He gives it to us through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sin. The moment we believe He died for our sins, then we are assured of God we shall never perish, but have eternal life. He gives it to us the moment we believe and we know it because God says so. Will you not believe Him now?

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). —Selected.

No Compromise

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

—Ephesians 5:11

No test is harder to a conscientious Christian than the necessity of separation in matters of conscience and principle from those most dearly beloved.

They plead so plausibly for our concessions and surrenders, that it seems almost harsh to ride roughshod over all their sweet affection and gentle pleading.

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With tender love, but heavenly courage, he is represented as gently holding back her hand and detaching the rosette from his bosom, knowing all the while that it was probably the last time they would ever meet on earth. It is just such little things as this which constitute the difference between loyalty and treason, between the hero-martyr and the "easy-time-server" of any and every age.

—A. B. S

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